



UBL Update

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[http://
oasis-open.org/
committees/
ubl](http://oasis-open.org/committees/ubl)



OASIS

The Universal Business Language (UBL)

- International effort to define a royalty-free library of standard electronic business documents
- Designed in an open and accountable vendor-neutral OASIS Technical Committee with participation from a variety of industry data standards organizations
- Plugs directly into existing business, legal, auditing, and records management practices with minimum disruption
- Eliminates re-keying of data in existing fax- and paper-based supply chains
- Fills the “payload” slot in B2B web services frameworks
- Maintains close alignment with existing EDI systems
- Presents vendors with a standard target for cheap off-the-shelf business software



UBL 1.0: the “Fifth Generation” B2B language

G1 (1Q 1998): CBL 1.0 (Veo/NIST)

G2 (2Q 1999): CBL 2.0 (Commerce One)

G3 (4Q 2000): xCBL 3.0 (Commerce One and SAP)

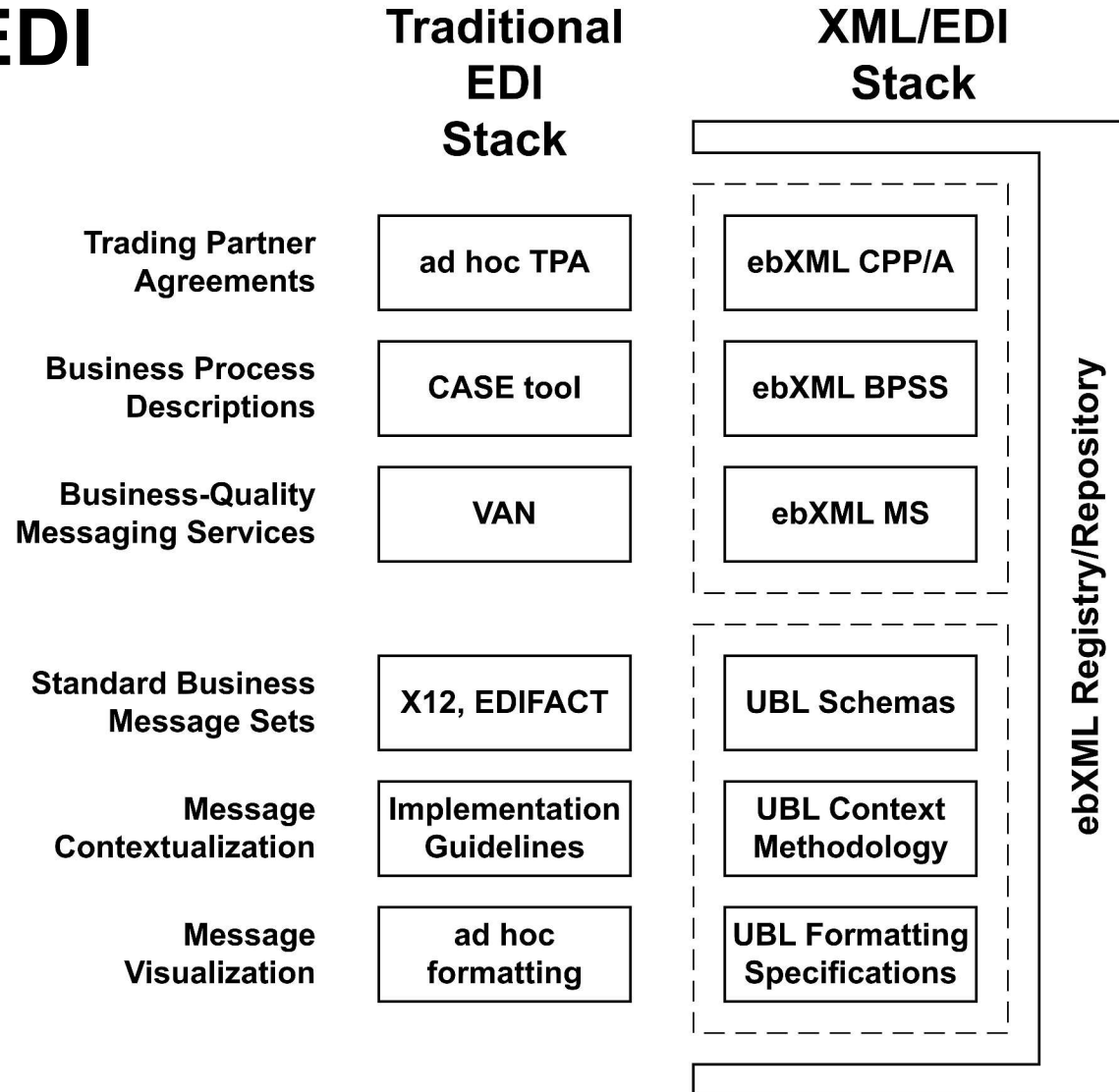
G4 (1Q 2003): UBL 0.7 (OASIS)

