

OASIS Committee Note

OpenC2 Actuator Profile Development Process Version 1.0

Committee Note 01

17 January 2024

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Related work:

This document is related to:

- Open Command and Control (OpenC2) Architecture Specification Version 1.0. Edited by Duncan Sparrell. 30 September 2022. OASIS Committee Specification 01. <u>https://docs.oasis-open.org/openc2/oc2arch/v1.0/oc2arch-v1.0.html</u>.
- Open Command and Control (OpenC2) Language Specification Version 1.0. Edited by Jason Romano and Duncan Sparrell. 24 November 2019. OASIS Committee Specification 02. <u>https://docs.oasis-open.org/openc2/oc2ls/v1.0/oc2ls-v1.0.html</u>.
- JSON Abstract Data Notation Version 1.0. Edited by David Kemp. 17 August 2021. OASIS Committee Specification 01. <u>https://docs.oasis-open.org/openc2/jadn/v1.0/jadn-v1.0.html</u>.

Abstract:

Open Command and Control (OpenC2) is a concise and extensible language to enable machine-to-machine communications for purposes of command and control of cyber defense components in a manner that is agnostic of the underlying products, technologies, transport mechanisms or other aspects of the implementation. OpenC2 Actuator Profiles (APs) specify the subset of the OpenC2 language relevant in the context of specific actuator functions. A profile refines the meaning of language elements used to perform the actuator function, and often defines additional elements that are relevant and/or unique to that function. This Committee Note describes the TC's process for using the JSON Abstract Data Notation (JADN) information modeling language in the development of APs, resulting in a rigorous schema for an AP properly integrated with the base OpenC2 language.

Status:

This is a Non-Standards Track Work Product. The patent provisions of the OASIS IPR Policy do not apply.

This document was last revised or approved by the OASIS Open Command and Control (OpenC2) TC on the above date. The level of approval is also listed above. Check the "Latest stage" location noted above for possible later revisions of this document. Any other numbered Versions and other technical work produced by the Technical Committee (TC) are listed at https://www.oasis-open.org/committees/tc home.php?wg_abbrev=openc2#technical.

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Notices

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1 Introduction

This document is non-normative in its entirety.

1.1 Purpose

This OASIS Committee Note (CN) describes a process for developing OpenC2 Actuator Profiles (APs), including the use of the JSON Abstract Data Notation (JADN) information modeling language in the development of APs. The process described here results in an AP design and specification that aligns to the relevant use cases and an associated rigorous JADN schema that binds the AP to the OpenC2 language.

1.2 Glossary

1.2.1 Definitions of terms

- Action: The task or activity to be performed (e.g., 'deny').
- Actuator: The Consumer that executes the Command.
- Actuator Profile: The document that defines a category of operations performed by an Actuator (e.g., 'Stateless Packet Filtering').
- Argument: A property of a Command that provides additional information on how to perform the Command, such as date/time, periodicity, duration, etc.
- **Command**: A Message defined by an Action-Target pair that is sent from a Producer and received by a Consumer.
- **Consumer**: A managed device / application that receives Commands. Note that a single device / application can have both Consumer and Producer capabilities.
- Information Modeling: A process to understand and document the essential information content relevant to a
 system, application, or protocol exchange without regard to how that information is represented in actual
 implementations.
- Message: A content- and transport-independent set of elements conveyed between Consumers and Producers.
- Producer: A manager application that sends Commands.
- **Request**: A Message from a Producer to a Consumer used to convey a Command.
- **Response**: A Message from a Consumer to a Producer acknowledging a Command or returning the requested resources or status to a previously received Command.
- Specifier: A property or field that identifies a Target to some level of precision.
- Target: The object of the Action, i.e., the Action is performed on the Target (e.g., IP Address).

