

# Standardisation experiences from Knowledge Representation

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# Semantic Web

- Semantic Web  $\approx$ 
  - web-exchange of machine-readable knowledge
  - requires a standardised representation
- Situation at end of 90's:
  - Desire for standardisation (W3C, industry)
  - Clear use-case (World Wide Web)
  - 40 years of research on foundations
  - Two leading academic candidates:
    - OIL (EU), DAML (US)



# Experience from OWL

- Standards are lots of work:
  - OWL = 3.5 yrs, 8500 emails, 100 teleconfs, 10 meetings
- Don't let academics drive standardisation (They thrive on divergence)
  - OWL = 55 members, 75% industrial
- Not only syntax (notation), also semantics (meaning)
- Start only if there is a consensus in the field:
  - SGML → XML
  - DAML+OIL → OWL
  - Standardisation should be .... booooring



# For medical protocols?

- There is no (near) consensus
- There is no industry pressure
- It's not (yet) academically “booooring”
- Anybody willing to do the work?

## Conclusion...

- Avoid premature standardisation
- At best: aim for
  - Common core
  - Interoperability
  - Understanding the trade-offs





The best thing about standards is  
that there are so many to choose from

