OASIS Expands Topic Maps Development: New Technical Committees Formed to Define Published Subjects for XML Standards and Geography and Languages

Consortium Members Form New Technical Committees to Define Published Subjects for XML Standards and Geography and Languages

Boston, MA, USA; 13 February 2002 -- OASIS, the XML interoperability consortium, today announced its members have formed two new technical committees to advance the XML Topic Maps specification (ISO/IEC 13250:2000) for organizing, retrieving and navigating information resources. The OASIS Vocabulary for XML Standards and Technologies (XMLvoc) Technical Committee will define the essential subjects needed to create interchangeable ontologies for the XML domain. The OASIS Published Subjects for Geography and Languages (GeoLang) Technical Committee will define sets of published subjects for languages, countries, and regions.

Both new technical committees will advance the topic maps model, which provides a 'knowledge layer'--independent of the information resources themselves--to capture and manage corporate memory, improve indexing and enable the integration of information that spans multiple, disparate repositories. Applications include subject classification, search and retrieval tools, portals, semantic Web, and knowledge management.

According to Debra Logan, senior research analyst at Gartner, "Any enterprise that has invested time and effort in searching for information resources online and needs a way to capture the output of that search will have a use for topic maps. Because the paradigm is powerful, flexible and extensible, topic maps will become a mainstream technology by 2003."

"XMLvoc will provide a reference set of concept and relationship types that will enable common access layers, making it easier to locate all types of information on XML," explained Dr. H. Holger Rath of empolis, chair of the OASIS XMLvoc Technical Committee. "Our work will allow information providers all over the world to create XML-related topics maps that can be merged and interoperate with one another. XMLvoc also will make it possible to collaboratively develop overarching indexes that improve accessibility to all aspects of XML, its related specifications, the communities that use it, the tools that support it, and the companies that provide services and expertise around it."
Lars Marius Garshol, chair of the OASIS GeoLang Technical Committee, observed, "Languages, countries, and regions are subjects that occur frequently across a wide range of topic maps. GeoLang’s published subjects will establish the foundation for internationalization of topic maps, and ensure that topic maps referring to these key subjects will merge correctly. Our group will update and extend existing topic maps work using code sets defined by recognized standards bodies such as ISO and the United Nations."

Users around the world welcome these development efforts at OASIS. "Topic maps will become an essential part of the added value that commercial publishers apply to their content," says Ton Schoonderbeek, CTO of Wolters Kluwer - Law, Tax and Business Europe. "Standardized subjects from the various application domains will ensure the return on our investments for topic maps. We greatly appreciate the topic map initiatives for vertical markets."

Members of the new OASIS Topic Maps Technical Committees include consortium sponsors, empolis, Innodata, Reuters, and other OASIS members. Participation remains open to all organizations and individuals interested in advancing the topic maps navigation model. Information on joining OASIS can be found on http://www.oasis-open.org/join [1].

OASIS will host open mail lists for public comment on XMLvoc and GeoLang, and completed work will be freely available to the public without licensing or other fees.

"I am looking forward to the outcome of the XMLvoc TC that will result in ontologies becoming interchangeable and robust. These groundbreaking developments are especially important for ontologies in the IT domain of XML standards and technologies," stated Dr. Stefan Wess, empolis CTO. Dr. H. Holger Rath, empolis Director of R&D and chair of the XMLvoc TC added, "The results of the TC will be a significant step towards global knowledge interchange."

About OASIS
OASIS (www.oasis-open.org [2]), a not-for-profit, global consortium, drives the development, convergence and adoption of e-business standards. Members themselves set the OASIS technical agenda, using a lightweight, open process expressly designed to promote industry consensus and unite disparate efforts. OASIS is the home for XML conformance, Web services, security, business transactions, electronic publishing, topic maps and other interoperability specifications development.

OASIS has more than 400 corporate and individual members in 100 countries around the world. OASIS and the United Nations jointly sponsor ebXML, a global framework for e-business data exchange. OASIS operates XML.org, a community clearinghouse for XML application schemas, vocabularies and related documents. OASIS also hosts The XML Cover Pages, an online reference collection for interoperable markup language standards.

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