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ebXML Report

Orlando, 31 January-4 February 2000

Klaus-Dieter Naujok

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Introduction

This report is a personal account by the project team leaders and myself about the 2nd UN/CEFACT-OASIS ebXML meeting held from 31 January-4 February 2000 in Orlando, FL USA. *Please note that this is not an official document approved by ebXML plenary, OASIS nor UN/CEFACT.* It has been prepared by me, with input from the project team leaders in order provide up-to-date process information in a consistent way to inquiries about this particular meeting.

A quick recap for those who may have forgotten what ebXML is:

- *Electronic Business XML (ebXML) is an International Initiative established by UN/CEFACT and OASIS (the Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards) with a mandate to undertake a 15-18 month program of work.*
- *The purpose of ebXML initiative is to research and identify the technical basis upon which the global implementation of XML (Extensible Markup Language) can be standardized. The goal is to provide an open technical framework to enable XML to be utilized in a consistent and*

uniform manner for the exchange of Electronic Business data in application to application, application to person and person to application environments.

- *The scope of ebXML initiative is to develop and publish, in the public domain, relevant and open technical specifications in support of domestic and international EB exchanges.*

Day 1 - Opening Plenary

There were about 125 participants from major companies, countries (North & South America, Europe and Asia). Please check www.ebxml.org for the participants list. At the start of the plenary the ebXML chair (Klaus-Dieter Naujok) stressed in his address the importance of this meeting. By the end of this week that there must be:

- a clear definition of project team deliverables and road map
- Establishment of liaison relationships among project teams
- Focus on concrete deliverables
- Delivery of a unified outline for our expected products

The vice chair (Bob Sutor) gave a summary of activities that took place since the last meeting in November. Our mailing list participation has increased from approximately 120 to close to 300 people. Further approximately 130 organizations are now represented in this initiative. In regard to the ebXML web site, it has been move to OASIS in order to provide consistent and timely updates, as well as provide private areas for project teams on the site. Immediate general goals are to improve general communication and increase the frequency of teleconferences for some project teams.

Project Team Updates

The rest (majority part) of the opening plenary was to receive updates from each project team identifying progress, work plan for the week, as well as identifying any issues that may have surfaced in order to resolve them this week. This presentations will be available after the ebXML meeting on www.ebxml.org

In summery the reports showed that most, if not all groups got of to a good start after the first meeting. A tremendous amount of work took place between the meetings ensuring that the initiative is on its way. All reports outlined their progress and work plan for the week including issues that need to be resolved at this meeting.

Day 2-4

Tuesday to Thursday were used by the project teams to progress their work programs. The steering committee met in the eveinngs to address issues raised. Overall the teams were very productive and no major issues arose. During the Wednesday night steering committee meeting the group agreed that each of the project teams will have at least one of its deliverables out for ebXML review 4 weeks before the Brussels meeting.

Day 5

This day was used for the closing plenary at which each Project Team leader presented their report outlining the major deliverables of the week and future work items under considerations.

Below is a summary of those reports.

Marketing, Awareness & Education Project Team

Highlights of the teams work during the week was to interview the Executive team in order to develop a *'talking points'* document. Further the team identified and prioritized key activities and developed ebXML Mission, Value Proposition & Strategies.

The team identified its future deliverables, which are:

- Develop 1-page *'What is ebXML?'*
- Create FAQ's
- Develop ebXML Web site content
- Develop ongoing ebXML Press Releases
- Consolidate/report Project Team work
- Develop standard ebXML speaker presentation(s)
- Develop ebXML Press Kit
- Facilitate increasing ebXML membership/participation
- Create ebXML speaker bureau & supporting material
- Develop Orlando Meeting Press Release

The team presented to the plenary the ebXML mission, its value and how ebXML will deliver those. As part of the mission, the team delivered the ebXML tag line, which reads:

Creating a Single Global Electronic Market

The ebXML mission is as follows:

To provide an open XML-based infrastructure enabling the global use of electronic business information in an interoperable, secure and consistent manner by all parties.

