

ECMA/TR 48, Study of the Translation of the ODA Formatted Form into Page Description Languages

SCOPE

This document is the report of a study undertaken to develop "proof of concept" level software capable of translating ODA-Formatted Form documents into the proprietary page description languages of Interpress and PostScript.

This study was proposed at the inception of the ECMA Print Format standard work as a practical mechanism by which one of the stated objectives could be attained. The objective was that ODA FF should be easily translatable into the Print Format standard.

This initial objective was refined and restated as the following threefold objectives. Firstly, to inform the market leader page description companies participating in ECMA TC29-TGPF of the capabilities of ODA for describing printable documents. Secondly, to decide, as a consequence of practical experience, whether extensions are required to ODA to support the printing requirements of the publishing industry. Thirdly, to evaluate current PDLs as prototypical implementations of the proposed Standard Printer Format and to examine their adequacy to support ODA-Formatted Form.

The project was undertaken from July 1987 to June 1988. The project commenced by determining a source of suitable ODA test documents. Since the relevant development staff within Xerox and Adobe were not ODA experts the creation of the appropriate test documents could have been time consuming and a potential source of error. Bull, a participant in both TC29-TGPF and the ESPRIT PODA project, offered to make available a set of ODA test documents.

These tests were to be developed by Bull as part of its ESPRIT PODA sub-task to develop an ODA printer. ICL offered to develop an ODA Document Application Profile (DAP) which would describe the subset of ODA to which the test documents would conform.

This DAP was based on work ICL was undertaking as a participant in the PODA project.

In the PODA project ICL was developing an ODA DAP suitable for use with proprietary word processors.

The members of TGPF also decided on and made available, a full set of the relevant standards documents to be used. Many of these were still under development within the standards bodies, most important of these being the ODA standard itself. Consequently, availability of these documents was very limited. A full list of the standards documents used is specified in this report under References.

-The ODA test sample documents were delivered to Xerox and Adobe in three phases. The first being in November 1987 and then February 1988 and finally April 1988.

-The project to develop the ODA to PDL translators was completed at the June 1988 TC29 meeting with a presentation and demonstration by Xerox of their work. Also at that time Adobe said that, regrettably, due to a lack of resources they would be unable to complete the development of their translation software. They were however, able to provide material for the technical report describing the work done so far. This material included important conclusions from their design and development work.