

Formats & standards used in the OmnIES environment

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Goals

- To present the chosen basic formats and standards used in the OmnIES environment
- Present the background and motivations for choosing the named standards and formats

Principles for choosing formats

- Long life...
- Many potential users...
- Freedom from viruses and trojans...
- “Clean” formats...
- Low demands on network and servers...
- “Real” standards...

Formats

The types of formats

- Presentation media
 - Presentations, video
- Read only text media
 - PDF, HTML
- Interaction media
 - RTF, Documents and files
- Special media
 - Excel worksheets etc
- URL-based media
 - External web pages, services etc

Presentation media

- Basis for learning materials using
 - Digital presentations
 - Video
 - Sounds
 - Pictures
 - Simpler animations
- Mostly using Apple QuickTime

Text media

- Read-only
 - PDF
 - HTML
- Modifiable
 - RTF
 - Pure text

PDF

- PDF = Portable Document Format
- Independent on operating system and applications
- Tools available to simplify distribution and control
- Read-Only format
- Quality control – no modifications allowed

HTML

- Close to all word processors can export to HTML
- Format used mainly for web-page based texts
- Relatively small sizes and fast transfers
 - But be aware of large graphics and lack of standards support...

Modifiable text formats

- RTF
 - Allows for basic formatting
 - Close to all word processors can read RTF
 - No risk for inclusion of viruses and trojans
 - Compact format
 - Evaluate more advanced formatting – tables...
- Text
 - Same as RTF, no formatting

Recommended applications

Apple QuickTime

- One install covers most of the used standard media formats
- Covers more than just the player
 - Production, editing, storage, distribution, players
- Based on *real* standards
 - MPEG 4 etc
- Allows for integrated management in the OmnIES environment

Apple QuickTime (2)

- Much cheaper solutions for streaming servers
 - Windows Media
 - Real media
- Servers can be based on many platforms
 - Easy upgrading when demands increases

Adobe Acrobat

- A family of applications to create and manage PDF files
- Acrobat
 - Application to create and manage PDF documents
- Reader
 - Reader of PDF documents
- Distiller
 - Create PDF documents from inside other applications

Special media & documents

- Microsoft Excel (example...)
 - Difficult to replace...
 - But is often misused...
- If no macros
 - Export as SYLK or text
- If using macros
 - Compress and warn the users!

Internet-based media

- The link is not enough...
 - Also specify the motivation for usage and instructions...
- Does the links contents need additional supporting information and structures?
 - Forums, FAQs, dictionary entries...

Future evaluation of standards

- Widen the perspectives...
 - Not all users has the latest versions...
 - Most users are using low speed communication links...
 - Future revisions of the materials might be more difficult to perform...
- Dependencies of a specific OS or software is a big minus!