The value propositions are:

- Provides the only globally developed open XML-based Standard built on a rich heritage of electronic business experience
- Creates a Single Global Electronic Market
- Enables all parties irrespective of size to engage in Internet-based electronic business
- Provides for plug and play shrink-wrapped solutions
- Enables parties to
 - complement and extend current EC/EDI investment
 - expand electronic business to new and existing trading partners
- Facilitates convergence of current and emerging XML efforts

ebXML will deliver the values by:

- Using the strengths of OASIS and UN/CEFACT to ensure a global open process
- Developing technical specifications for the open ebXML infrastructure
- Creating the technical specifications with the world's best experts
- Collaborating with other initiatives and standards development organizations
- Building on the experience and strengths of existing EDI knowledge
- Enlisting industry leaders to participate and adopt ebXML infrastructure
- Realizing the commitment by ebXML participants to implement the ebXML technical specifications

ebXML Requirements Project Team

The Project Team reviewed the first draft of the requirements specification. The outline and organization was simplified to address three major requirements areas:

- Business Requirements (informative)
- ebXML Requirements (normative)
- ebXML Organizational and Process Requirements (normative)

Issues raised during list server discussions of this draft were resolved and the team will incorporate them into a new revision of the document. The team also arranged for joint meetings with the other project teams on

Wednesday and Thursday to discuss requirements as they relate to the respective teams.

Business Process Project Team

The team developed its vision statement which is:

The vision of ebXML with respect to business processes is that organizations be able to express their business processes according to a specification to insure that they are understandable by other organizations thereby enabling integration of business processes

The following items were addressed and completed by the team during the week:

- ebXML Vision- Audience-Customers
- ebXML BPM Vision-Audience-Customers
- ebXML BPM Deliverables
- Identified ebXML BPM In-Scope and Out-of-Scope Deliverables
- Clarified the level at which the ebXML Initiative will create DTDs
- Identified ebXML BPM Project Team Liaisons
- Clarified the Role of the ebXML BPM Project Team within the ebXML Initiative
- Identified interdependency deliverables for ebXML BPM and other Project Teams
- Identified issues to be addressed at a later date by the ebXML BPM
- Definitions for Terms Used in the Description of ebXML BPM Deliverables (Glossary of Terms)
- Defined ebXML BPM Project Team Milestones and Timetable for Completion of Tasks
- Refined the ebXML BPM Requirements as related to the ebXML Initiative

Technical Architecture Project Team

The team presented the goals for the ebXML architecture, which are:

- Reducing the need for collaborative business partners to have individual and expensive prior agreement on how to integrate business processes.
- Providing a view for integration of business processes among ad-hoc or established independent business partners by electronic means.
- Providing a high-level business-centric view of distributed e-business processes.

- Supporting and representing business processes independent of the technical solution.
- Providing and supporting a library of common, standard intra-business processes
- Allowing for both business processes and enabling technologies to evolve independently while retaining long-term investments in both.
- Integrating with new and legacy systems throughout the enterprise
- Leveraging existing technologies and standards

Core Components Project Team

The team had 34 participation during the week, with a core of about 28 members with a 50/50 distribution between XML and EDI backgrounds. Further, the team identified representation to, or connection with, approximately 50 industry associations or standards bodies [national and International].

The objectives for the meeting were to establish a shared common vision within the project Team, identify deliverables and determine a work plan and work method for completing deliverables.

The approach taken was that 'The world does not need another P.O.!!'. That a new approach to problem was needed. They identified that the key is 'Context' and utilizing the rich set of existing body of related work.

