



15 Years Ago, Sony Joined 5 Enterprise Companies to Fund a Big Idea: Today Sony Reflects on Its Decision.

A One-on-One Interview with Peter Toto, Senior Vice President & IP Counsel, Sony

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Q: WHY DID SONY JOIN OIN?

A: Sony joined OIN over 15 years ago when there were strong proprietary Operating Systems (OS), notably Microsoft's Windows that were well protected from Intellectual Property issues. At the same time, Linux was gaining momentum, but didn't have a protector of Open Source. OIN was formed to be a guardian of Open Source from a patent perspective and Sony wanted to be part of OIN's community.

Q: DO YOU THINK THE ORIGINAL IDEA OF OIN HAS BENEFITED SONY?

A: The 1st and easiest benefit to see is the lack of patent confrontations we've experienced in Open Source. I've been with Sony since it joined OIN and can't think of any business-affecting events we've had around patents being asserted in the Open Source space. I attribute much of that to Open Invention Network. Also, being a part of OIN gives us some credibility in the Open Source space as a serious player. We founded the Consumer Electronics Linux Forum, we were on the ground floor of the Academy Software Foundation with the Linux Foundation, now we're on their Board, we're a Platinum Member and certified with OpenChain. I think all this activity around Open Source has been greatly facilitated by our OIN membership.

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY PEARLS OF WISDOM FOR COMPANIES THAT MIGHT BE THINKING ABOUT JOINING OIN?

A: Why not? In life there are few things that are free, and this is one of them. If you are a well-meaning company that uses Open Source in any aspect of your business, or plans to, joining is one of the simplest decisions you can make to access a cross-license of millions of patents and join this community of Open Source forward-looking companies. All companies have learned that collaboration is the key to success and to collaborate, Open Source is the best platform. It's a rare company that wouldn't benefit from participating in OIN, accessing the fantastic cross-license and being able to tap into OIN's resources for patent issues.