G5 (4Q 2004): UBL 1.0 (OASIS)

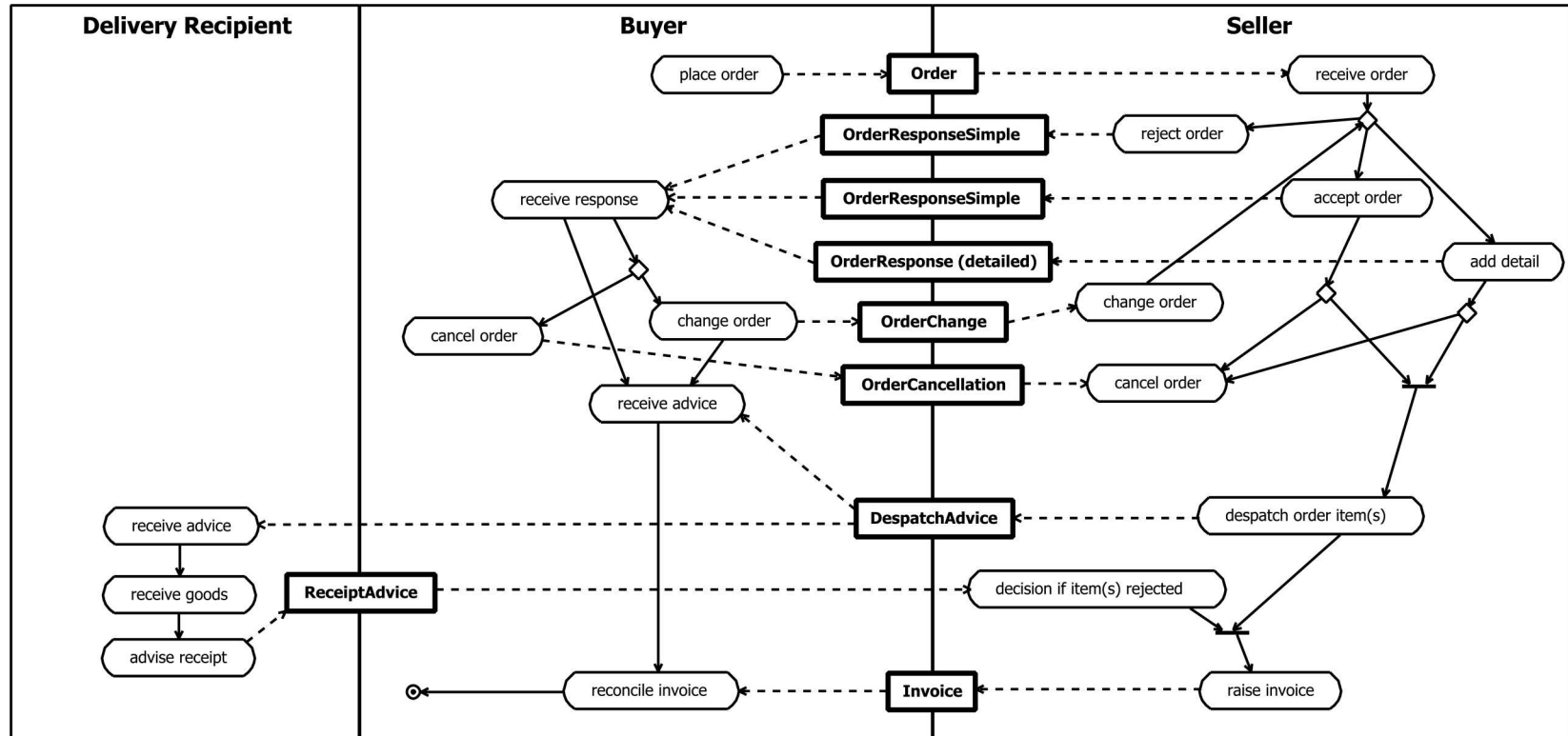
UBL represents over six years of continuous development in the creation of a standard XML business syntax.