1.2.2 Acronyms and abbreviations

Acronym	Description
AP	Actuator Profile
IM	Information Modeling
JADN	JSON Object Data Notation
JSON	JavaScript Object Notation

Acronym	Description
LS	Language Specification
OASIS	Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards
OpenC2	Open Command and Control
TC	Technical Committee
UML	Unified Modeling Language

1.2.3 Document conventions

- Naming conventions
- Font colors and styles
- Typographic conventions

1.3 Background

This section provides background information on OpenC2, JADN, and the role of actuator profiles (APs) to provide a context for the process described in sections 2 and 3.

1.3.1 Open Command and Control (OpenC2)

OpenC2 is a suite of specifications that enables command and control of cyber defense systems and components. OpenC2 typically uses a request-response paradigm where a *Command* is encoded by a *Producer* (managing application) and transferred to a *Consumer* (managed device or virtualized function) using a secure transfer protocol, and the Consumer can respond with status and any requested information. This request / response paradigm is illustrated in Figure 1-1.

Figure 1-1: OpenC2 Request / Response Paradigm



OpenC2 allows the application producing the commands to discover the set of capabilities supported by the managed devices (i.e., an introspection capability). This capability permits the managing application to adjust its behavior to take advantage of the features exposed by the managed device. The capability definitions can be easily extended in a noncentralized manner, allowing standard and non-standard capabilities to be defined with semantic and syntactic rigor.

OpenC2's approach to automating cybersecurity command and control is described in the OpenC2 Architecture Specification [OpenC2-Arch-v1.0]. The specifics of the OpenC2 language are defined in the OpenC2 Language Specification [OpenC2-Lang-v1.0].

1.3.2 JSON Abstract Data Notation (JADN)

JSON Abstract Data Notation (JADN) is a UML-based information modeling language that defines data structure independently of data format. Information models are used to define and generate physical data models, validate information instances, and enable lossless translation across data formats. A JADN specification consists of two parts: type definitions that comprise the information model, and serialization rules that define how information instances are represented as data. The information model is itself an information instance that can be serialized and transferred between applications. The model is documented using a compact and expressive interface definition language, property tables, or entity relationship diagrams, easing integration with existing design processes and architecture tools.

The OpenC2 TC has published a *JADN Specification* [<u>JADN-v1.0</u>], and a companion CN describing the use of JADN in Information Modeling (IM) [<u>IM-JADN-v1.0</u>].

1.3.3 OpenC2 Actuator Profiles

As described in the *OpenC2 Architecture Specification*, APs serve the purpose of scoping the general purpose OpenC2 language to the C2 of a particular cyberdefense function:

OpenC2 Actuator Profiles specify the subset of the OpenC2 language relevant in the context of specific actuator functions. Cyber defense components, devices, systems and/or instances may (in fact are likely to) implement multiple profiles. A profile refines the meaning of language elements (actions, targets, command arguments, results) used to perform the actuator function, and often defines additional elements that are relevant and/or unique to that function.

The goal of this CN is to document a well-formed approach to developing APs that takes advantage of the rigor provided by applying JADN information modeling to the process.

2 AP Development Process Overview

This section describes the standard structure of an OpenC2 AP and provides an overview of the development process that will be detailed in <u>Section 3</u>.

2.1 AP Specification Structure

OpenC2 APs employ a common structure to ensure consistent inclusion of the essential content. As APs are published as OASIS Specifications, the structure also incorporates standard document elements defined by OASIS. As specified in the *OpenC2 Language Specification*, an AP *may* extend the OpenC2 language by defining extension targets, arguments, and specifiers needed to support the function the AP is addressing, but *may not* define actions beyond those contained in the LS.

The focus of the process described in this CN is to identify and refine the specific actions, targets, arguments, specifiers, and supporting data types needed for the AP, to illustrate their use with example message content, and to formally define that in a schema using the JADN information modeling language.

