

The Directory Interoperability Forum: A Superior Model

Lockheed Martin is moving forward in the area of directories with a keen sense of how their requirements for interoperability can be met through open standards.

*A Case Study on Lockheed Martin and
The Open Group Directory Interoperability Forum*

May, 2003

Lockheed Martin and the DIF

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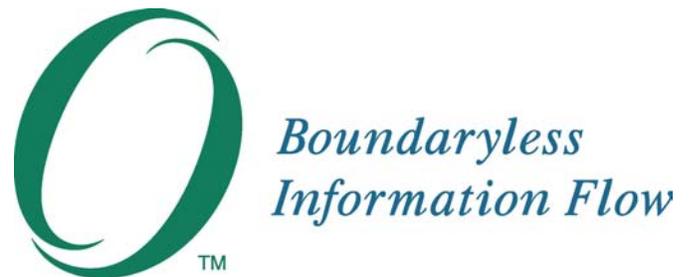
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Executive Summary

Lockheed Martin's participation in the Directory Interoperability Forum has yielded unbiased access to industry expertise, a venue to connect with key people in directory standards, and a way to assert Lockheed's requirements as a major technology customer.

The vendor-neutral focus on interoperability has helped move Lockheed Martin closer to **Boundaryless Information Flow™**.

One Membership – Two Goals

*“I can go to one place
and know what’s
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place.”*

“The Directory Interoperability Forum has provided a venue where I can make connections with the right people in my field and be tuned in to a wide range of standards activities in the directory world,” says Skip Slone, Principal Systems Architect for Lockheed Martin Corporation. “I can go to one place and know what’s happening all over the place.”

Slone’s explanation describes how he is accomplishing one of his two goals for Directory Interoperability Forum (DIF) membership. The other objective is more long-term and over-arching: To shape the direction the industry is taking in the area of directory standards. As a corollary, his participation in the DIF enables him to assert Lockheed’s requirements in a way the directory industry can respond to them.

Dr. Chris Harding, the DIF’s long-time director, creates the environment for these things to happen, according to Slone. “Chris is well-connected in the industry yet he maintains a neutral stance. He is a non-biased participant and leader, as opposed to a vendor who is trying to represent a company.”

“In short,” he says, “Chris Harding protects the goal of interoperability, and not a single company’s agenda or objectives. There is built-in conflict of interest in other models.”

Slone’s comment gets to the heart of a problem that users sometimes encounter in volunteer-led consortia and other standards development organizations. By virtue of the leadership falling to an elected member of the group, as opposed to a professional staff member, the biases of that person’s company can be expected to color proceedings.

The next step for Slone is leveraging the knowledge gleaned from his experience in the DIF to align Lockheed’s internal direction and strategy regarding directory standards.

About The Open Group

The Open Group is a vendor-neutral and technology-neutral consortium, whose vision of Boundaryless Information Flow™ will enable access to integrated information within and between enterprises based on open standards and global interoperability. The Open Group works with customers, suppliers, consortia, and other standards bodies. Its role is to capture, understand, and address current and emerging requirements, establish policies, and share best practices; to facilitate interoperability, develop consensus, and evolve and integrate specifications and Open Source technologies; to offer a comprehensive set of services to enhance the operational efficiency of consortia; and to operate the industry's premier certification service, including UNIX® system certification. Further information on The Open Group can be found at www.opengroup.org.