Standardization
Tilting at windmills?

Paul Oude Luttighuis

Interoperability Seminar

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novay

paul.oudeluttighuis@novay.nl
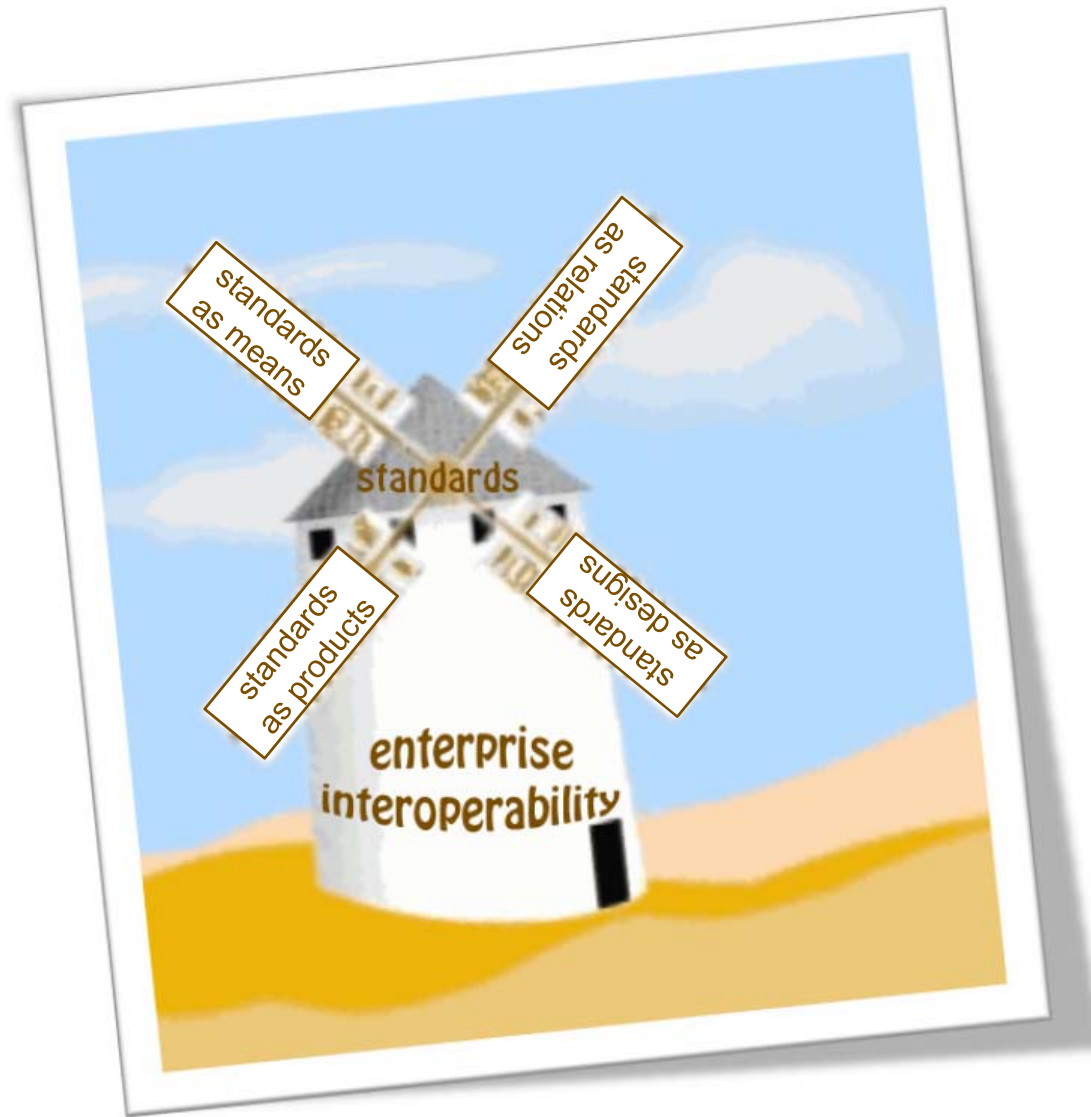
This talk is about …

- enterprise interoperability: useful and meaningful sharing of business information, business rules, business processes, et cetera;

- standardization as a popular approach for that;

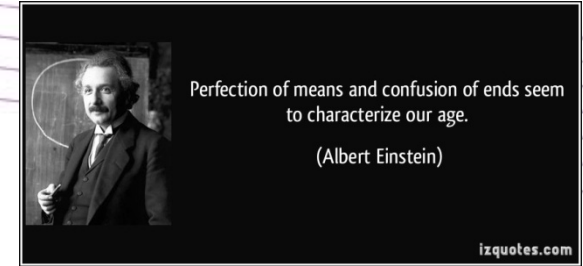- where that may fall short, from a design and analysis perspective.