- Body
 - 1: Introduction (including Glossary, Acronyms and Abbreviation, Overview, Purpose and Scope)
 - 2: OpenC2 Language Binding
 - 2.1: OpenC2 Command Components
 - 2.1.1: Actions -- identifies the actions relevant for this AP
 - 2.1.2: Targets -- identifies the targets relevant for this AP, including extension targets
 - 2.1.3: Type Definitions -- identifies extension types relevant for this AP targets
 - 2.1.4: Command Arguments
 - 2.1.5: Actuator Specifiers
 - 2.2: OpenC2 Response Components
 - 2.3: OpenC2 Commands -- defines the valid Action / Target pairs for this AP
 - 2.3.x -- describes each valid command and the expected behavior
 - · 3: Conformance -- defines requirements for claiming conformance to this AP
- Annex A: JADN Schema -- identifies the JADN schema files defining the normative schema for this AP. The schema file(s) are normative, per OASIS conventions, and take precedence over the text in the AP specification. The schema(s) are linked in an *Annex* to support potential adoption of the AP as an ITO-T Recommendation (Annexes are normative in ITU-T Recommendations, Appendices are non-normative).
- Appendices
 - Appendix A: References
 - Appendix B: Safety, Security, and Privacy Considerations
 - Appendix C: Acknowledgements
 - Appendix D: Revision History
 - Appendix E: Message Examples
 - Appendix F: Notices
- Associated schema files (packaged separately, linked from Annex A)

2.2 Process Steps

Figure 2-1 illustrates a process for the development of an Actuator Profile (AP) based on defining use cases, prototopying messages, and formalizing that material in a JADN information model. The process assumes a degree of iteration toward completion and its execution does not need to be strictly linear.

Note: inital draft graphic, to be refined as document develops

Figure 2-1: Actuator Profile Development Process



- 1. **AP Development Initiation:** Identify the need, define the scope, receive TC approval, request a starter document, establish a work environment.
- 2. Develop AP Content: a development loop for creating the AP,

A) Develop Use Cases: Identify use case(s) for control of cyber defense function for the AP.

B) **Develop Example Messages:** Develop example messages to implement the defined use case(s), and capture in the Examples appendix.

C) **Develop JADN Schema:** Develop the JADN information model specifying the types needed to create and validate the example messages.

- D) Link JADN Schema: Link to the JADN schema file(s) from Annex A.
- E) Create Property Tables: Use JADN tooling to generate property tables from the JADN schema.

F) **Insert Property Tables and Associated Text:** Add the property tables for the schema to the body of the AP specification, and develop corresponding text content.

- 3. Interate To Completion: As the AP matures the initial use case(s) can be refined and additional use cases can be defined and integrated as described in Step 2.
- 4. **Develop Final Example Messages from JADN Schema:** The example message content included in the AP should be finalized based on the JADN schema to ensure the messages are valid and conform to the schema.
- 5. **Define Conformance Requirements:** All OASIS specifications are required to include <u>conformance</u> <u>requirements</u>.
- 6. **Review, Approval, and Publication:** All OASIS specifications are required to follow the standard approval process, including <u>public review</u> prior to <u>final TC approval</u>.

3 AP Development Process Walkthrough

3.1 AP Development Initiation

The OpenC2 TC follows OASIS processes for the initiation of new work items. The details of the TC's process are captured in <u>Section 4 of the TC's Documentation Norms</u>. Editors of Actuator Profiles should review the TC's development process and use of GitHub and other tools.

3.2 Develop Use Cases

A primary activity in developing an AP is to identify the cyber defense function(s) to be invoked and document the specifics. Use cases are employed to structure this information. An OpenC2 AP use case will typically describe the following:

- The **OpenC2 Request** (i.e., command)
 - The Actuator function to be invoked
 - The OpenC2 Action employed to invoke the functions
 - The Target of the Action
 - A Target can be selected from the targets defined in the OpenC2 Language Specification
 - OpenC2 APs can define AP-specific Targets as extensions if a suitable target does not exist in the base set
 - Additional parameters needed for the command
 - Parameters can be selected from those defined in the OpenC2 Language Specification
 - OpenC2 APs can define AP-specific data types as extensions in order to enumerate all of the information necessary to completely define the meaning and scope of the command
- The Actuator Behavior describing the activities to be performed by the Actuator on receipt of the Request and the information expected to be returned
- The OpenC2 Response
 - The data types and structures appropriate for responding to this Request
 - Data types can be selected from those defined in the OpenC2 Language Specification
 - OpenC2 APs can define AP-specific data types as extensions in order to enumerate all of the information necessary to completely define the information to be returned in the response

Use case development often uncovers unanticipated needs for additional functions or information types. The quantity of use cases needed for an AP varies with the complexity of the Actuator being profiled.

