

vCard Workshop

Cambridge, MA

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Overview

- ✦ Quick History of vCard
- ✦ vCard as used today
- ✦ vCard issues
- ✦ Why we are here...

vCard History

- ✦ Originally developed by the now defunct Versit Consortium in 1995, and based on X.500 work.
- ✦ Transferred rights to Internal Mail Consortium in 1996.
- ✦ IETF standardized vCard 3.0 in 1998.
- ✦ A few IETF extensions done since then.

vCard in use today

- ✦ vCard is in heavy use today as a contact interchange format.
- ✦ Used as import/export format by address book apps, sent via email, synchronized to/from mobile devices.
- ✦ Various spin-offs including hCard and Jabber XML variant.

vCard Issues

- ✦ Interoperability: we need all applications and devices to be able to exchange data without any loss or corruption in either direction.
- ✦ Extensibility: new fields need to be added and understood.
- ✦ New types need to be easily added and understood.

Why we are here...

- ✦ Various groups have expressed an interest in improving the state of vCard interoperability.
- ✦ The IETF are also assessing interest in doing such work.
- ✦ The goal today is to determine what the interest is and what steps we should take to progress this work.

Experiment

- ✦ Lets all exchange our vCards right now...
- ✦ Get those bluetooth devices out, send your's via email.
- ✦ No?
- ✦ Well after 11+ years of vCard we really ought to be able to easily do something like this.
- ✦ Instead we all still have paper business cards and some people even have special scanners to digitize those!

Questionnaire comments

About 20 received.

- ✦ Multiple vCards in one file is not always supported.
- ✦ Better UTF-8 support.
- ✦ Easier way to drag-and-drop vCards between apps.
- ✦ Incompatible TEL attributes on mobiles.

Questionnaire extensions:

- ✦ distinguished name.
- ✦ x-anniversary, x-yahoo-id, x-im, x-skype-id, x-irc-id, x-icq-id, x-google-id, x-msn-id, x-aim-id, x-qq-id, x-cid, x-created, x-modified.
- ✦ Oracle, Apple, Lotus, Outlook/WAB.

Questionnaire alternatives:

- ✦ XML format (with SDKs for major OS's).
- ✦ CSV (Outlook and Thunderbird variants).
- ✦ LDIF.
- ✦ Updateable vCard (uVcard).
- ✦ LDAP schema.
- ✦ RDF/XML.

Questionnaire consider:

- ✦ The industry body should build an open source synchronization engine to promote the standards.
- ✦ Consider issues arising from use of hCard microformat.
- ✦ Sync IOP issues caused by current limitations.
- ✦ Lack of groups.
- ✦ Linking to directories and other repositories.
- ✦ Avoid duplicates or accidental removal of vCard entries during synchronization.
- ✦ Getting vCard IM and Calendar standard extensions deployed.

Questionnaire other issues:

- ✦ I would like the industry body to open itself up for donations, sponsorship etc in order to fund the development of industry standard applications and software development toolkits which are robust and easy to understand and use.
- ✦ vCard 3.0 is already very good, and we would benefit from more industry support (most mobiles still prefer vCard 2.1).
- ✦ Use other than for people (venues, organizations, etc.)

Other Standards

Other Related Standards

- ✦ Liberty Alliance
- ✦ OASIS
- ✦ LDAP
- ✦ hCard
- ✦ CardDAV

Liberty Alliance

- ✦ ID-SIS Contact Book Service.
- ✦ Uses XML abstraction of vCard, and XPATH-based queries.
- ✦ Web-services infrastructure used for the service itself.
- ✦ Supports sorting, grouping, paged results.

OASIS: CIQ

- ✦ Customer Information Quality
- ✦ http://www.oasis-open.org/committees/tc_home.php?wg_abbrev=ciq
- ✦ Defines XML based formats for names, addresses and relationships.

LDAP

- ✦ Well established directory service application protocol.
- ✦ Used for much more than just contact information (e.g. authentication).
- ✦ Uses a “tree” model for relationships/boundaries.
- ✦ “White pages” schema used for representing contacts (e.g. inetOrgPerson Object Class RFC2798).

hCard

- ✦ 1-to-1 mapping between vCard and semantic XHTML.
- ✦ Suitable for embedding in (X)HTML, Atom, RSS and XML.
- ✦ One of several “microformats”.
- ✦ Fairly extensive website with lots of detail on the spec, examples etc:
- ✦ <http://microformats.org/wiki/hcard>

CardDAV

- ✦ WebDAV-based address book access protocol.
- ✦ Use vCard as the data exchange format.
- ✦ Similar to CalDAV (iCalendar).
- ✦ Uses proven web technology to provide a low barrier to entry.

Fixing vCard

Issues & Solutions: #1

- ✦ Specifications:
 - ✦ RFC 2425 : MIME directory profile.
 - ✦ RFC 2426 : vCard MIME directory profile.
- ✦ Proposal:
 - ✦ Since RFC 2425 is not used anywhere else,
 - ✦ Lets merge both specs into one.

Issues & Solutions: #2

- ✧ MIME Type:
 - ✧ text/directory; type=vcard
 - ✧ text/x-vcard
- ✧ Proposal:
 - ✧ Define text/vcard as the MIME type for our new specification

Issues & Solutions: #3

- ✦ Character set:
 - ✦ No default character set defined.
- ✦ Proposal:
 - ✦ Follow iCalendar's lead and require vCard data to be utf-8.
 - ✦ charset=utf-8 will be the default for text/vcard.

Issues & Solutions: #4

- ✧ Registration of properties and parameters:
 - ✧ Currently requires sending email to ietf-mime-direct@imc.org.
- ✧ Proposal:
 - ✧ Define formal IANA registry.
 - ✧ Use template format now used in iCalendar 2445bis.
 - ✧ X-<Vendor-ID> mechanism for non-standard extensions.

Issues: #5

- ✦ Too many combinations of parameters for things like TEL:.
- ✦ How to indicate localization for address formats.
- ✦ Geographic properties should be parameters on ADR and we should add a MAP parameter.