The background of the slide is a black and white photograph of a highway interchange. The image shows concrete pillars supporting an elevated roadway that curves into the distance. The sky is bright and overcast.

Some Thoughts Concerning DIS 29500 “OOXML”

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What is a Standard?

“[A] document, established by consensus and approved by a recognized body, that provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context

NOTE Standards should be based on the consolidated results of science, technology and experience, and aimed at the promotion of optimum community benefits.”

-- ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004, Definition 3.2

FastTrack – Ecma's “value”



What is Ecma's value?

A proactive, problem solving **experts' group** that ensures **timely** publication of international **standards**;

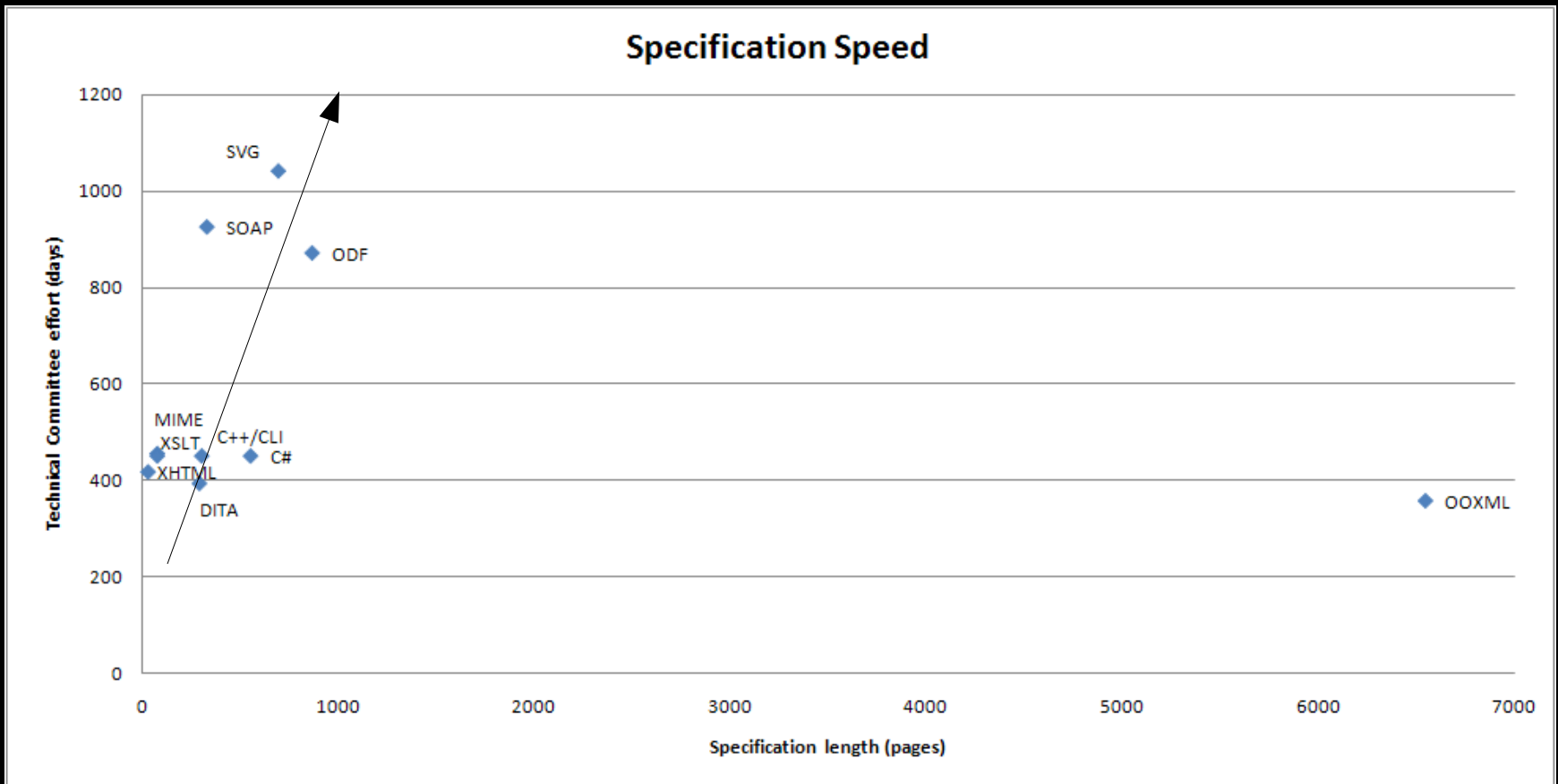
Offers industry a "**fast track**", to global standards bodies, through which **standards are made available on time**;

Balances Technical Quality and **Business Value**:

- Quality of a standard is pivotal, but the balance between timeliness and quality as well: Better a good standard today than a perfect one tomorrow!
- Offers a path which will **minimise risk of changes** to input specs
- Solid IPR policy and practice

Ecma can be viewed as a reconfigurable hub of TCs

OOXML: a rushed standard



The technical case against DIS 29500 / OOXML

OOXML does not satisfy the criteria commonly used to define standards :

Standards should be repeatable, optimal/best practices and interoperable

Ref. ISO, British Standards Institute, ISO/IEC JTC1 Directives

1. NOT Precise, Repeatable, Common

"Compatibility Settings" of WordProcessingML, such as "autoSpaceLikeWord95", do not provide for repeatable practices. Many other properties are undefined.

2. NOT aspirational and a consolidation of best practices

Very little use of the consolidated best practices of the industry such as XForms, Xlink, SMIL and MathML

3. NOT Interoperable and Portable

Heavily tied to Microsoft Office applications and Windows, to the detriment of interoperability and portability. Example: clipboard only supports Microsoft formats, such as EMF, and WMF. Supports Internet Explorer, but not Firefox, Opera or Safari.

4. LACKS Cultural and Linguistic Adaptability

Example: NETWORKDAYS() defines a weekend in a way that will be improper in most parts of the Middle East.

Recommendations

- Vote “**No, with comments**,” which is the JTC1-prescribed way of indicating “conditional approval” (JTC1 Directives, Section 9.8)
- Recommend that OOXML be resubmitted as normal working item in JTC1/SC34:
 - Split into a multi part standard: WordProcessingML, SpreadsheetML, DrawingML, Office Open Math Markup, VML, etc.
 - Have each part progress independently, at its own speed, within normal ISO processing stages
 - Encourage participation from OASIS to identify opportunities for harmonization with existing ISO 26300 “ODF”
- OOXML, as the default format in MS Office, is important. But as a standard it is full of inconsistencies, omissions, inaccuracies and errors. No standard is perfect, but OOXML, in its current state, does even not meet the minimum requirements.