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Universal Business Language (UBL) Ratified As OASIS Standard

Royalty-Free, International Standard for XML-Based Electronic Business Documents Approved

Boston, MA, USA; 8 November 2004 -- The OASIS international standards consortium today announced that its members have approved the Universal Business Language (UBL) version 1.0 as an OASIS Standard, a status that signifies the highest level of ratification. Developed through an open process, UBL defines a common XML library of business documents, such as purchase orders and invoices, as well as reusable data components from which an unlimited number of other documents can be constructed. UBL is the first standard implementation of the ebXML Core Components Technical Specification.

"Agreement on a common set of business-to-business document standards is essential for successful electronic commerce," explained Jon Bosak of Sun Microsystems, chair of the OASIS UBL Technical Committee and organizer of the working group that created XML. "UBL provides the world with standard electronic versions of traditional business documents designed to integrate with established commercial and legal practices. Using UBL, businesses of all sizes can enjoy the benefits of electronic commerce."

Joanne Friedman, CEO of business-technology advisory, ConneKted Minds Inc., observed, "The combination of a fixed tag set for electronic business (UBL) together with a transport protocol designed for the same purpose (ebXML messaging) is analogous to the foundations which built the World Wide Web. Where HTML provides consumers with information ubiquity, and HTTP a transfer protocol designed for the same purpose provides universal access, the UBL/ebXML combination will bring industry the boundary-less, barrier-free information needed to catalyze economic growth and foster inter-industry global trade. E-business didn't die, it just (quietly) got smarter."

"With XML came a proliferation of industry-specific vocabularies for business documents. Unfortunately, no company does business in isolation. The very nature of the supply chain requires meaningful, cross-industry communication," noted Mark Crawford of LMI Government Consulting, vice-chair of the OASIS UBL Technical Committee. "Instead of being optimized for a particular vertical industry or application domain, UBL is designed for real-world businesses that work with partners across multiple industries."

UBL was developed in harmony with ebXML OASIS Standards and in light of recommendations and standards issued by ISO, IEC, ITU, UNECE, W3C, IETF, and other relevant standards bodies and organizations. Industry groups including ACORD (insurance), ARTS (retail sales), CompTIA EIDX Leadership Group (electronics), HL7 (health care), NACS (convenience stores), RosettaNet (supply chain), UIG (utilities), VCA (prescription eyewear), and XBRL (accounting) all provided input on UBL.

"The key to UBL is that it was built on consensus and collaboration," said Patrick Gannon, president and CEO of OASIS. "The new OASIS Standard is an exciting example of the benefit of bringing together users, vendors, industry associations and government agencies. By actively involving all parties affected by cross-industry

standards in the requirements and development phases, the usability of UBL across a variety of trading contexts is assured. We congratulate OASIS UBL Technical Committee members on their achievement and encourage other organizations to join them in advancing this work."

To promote global adoption of the new OASIS Standard, members of the OASIS UBL Localization Subcommittees have produced draft translations of UBL 1.0 data definitions into Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Spanish. Together with the original English definitions, these translations will make UBL usable to approximately two-thirds of the world's current online population.

UBL contributors include representatives of Accountis plc, ACORD, Asociación Nacional de Fabricantes Autoridad de Certificació, The Boeing Company, Center for Document Engineering, Denmark Ministry of Science, Technology & Innovation, East Asia Electronic Commerce Association, Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore, Korea CALS/EC Association, LMI Government Consulting, NEC, NIST, Oracle, PISCES Ltd, PSLX Consortium, SeeBeyond, Sterling Commerce, Sun Microsystems, University of Hong Kong, US Dept of the Navy, U.S. General Services Administration, and others.

Participation in the OASIS UBL Technical Committee remains open to all organizations and individuals; OASIS hosts an open mail list for public comment and the ubl-dev mailing list for exchanging information on implementing the standard. UBL is provided on a royalty-free basis, available to all without licensing or other fees.

Industry Support for UBL

"The UBL 1.0 release represents a significant advancement in the process of using international open standards to conduct business modeling, data analysis, and XML schema deployment. It provides an "out of the box" solution for document-based transactions as well as a library of reusable business data components," said Marion A. Royal, Senior Policy Advisor with the Office of Governmentwide Policy at U.S. General Services Administration.

"As a proponent of open standards-based integration, SeeBeyond is pleased to have participated in the development of UBL 1.0, and welcomes its approval as an OASIS Standard in the payload domain of XML-based B2B frameworks," said Alex Andrianopoulos, Vice President of Product Management for SeeBeyond. "Working with a broad range of businesses across all major industries, we see such a standard playing a key role to enabling global ecommerce interoperability as it promotes the integration of small-to-mid range businesses into broader electronic data exchange-based supply chains."

"Sun is committed to open standards development and is proud to have organized and led the UBL initiative that defines the standard XML payload format for Electronic Procurement," said Mark Bauhaus, vice president of Java Web Services at Sun Microsystems. "Sun is investing in developing UBL because we believe it will play an important role in providing an entry point into SOAs for small and medium sized businesses, where there is a significant need for standardized vocabularies to truly enable electronic business."

Additional information:

OASIS UBL Technical Committee

<http://www.oasis-open.org/committees/ubl> [1]

UBL FAQ

<http://www.oasis-open.org/committees/ubl/faq.php> [2]

About OASIS:

OASIS (Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards) is a not-for-profit, international consortium that 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. The consortium produces open standards for Web services, security, e-business, and standardization efforts in the public sector and for application-specific markets. Founded in 1993, OASIS has more than 3,500 participants representing over 600 organizations and individual members in 100 countries. Approved OASIS Standards include AVDL, CAP, DocBook, DSML, ebXML, SAML, SPML, UBL, UDDI, WSRP, WSS, XACML, and XCBF. <http://www.oasis-open.org> [3]

Press contact:

Carol Geyer
OASIS Director of Communications
carol.geyer@oasis-open.org [4]

+1.978.667.5115 x290

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