



OHI – OpenHardware Initiative

@OpenTech Summit Taiwan – April 2008



OHI – a Spin-Off of
The World Summits of Free Information Infrastructures
<http://wsfii.org>



WSFII is an ongoing international process of multiple, local action oriented events which provide space for people to come together, to share experiences, present practical solutions, to learn and to build, all kinds of Free Information Infrastructures.





OHI – founded 2007 and open for everyone to join

OHI was officially founded on the initiative of WSFII activists together with other OpenSource developers at the OpenPattern's Office in Paris end of 2007.

OHI is open for everyone to join who is willing to help and to support it's mission

OHI – Mission Statement

- to support the process of making available cheap and affordable ready-to-use (pre flashed/pre installed) FOSS compliant hardware as widely (globally) as possible
- to further define the terms and legal aspects of OpenHardware (licensing, business models)
- to organize meetings and workshops to connect individuals and organisations sharing similar goals
- to make available OpenHardware as a key for education and to bridge the so called "digital divide"
- to support a bottom up community driven process of development and innovation based on open standards (open HW/SW platforms)

OHI – Spreading The OpenSource Culture


Besides the development of free open source hard- and software the mission includes:

- To get in touch with each other, to meet, and to get to know the different people and FII projects around the world.
- Not just tech-talks, contents and presentations, but also to seed a „World Spanning Social Network“ of activists
- Only the growing social networks enable us to expand FII in larger scales – locally and globally.
- The course includes spreading knowledge, learning and making friends in other regions in your country, your continent, in the world and to work together globally



The physical Layer becomes part of the commons

Like Free Open Source Software (e.g. LINUX, OpenOffice.org) and free content (e.g. Wikipedia, FDL-/CreativeCommons-Works) today free communications infrastructures (the physical layer) are also becoming a part of and many times also a prerequisite to the digital commons.



OHI – Initiating the Shift from OpenSoftware to OpenHardware

“To keep and expand the space of publicly available knowledge and digital tools, it is a necessity, that not just software, but also the hardware and the networks are free and open.”

Prof. Dr. Eben Moglen, Consultant of the Free Software Foundation

OHI – Pioneering a new approach to business

Conventional business approaches are based on proprietary technologies and pre-ordained obsolescence. We believe that this model is already obsolete and look now towards the creation of synergies through P2P business models, using huge groups of user innovators. With their market channels, the price of the hardware can be significantly reduced.

The key to this business model's success is encouraging local actors to “buy into” an open solution where they have the power to implement their own solutions, train local people to develop and support the hardware, and build completely new and unique solutions.

OHI – Opening up new market places

Original equipment manufacturers (OEM) have not even scratched the surface of the potential markets in emerging economies and they seem to have little knowledge on how to more rapidly tap into these markets and either increase sales or satisfy Corporate Social Responsibility commitments.

Through support of bottom-up economies and markets in developing countries, OEMs can increase their market. It goes without saying that this is subject to the effective use of 'economies of scale' approaches, the incorporation of disruptive technologies and approaches and special attention to the need to re-think and re-design the traditional channels of distribution. OpenHardware will absolutely be key to this approach.

OHI – moving step by step

Opening up the hardware may have many caveats and due to its physical nature bears high financial risks. This has to be taken into respect!

On the other hand: the long term motivation of OpenSource community and developers to support such projects will always depend on the degree of openness, that the manufacturer will be willing to provide.

There will be no quick shots and sustainability will have to be taken into account when switching to OS models.

This needs to be discussed carefully!

OHI wants to thank everyone who has helped to start this process here in Taiwan!

Special thanks to ASUS, the main sponsor of this event and also to Intel for their engagement as well as to The Association of Digital Culture Taiwan.

Peoplewise the biggest thanks go to our volunteers Marek, Wesley, Wendy and the numerous other helping hands who gave us such a warm welcome, pleasant stay and excellent organisation here.

Personally I want to thank Joy Tang who has been the good magic wisdom for me to start all this.

Thanks to every single one of you all for being here today!

The discourse has started. Let's move and make it real - together!