

Effects body to foster open standards

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Seven of the post-production sector's best known software companies have formed a new independent industry body that will develop and promote open standards within the visual effects community.

The Open Effects Association (OEA) is a not-for-profit, UK-based company that includes representatives from Assimilate, Autodesk, Digieffects, FilmLight, The Foundry, GenArts and Re:vision Effects.

Its initial focus will be to jointly improve the OpenFX (OFX) image processing plug-in standard launched by The Foundry in 2004.

The OEA has bought the intellectual property rights for the standard for 1p from its creators with the goal of reducing the level of development and support required for plug-ins across different compositing and editing host platforms.

It also hopes to encourage better communication and collaboration between systems developers and plug-in makers.

Bruno Nicoletti, the chief technical officer at The Foundry and the main creator of the original OFX standard as well as the newly appointed head of the OEA's technical committee, believes that having more companies involved will help to share the burden of development.

"The original OFX standard was created because of the frustration of having too many formats and plug-ins which didn't match," he said. "By joining forces we will be able to increase the speed at which OFX can be updated and improved and encourage more companies to introduce applications that use it. This also means that the industry isn't reliant on The Foundry's whim."

The new company is currently going through formal set-up procedures. Meetings will be scheduled for NAB and IBC with development discussions taking place using online forums and mailing groups.

OpenFX has been adopted by applications such as Nuke, Film Master and Baselight.