(Pavel Šimon)

standards

enterprise
interoperability

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Perfection of means and confusion of ends seem to characterize our age.
(Albert Einstein)
izquotes.com

Standards are means …

- … to ends: enterprise interoperability.

- How do standards help enterprise interoperability?

- By providing efficient scalability: the network effect.

- Since $m+n$ is cheaper than $m*n$, they say.

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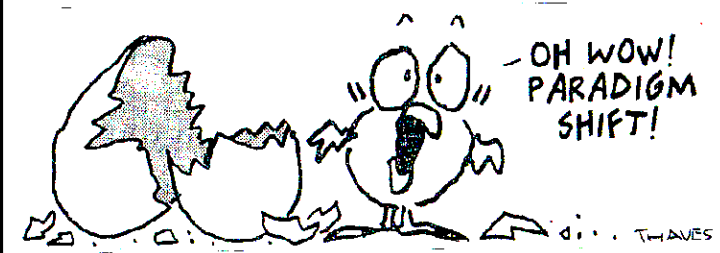
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Standards are relations …
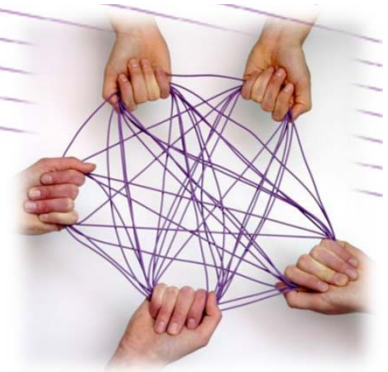
- … between ineracting parties.

- They act as agreements, im- or explicitly. They bind.

- They should serve the specific interests, needs, and views of those involved.

- How would the business network scale otherwise?

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Standards are designs

- How could they ever work, otherwise?

- So, in come designers.

- They construct.

- They use design language and paradigms.

- And project these onto the business domain.

- They intrude.
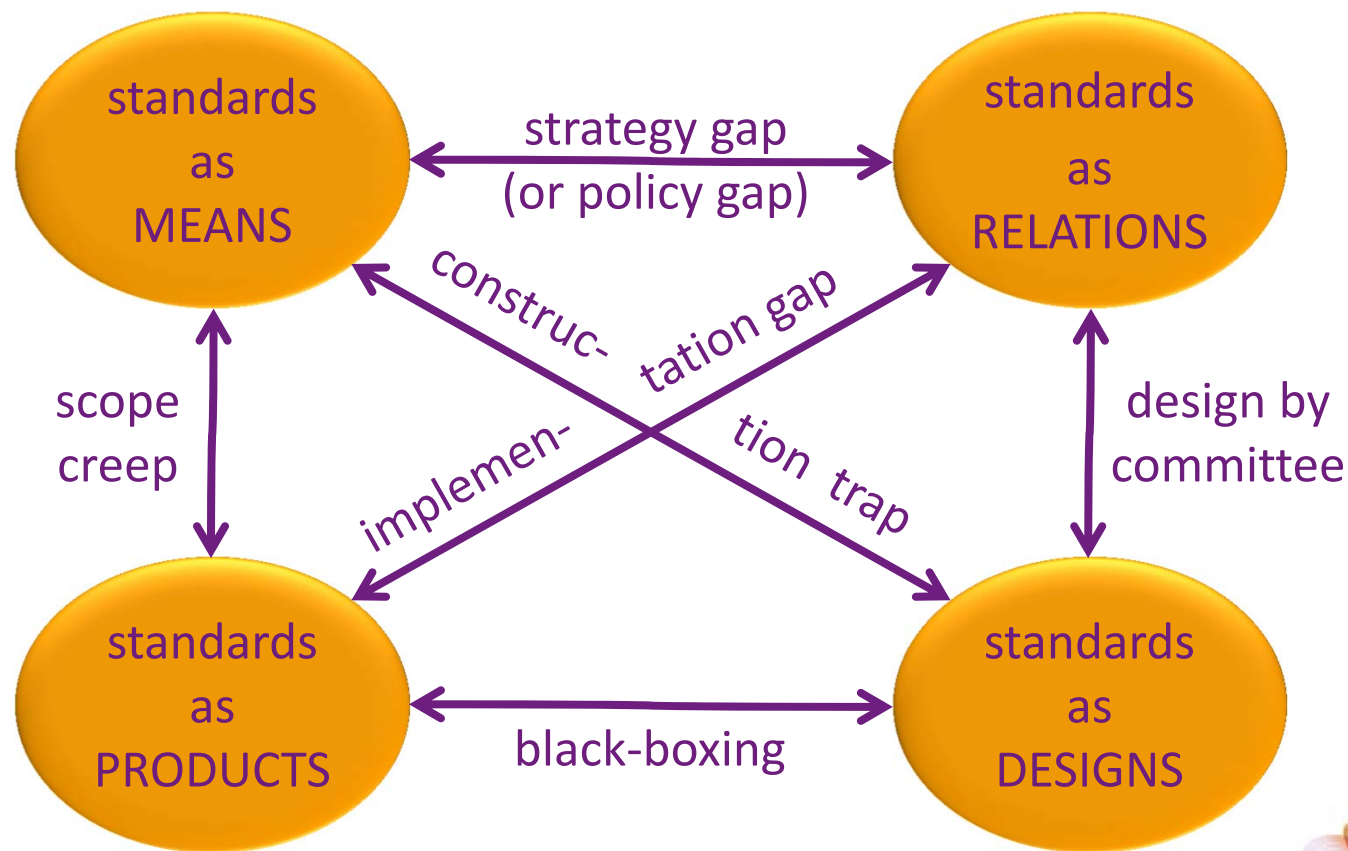
Standards are products …

