Open Personal Data Standard

OPDS Contacts Format Reference

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1 Introduction

1.1 This Document

This document describes the Open Personal Data Standard Contacts format (OPDSC). This is a standardized format to store Address book style data within a SQL database.

The design of this format is intended to allow application to access and search address book data. This format is very strongly tied to the OPDS Schema definition[1], as such this format dose not defines any methods for identifying the record concerned. Instead this is left down to the outlying database schema.

This is considered a living document and open to review and changes as the subject it describes changes.

1.2 Copyright

1 For further details please see the *Open Personal Data Standard Reference Guide* document.

2 Conventions

The following meaning are used throughout this document.

- Entity. Used to refer to a group of related data elements. This group would relate to a Single Person, Business or Place.
- Element. Used to refer to a single data concept. Examples are Name, Formated Name, Address, City and Country.

The OPDSC format uses a simple Name Value Pair structure to store single data elements. When an element contains multiple fields a semicolon ";" is used to separate these fields.

Any use of semicolon used within the text of an element will require a preceding "\" character to differentiate it from a field separator. If a "\" character is required within the text this will also require a second "\" instance to differentiate it from an escape sequence.

It is worth noting that the backslash has been chosen for this job as opposed to the more usual forward slash. With the advent of URLs and less of a requirement to display dos based file paths this seems like a more sensible requirement.

3 General Rules

This standard defines a collection of elements used to describe people places or organizations. Every element within this standard is optional. Due to the nature of the OPDS Schema definition no entity elements are required for seamless interaction between components.

It is also common for people to store contact style data that is missing important key fields.

Due to this requirement any application implementing this standard needs to be able to handle the lack of any data element gracefully.

A Name will always need to be provided to the OPDS Schema definition to be ysed within the GPE_RESOURCE table for element identification. Please see the *Open Personal Data Standard Reference Guide* document for further information of this requirement.

3.1 Element Grouping

At the option of the developer is is possible to group elements together. This is done by preceding the element name with a dot then the group name. This allows multiple elements of the same type to be provided for each entity. Examples are HOME WORK addresses and phone numbers etc. it is not required for an application to make use of this grouping method. But all applications must be able to handle the fact that multiple entries may exist for many elements supplied.

When multiple elements of the same type exist the application writing those elements must supply a preferred element this can be done either by suppling an element with no group name. Or attaching a .pref tag after the group name of one element.

4 Elements

4.1 Type

The type element allows for a user to distinguish between Person, Place and Organization Contacts.

This element should contain one of the following words in upper: PERSON, PLACE, ORGANIZATION.

It is worth noting that this field is also optional. While it will provide a nice interface for your address book application to be able to divide contact lists in this way. There is no requirement for yours or other applications to store data in this manner. If you wish to use this option then your application will need to be able to handle the absence of this field. Please see the (as of yet unwritten) *OPDS Implementation Guide* document for further advice on the use of this element.

4.2 Name

The name element refers to the title of the described entity. This element is divided into 5 fields each semicolon separated. The entity being described indicates the meaning of each field.

The following table details the meaning of each location for each entity type, as well as providing an example of the contents of that field.

Entity Type	1st Field	2nd Field	3rd Field	4th Field	5th Field
Person	Family Name	Given Name	Other Names	Prefix Title	Suffix Title
Person Example	David	Hall	Alan, Fredrick, Wilber	Mr	B Sc
Place	Name	Purpose	Other Use	Blank	Blank
Place Example	The White House	Government	Intern Entertainment, Wealth absorption		
Organization	Name	Field	Other Fields	Blank	Blank
Organization Example	Adelie Solutions	Software Development	IT Services, Requirements Analysis		

All of the above fields are optional. Any field used should be positions as suggested. If a preceding field is blank then semicolons should be provided to indicate the position of the supplied field. No semicolons need to be provided after the final used field.

All element types allow for multiple entries within the 3rd Field. When writing data to this fields commas are required to separate multiple names.

The layout of the person type within this element is unashamedly copied from the vCard[2] N field format.

2 vCard is a registered trademarks of the Internet Mail Consortium.

4.3 FName

The FName element is used to store the preferred format of the entity's name. This is the field that should be used when addressing the person concerned.

This element contains a simple text string.

Examples :

- Mr Davis A Hall BSc
- Adelie Solutions
- Queen Elizabeth II by the Grace of God, Queen of this Realm and of Her other Realms and Territories, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith.

4.4 Addresses

Five elements are used to store address details:

Address: Supplementary Address data.

Metro: City or Town

Region: State, County, Province etc.

Code: Postal or Zip code

Country: Nation.

The Address element may contain multiple lines, using semicolons as separators.

Element grouping may be used with address elements but care must be taken to ensure all address elements relating to a group have the appropriate group tag added to there element name.

4.5 Phone Email URL and Note

These elements are fairly self explanatory. Each allows data to be stored as a text string.

PHONE=123 234 3456

EMAIL=bloke@somewhere.org

URL=http://www.someserver.org/

Note=Oh what wonderful weather we are having.

HTML formating tags may be used with the note element. Although a reader application may choose to strip and ignore such tags.

Multiple entries may be provided for each element. If this is done it is down to the program creating the record to make sure that the preferred entry is marked. See the Element grouping section for further detail.

4.6 Image

The Image element is provided to allow photos or maps to be attached to a contacts entry.

This element still requires definition and should probable be ignored bay application developers until It has been settled.

To give you a hint though. The element will be able to store images in one of 2 ways.

- Using a URL to point to a file without of the database.
- Using standard MIME syntax to provide a Base64 or UUEncoded syntax.

4.7 Additional Elements

The elements described in this document provide only those standardized elements provided by the OPDS. As such by providing these elements any other application should be able to find the minimal data needed to allow interaction with contacts data.

If developers have requirements for further data within an application. Then simply providing a new element name and text name and element value is the appropriate way to embed this element. As such other contact apps should be able to find the element and display it. Internationalization of the new element may be more complicated.

Until the MIME format of the Image tag is completely defined wit would be wise to avoid including non text based data within any elements.