

> OPEN XML

'Let market decide on technology'

PUTRAJAYA: Malaysia abstained from voting for Microsoft's Open Office XML (Open XML) as an ISO standard on the "technology-neutral" principle, the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry has said.

This means that it is not against the proposed standard, but would rather let the market decide on which technology meets its needs, minister Datuk Seri Dr Jamaludin Jarjis said in a statement.

His statement was in response to a report that the ministry does not support Open XML as an ISO 9001:2000 standard.

Open XML is a document format, or a set of specifications, which supports its respective software.

Jamaludin said abstaining from voting meant that the Open XML would need to go through a more rigorous standardisation process.

A review will be held in February.

ISO member countries will then look at proposals for re-evaluation, and the proposer of Open XML can resubmit its application to be published as a standard.

"By abstaining, it does not mean that Malaysia agrees or



Datuk Seri Dr Jamaludin Jarjis is not against the format

disagrees with the new proposed standard, but that at the moment it is too premature to make a concrete decision based on vague and unclear information."

He said the government consulted key ministries, agencies and industries before reaching its decision to abstain from voting.

Another reason cited for abstaining was concerns over the format voiced by the market and industry.

Seventeen countries voted to approve, nine abstained, while 15 voted against approval, including several European Union countries and three of the Group of Five countries.