3.3 Develop Example Messages

Each use case should be supported by one or more Request / Response pairs that illustrate the message content needed to carry out the use case. Depending on the level of flexibility allowed by parameters defined for the Request and range of data types potentially returned in a Reponse, multiple Request / Response pairs may be needed to fully explore the implementation of a use case.

To provide specificity, example messages should be written out completely. This is typically done by writing JSON code for each Request and the associated Response, providing example values for the parameters and return data. As with use cases, the development of example messages often uncovers unanticipated needs for additional functions or information types, or may lead to the identification of additional use cases.

3.4 Develop JADN Schema

Describing use cases and then developing example messages to implement them are steps toward documenting the actuator interactions with increasing precision. Developing a JADN schema for the example messages represents the next step in specificity, defining the information model specifying the content of acuator requests and responses in precise terms, using a well-defined set of information types.

As a simple example, consider developing an initial use case for an actuator profile for IP packet filtering. At the use case level, an example use case might state: "the packet filter needs to be able to block traffic from a collection of network addresses specified as a CIDR block."

To develop example messages, the dimensions of the use case need to be defined in more specific terms:

- What is the OpenC2 Action appropriate for blocking traffic?
- What OpenC2 Target is used to specify a CIDR block?
- What is the OpenC2 syntax for describing a CIDR block?
- Should the ability to block include both IPv4 and IPv6 addresses?

Reviewing the needs defined in the use case against the *OpenC2 Language Specification* provides specifics that help in creating example messages:

- The deny Action is appropriate for blocking IP traffic
- The ipv4 net and ipv6 net Targets are used to specify CIDR blocks

With the information from the Language Specification, the formulation of an example command in JSON syntax is straightforward:

NOTE: confirm that the syntax in this example is correct; should the IPv4-Net array use square brackets? [...]

```
{
    "action": "deny",
    "target": {
        "ipv4_net": {"1.2.3.0", 24}
    },
}
```

Having defined the command, the next step is to consider the possible responses from the actuator: what are the success and failure possibilities in response to this deny command? What information should the actuator provide back to the command Producer? The OpenC2 response message provides for a numeric status code (based on the HTTP response code set), an optional human-readable status message, and an optional results field that, if used, needs to be defined in the actuator profile. For this command, a success or failure indication can be provided using the status code and, perhaps, explanatory information regarding a failure could be defined for the status message. Since it is typical for packet filters to apply rules based on some priority order, a useful return value might be the rule number assigned to the new deny setting. This might lead, in turn, to additional use cases, such as the removal of a rule by specfying its number.

Finally, the JADN information model to support the content developed in the example messages should be documented. In this case, the majority of the model is simply a subset of the *OpenC2 Language Specification*'s JADN model, but an additional data type must be defined for the rule number information in the response message.

NOTE: insert JADN content here for basic message example

3.5 Link JADN Schema

NOTE: need to look at emails from TC-ADMIN with some guidance details on naming, linking, namespaces, ets.

The JADN Schema is a formal part of the AP and the normative definition of the associated data types and structures. As discussed in <u>Section 2.1</u> Annex A is used to establish the linkage between the AP specification document and the JADN schema file(s). Per OASIS TC Procedures:

- All normative definitions must also be provided in separate plain text files;
- · Each text file must be referenced from the Work Product; and
- Where any definition in these separate files disagrees with the definition found in the specification documentation, the definition in the separate file prevails.

([OASIS-TC-Proc], Section 2.2.5).