- … of those that design(ed), manage(d), and implement(ed) them.

- They are branded and marketed.

- They are wrapped and black-boxed.

- They have created new interests.

- So that they have become new ends to means.

Crushed by the windmill sails

standards as MEANS

← strategy gap (or policy gap) →

standards as RELATIONS

scope creep

construc- tation gap

implemen- tion trap

design by committee

standards as PRODUCTS

← black-boxing →

standards as DESIGNS

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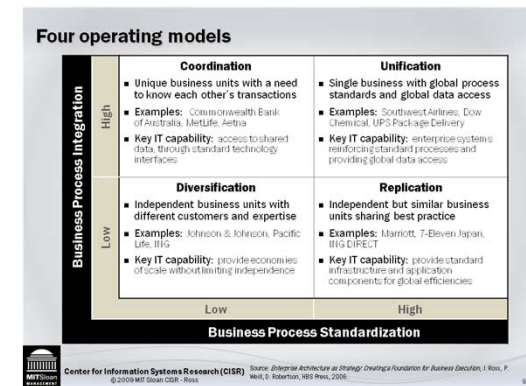
Strategy (or policy) gap

- Why would standardization be the single best strategy in a business network?

- We are not talking technology here, we are talking business.

- + is more expensive than *

1. Design a business network operating strategy, rather than assuming a specific one.

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Design by committee

- When uniformity is an upfront requirement ...

- ... design evokes incompatible or even irreconcilable interests.

- Which drives apart (political) feasibility and design quality.

- Design by reconciliation, rather than by imposition.

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Black-boxing

- Finished standards (versions) are black-boxed.

- The design is alienated from its context (including its history) …

- … and hence from its business meaning.

- This is inherent in technical design paradigms.

- Use contextual and intentional, rather than technical design paradigms.

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Scope creep

- When a standard is a black-boxed product, it represents new interests.

- In order to be successful, it is challenged to meet needs for which it was never designed.

- and to absorb features never foreseen.

- Design for scope, stick to scope; when scope changes, backtrack and re-design.

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Construction trap

- Interoperability requires constraining the freedom of those involved.

- Many standards, though, are not sets of rules, they are sets of Lego blocks.

- Design-by-constraint, rather than design-by-construction.

Implementation gap

- Each business relation is more specific than the standard.

- Implementation of the standard takes additional effort and risks.

- Less freedom, but no solution yet. Why invest?

- Make the implementation process the standard, rather than (just) the exchange spec.

Wrap-up: Designing Enterprise Interoperability

1. Design a business network operating strategy, rather than assuming a specific one.

2. Design by reconciliation, rather than by imposition.

3. Use intentional and contextual, rather than technical design paradigms.

4. Design for scope, stick to scope; when scope changes, backtrack and re-design.

5. Design-by-constraint, rather than design-by-construction.

6. Make the implementation process the standard, rather than (just) the exchange spec.

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THANK YOU!

(Pavel Šimon)