XML EDI



UBL order-to-invoice



This model describes a very large class of use cases.



Recent developments

- UBL 1.0 ratified as **OASIS Standard** (November 2004)
- UBL 1.0 Naming and Design Rules ratified as **OASIS Standard** (January 2005)
- UBL 1.0 International Data Dictionary released as an **OASIS Committee Draft** (April 2005), enables deployment in Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Spanish
- Free stylesheets and UBL formatter provide bridge to paper form
- UBL Naming and Design Rules (NDR) adopted by major industries: chemicals (CIDX), petroleum (PIDX), agriculture (RAPID), real estate (OSCRE/PISCES), U.S. Department of the Navy (DON)
- UBL Invoice required for all public sector invoices in Denmark (February 2005)
 - Estimated annual savings 94 million Euros (117 million USD)
 - If the UBL Purchase Order is implemented, annual savings are estimated at 160 million Euros (199 million USD)
 - Over one million invoices exchanged in first two months of operation
- HISC and SBSC formed to develop Small Business Subset
 - Provides standard input forms and “starter kit” for inclusion in XML products



Next step: UBL 1.1

Work now continues on an update due out by the end of 2005.

UBL 1.1 will include:

- Resolution of a number of issues raised during the development of UBL 1.0 that were judged safely deferrable to 1.1
- Refinements and clarifications of the UBL data definitions arising from the translation work
- Additions to the UBL library identified by the UBL localization subcommittees as required to accommodate regional business practices; example: ECALGA (Japan)
- Additions to the UBL document set submitted by qualified organizations (Example: Certificate of Origin)
- Additional support for taxation requirements from the OASIS Tax XML TC
- Extensions to the UBL procurement model proposed by IDA (EC) and OGC (UK) to implement a common European government eprocurement process; result will provide document types for pre-ordering phase (catalogue, request for quotation, quotation) and post-ordering phase (credit note, debit note, statement, remittance advice)



Challenges

- All the usual stuff (getting people interested, keeping on schedule, etc.)
 - Hard to see how this could succeed without an (almost) full-time chair
- Lack of commitment to the majority rule decision-making process
- Secretarial support (site maintenance, calendar, issues tracking...)
 - Root of the problem: it takes a subject-matter expert to do this properly
- Versioning and naming
 - No coherent OASIS process that addresses all the hard bits
 - Takes a lot of thought that no one has time for
 - Inability to construct a sensible file tree makes this harder than it has to be
 - Possible solution: OASIS Librarian
- Meeting logistics in an international context (see next slide)



International meeting logistics

- F2F meetings will become increasingly difficult as travel becomes more expensive; this model of standards work probably doesn't have more than another 2-3 years
- Solution #1: phone conferences
 - Problem: scheduling
 - Solution: Split meetings
 - Atlantic call: 08h00 in San Francisco, 17h00 in Brussels
 - Pacific call: 16h30 in San Francisco, 08h30 in Beijing
 - Cost: Communication and coordination overhead
 - Short-term ad hoc work groups can help with this
 - Problem: audibility
 - Solution: Wireless microphones
 - Challenge: No community adoption, no standards
 - Proposal: An OASIS TC to address this
- Solution #2: regional work groups
 - SC membership independent of TC membership will be a big help
 - We need to develop community norms around this approach



For more information

UBL: <http://oasis-open.org>

UBL 1.0: <http://docs.oasis-open.org/ubl/cd-UBL-1.0.zip>

UBL 1.0 Naming and Design Rules: <http://www.oasis-open.org/committees/download.php/9943/cd-UBL-NDR-1.0Rev1b.pdf>

UBL 1.0 International Data Dictionary: <http://www.oasis-open.org/committees/download.php/12205/cd-UBL-1.0-IDD-1.xsc>

UBL UN Layout Key stylesheets: <http://www.cranesoftwrights.com/u/>

UBL/Layout Key Transformer: <http://www.ambrosoft.com/>

ubl-dev: <http://www.oasis-open.org/mlmanage/>

ebXML: <http://ebxml.org>

freebXML: <http://www.freebxml.org>

OpenOffice: <http://openoffice.org>

xmlroff: <http://xmlroff.sourceforge.net/>

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