

ebXML Sets Standard for Electronic Trading Partner Agreements

Boston, MA, USA and Geneva, Switzerland;

September 5, 2000 ebXML, a joint initiative of the United Nations/CEFACT and OASIS, announced plans to standardize electronic contracts and trading partnerships using XML. The newly formed ebXML Trading-Partners Project Team will develop a specification to define the technical parameters of trading partner profiles and agreements (TPA). The Trading-Partners team will complement other ebXML project teams working to develop an open XML-based infrastructure that will enable business information to be exchanged consistently on a global basis.

Standardizing on a specification for the electronic trading partner agreement is essential to widespread e-commerce, said Klaus-Dieter Naujok of NextERA Interactive, chair of ebXML and member of the UN/CEFACT Steering Committee. TPAs capture critical information upon which organizations must agree in order for their applications and business processes to communicate. TPA will be a key element for interoperability among B2B server implementations.

Martin W. Sachs of IBM, leader of the ebXML Trading-Partners Project Team, defines an electronic TPA as an XML document that records specific technology parameters for conducting electronic business. Partner identification, communications protocol, security for message exchanges (including encryption, authentication, and non-repudiation), definition of requests and responses are all part of a typical TPA.

Much of the new project team's initial focus will be based on previously proposed OASIS technical work surrounding tpaML (the Trading Partners Agreement Markup Language). tpaML was originally developed by IBM.

OASIS recognizes the expediency of continuing its tpaML development within the ebXML framework, explained IBM's Robert S. Sutor, Ph.D., Vice Chair of ebXML and Chair of the OASIS Board of Directors. ebXML and tpaML are a natural

fit. Accomplishments of other ebXML project teams will directly feed into the TPA effort, and the final outcome will be an integrated, interoperable set of ebXML standards.

Participation in ebXML is open and representatives from all industries are invited to contribute to the development of the initiative.

About ebXML

The Electronic Business XML Initiative (www.ebxml.org [1]) is a worldwide project to standardize the exchange of electronic business data. Sponsored by the UN/CEFACT and OASIS, ebXML will lower the barrier-of-entry to electronic business and facilitate trade, particularly for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and developing nations. ebXML is supported by hundreds of industry consortia, standards bodies and companies from around the world.

About UN/CEFACT

UN/CEFACT (www.uncefact.org [2]) is the United Nations body whose mandate covers worldwide policy and technical development in the area of trade facilitation and electronic business. Headquartered in Geneva, it has developed and promoted many tools for the facilitation of global business processes including UN/EDIFACT, the international EDI standard. Its current work programme includes such topics as Simpl-edi and Object Oriented EDI and it strongly supports the development and implementation of open, interoperable global standards and specifications for electronic business.

About OASIS

OASIS (<http://www.oasis-open.org> [3]) is the world's largest independent, non-profit organization dedicated to the standardization of XML applications. OASIS sponsors include Adobe Systems, Aerospatiale, AND Data Solutions, Arbortext, Auto-trol Technology, B-Bop Associates, BEA Systems, Bentley Systems, Boeing, Bowstreet, Bridge, BroadVision, Chrystal Software, Cohesia, Commerce One, Corel, DataChannel, Dataloom, DMSi, Documentum, Dun & Bradstreet, eCredit.com, Enigma, eXcelon, Extensibility, Extricity Software, First Call, IBM, InformIT, Informix, Interwoven, [IPNet Solutions](#) [4], ISOGEN, ITEDO, JetForm, Keyfile, Logistics Management Institute, Mercator Software, [Micrografx](#) [5], Microsoft, Netfish, NextPage, NII Enterprise Promotion Association, Nimble Technology, NIST, Oracle Corporation, Pick Systems, ProNet Technology, Reuters, Sabre, SAP, Sequoia Software, SoftQuad, Software AG, STEP, StreamServe, Sun Microsystems, Synth-Bank,

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Links:

[1] <http://www.ebxml.org>

[2] <http://www.uncefact.org>

[3] <http://www.oasis-open.org/>

[4] <http://www.ipnetsolutions.com>

[5] <http://www.micrografx.com/>

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