All JADN files that are part of the schema must be named in accordance with OASIS naming conventions (<u>OASIS-Names</u>), identified in the front matter under Additional Artifacts and Declared JADN Namespaces, listed in Annex A of the AP specification, and included in the package of files for the AP when submitted to OASIS for approval or publication.

The OpenC2 convention for APs is to identify the JADN schema (i.e., the JSON data representation in a separate file) as the normative schema, and present the JIDL version in an Appendix to provide a readily human-readable presentation of the schema in the AP specification document.

3.6 Create Property Tables

To create readable, structured documentation of the types defined for the profile, the JADN schema is processed via automated tooling to create a property tables representation. These tables are integrated into Sections 2.1 and 2.2 of the AP document to identify the various data structures and types used in the profile. As described in section 3.1.4 of [OpenC2-Lang-v1.0], the specification of extensions in an AP to fit the needs of a particular cyberdefense function are anticipated and supported by the OpenC2 language. These extensions are defined in the profile's JADN schema and documented in the specification using property tables.

The fields of a property table vary with the needs of the data type being described but will include an appropriate subset of the following:

- **ID:** an integer identifier for a field in a compound type
- Name: the name of the type or field being defined
- Type: the data type for the type or field being defined
- #: a field to define the cardinality requirements of type or field being defined
- **Description:** a description of the purpose of the type or field being defined

All of these fields are normative except for the Description field and their meanings are as defined in the [JADN-v1.0] specification.

3.7 Develop Specification Text

Descriptive text is needed to complement the JADN schema and property tables. The text should provide details (e.g., usage requirements) regarding the extensions defined in the AP. Section 2.3.x should walk through the commands defined in the profile, describing the expected processing associated with each command and any specific requirements associated with Responses to particular commands. This content is typically organized to present each OpenC2 Action included in the profile and discuss the handling of each valid target for that action.

3.8 Iterate To Completion

The development of a profile is typically iterative as additional use cases and revised or additional data types are uncovered. This is also consistent with the TC's <u>"Agile" document development concept</u> under which content is developed over time, with frequent publication of <u>Committee Specification Drafts (CSDs</u>) to codify and document TC acceptance of content developed to-date.

3.9 Develop Final Example Messages from JADN Schema

As described in <u>Section 3.3</u>, developing example OpenC2 Command and Response messages is a useful technique for clarifying the capabilities needed for the profile. Example messages often identify types needed, which are then codified in the profile's JADN schema. It is common as the profile content evolves that changes are made to the schema such that the example messages developed earlier in the process may no longer align with the schema. To ensure consistency those examples should be validated against the final schema version and, if necessary, updated example messages produced that are consistent with the final schema.

3.10 Define Conformance Requirements

All OASIS specifications require a conformance section, consisting of <u>conformance clauses</u>. The editor of the profile must determine how to organize the conformance clauses, which are a logical extension of the conformance clauses contained in [OpenC2-Lang-v1.0].

OASIS has published guidance on developing conformance requirements [OASIS-Conformance].

A primary concern for the editor of a profile is to define logical groupings of conformance clauses against the requirements of the profile to form "conformance targets", which can serve to organize and simplify the conformance section of the specification.

3.11 Review, Approval, and Publication

When the Actuator Profile specification is deemed complete, its approval is governed by the [OASIS TC Process] requirements for public review and approval of a Committee Specification. The OpenC2 TC has documented its approach to handling public review comments and publishing the approved Committee Specification.

Appendix A. Informative References

This appendix contains the informative references that are used in this document.

While any hyperlinks included in this appendix were valid at the time of publication, OASIS cannot guarantee their long-term validity.

(Reference sources: For references to IETF RFCs, use the approved citation formats at: <u>https://docs.oasis-open.org/templates/ietf-rfc-list/ietf-rfc-list.html</u>. For references to W3C Recommendations, use the approved citation formats at: <u>https://docs.oasis-open.org/templates/w3c-recommendations-list/w3c-recommendations-list.html</u>. Remove this note before submitting for publication.)

[IM-JADN-v1.0]

Information Modeling with JADN Version 1.0. Edited by David Kemp. 19 April 2023. OASIS Committee Note 01. https://docs.oasis-open.org/openc2/imjadn/v1.0/cn01/imjadn-v1.0-cn01.html. Latest stage: https://docs.oasis-open.org/openc2/imjadn/v1.0/imjadn-v1.0.html.

[JADN-v1.0]

JSON Abstract Data Notation Version 1.0. Edited by David Kemp. 17 August 2021. OASIS Committee Specification 01. <u>https://docs.oasis-open.org/openc2/jadn/v1.0/cs01/jadn-v1.0-cs01.html</u>. Latest stage: <u>https://docs.oasis-open.org/openc2/jadn/v1.0.html</u>.

[OASIS-Conformance]

Guidelines to Writing Conformance Clauses for OASIS Specifications, 01 April 2018, <u>https://docs.oasis-open.org/templates/TCHandbook/ConformanceGuidelines.html</u>

[OASIS-Names]

OASIS Naming Directives, 13 February 2020, https://docs.oasis-open.org/specGuidelines/ndr/namingDirectives.html

[OASIS-TC-Proc]

Technical Committee Process, 01 December 2020, https://www.oasis-open.org/policies-guidelines/tc-process-2017-05-26/

[OpenC2-Arch-v1.0]

Open Command and Control (OpenC2) Architecture Specification Version 1.0. Edited by Duncan Sparrell. 30 September 2022. OASIS Committee Specification 01. <u>https://docs.oasis-open.org/openc2/oc2arch/v1.0/cs01/oc2arch-v1.0.html</u>. Latest stage: <u>https://docs.oasis-open.org/openc2/oc2arch/v1.0/cs2arch-v1.0.html</u>.

[OpenC2-Lang-v1.0]

Open Command and Control (OpenC2) Language Specification Version 1.0. Edited by Jason Romano and Duncan Sparrell. 24 November 2019. OASIS Committee Specification 02. <u>https://docs.oasis-open.org/openc2/oc2ls/v1.0/cs02/oc2ls-v1.0-cs02.html</u>. Latest version: <u>https://docs.oasis-open.org/openc2/oc2ls/v1.0/oc2ls-v1.0.html</u>.

[OpenC2-HTTPS-v1.0]

Specification for Transfer of OpenC2 Messages via HTTPS Version 1.0. Edited by David Lemire. Latest stage: http://docs.oasis-open.org/openc2/open-impl-https/v1.0/open-impl-https-v1.0.html

[OpenC2-SLPF-v1.0]

Open Command and Control (OpenC2) Profile for Stateless Packet Filtering Version 1.0. Edited by Joe Brule, Duncan Sparrell, and Alex Everett. Latest stage: <u>http://docs.oasis-open.org/openc2/oc2slpf/v1.0/oc2slpf-v1.0.html</u>

Appendix B. Acknowledgments

(Note: A Work Product approved by the TC must include a list of people who participated in the development of the Work Product. This is generally done by collecting the list of names in this appendix. This list shall be initially compiled by the Chair, and any Member of the TC may add or remove their names from the list by request. Remove this note before submitting for publication.)

B.1 Special Thanks

Substantial contributions to this document from the following individuals are gratefully acknowledged:

Participant Name, Affiliation or "Individual Member"

B.2 Participants

The following individuals were members of the TC during the creation of this document, and are gratefully acknowledged:

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Chris	Ricard	Financial Services Information Sharing and Analysis Center (FS-ISAC)			
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Aleksandra	Scalco	US Department of Defense (DoD)			
Randall	Sharo	US Department of Defense (DoD)			
Michael	Simonson	Cisco Systems			
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Appendix C. Revision History

Revision	Date	Editor	Changes Made
filename-v1.0-wd01	yyyy-mm-dd	Editor Name	Initial working draft

Appendix D. Notices

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