The deliverables identified are:

- Scope
- Project Plan
- Attributes which specify context
- Methodology for Describing Core Components
- Core Component Content
- Reuse and extension methodology
- Sample & recommended for XML & EDI instantiation

Transport/Routing and Packaging Project Team

The team developed is Vision which is:

ebXML is the glue that ties businesses processes together using XML in a manner that facilitates the interoperable exchange of data by small, medium and large businesses across all industries. ebXML

will define how to exchange business documents securely and reliably so that other industry groups are free to focus on the business problems they want to solve.

The team work during the week on its definitions and requirements and started the process of reviewing and selecting standard for the message structure.

The Teams's project overview was presented:

- provide an envelope and header for routing of message content
- define template sequences for the exchange of messages
- adopt security protocols that enable:
 - non repudiation of sending of messages and acknowledgements
 - privacy and integrity of communications between parties
 - authentication of senders of messages
 - control over access to services
- support verifiable audit trails
- provide mechanisms for reporting on errors or other problems
- develop a messaging protocol for reliable message delivery
- define the information required that describes how to interact with a service
- develop a default method of usage that enables bootstrapping of services

The project teams objectives are:

- enable any party to carry out integrated eCommerce transactions with any other party anywhere in the world using their hardware and software vendor of choice
- persuade a wide variety of vendors to implement the approach
- don't reinvent the wheel - re-use where possible
- enable existing 'messaging' solutions to 'bridge' to the ebXML solution
- scalable from SMEs to large companies
- scalable from low power to high end solutions

Registry and Repository Project Team

The objective of the project team is to 'define the business and functional requirements for an ebXML registry and repository' and 'XML-based interfaces to interact with the registry and repository'.

The team's mission is to deliver requirements and specifications for the creation and use of a registry and repository. The registry and repository will be comprehensive, distributed, business analysis driven, and support the runtime and development viewpoints of the ebXML architecture.

The Business requirements for the repository were presented as:

- Storage of items in their original form
- Support Services
 - Query; search / retrieval
 - Workflow * ; e.g., development of process models
 - Quality Assurance; ensure consist process models
 - Transformation; to / from different forms, e.g., XMI
 - Repository Interface Discovery; capabilities of distributed Repositories
 - Logging; transactional events
- Specific Workflow business requirements
- Best Practices

The team completed the following items during the week:

- Finalized on Business Requirements
- Finalized on Business Requirements
 - alignment with OASIS XML.ORG spec/prototype
 - teleconference schedule: 4th Thursday each month
- completed scope statements
- Identified all (18) use cases for the submission, work-in-progress, and technical specification registry and repository partitions

- XMI Teleconference with OMG Sridhar Iyengar; current and future states

Technical Coordination & Support Project Team

The team did not meet during the week since its Terms of Reference (ToR) were not developed until the meeting. However, the project team leader (Dick Raman) and project editor (Bob Glushko) visited all other project teams in order to identify their work in regard to the ToR.

Below are the ToR as approved by the executive committee.

ebXML's Technical Coordination and Support Project Team - ToR

Purpose

The purpose of the Technical Coordination and Support Project Team is coordinate the work among the ebXML's technical project teams in order to identify inconsistency among their deliverables. Other responsibilities include defining ebXML compliance in regard to implementing ebXML deliverables. Further, the Technical Coordination and Support Project Team shall research external work related to the overall ebXML deliverables in regard to their applicability and benefits to the ebXML's work efforts.

Scope

To support the mission and objectives of ebXML and its project teams.

Key issues

- Possible inconsistency among the various project teams outputs
- In order to ensure that ebXML's deliverables are interoperable when implemented a unambiguous definition what entails ebXML compliance is required.
- External XML efforts in regard to Electronic Business that are not part of ebXML

Deliverables

- Analysis of ebXML's project teams deliverables identify possible conflicts and inconsistencies as related to other ebXML deliverables
- Research, by request from other ebXML project teams, internal or external XML related concepts or topics.
- Recommendations to the ebXML executive committee on how external XML efforts can be encouraged to participate in ebXML.
- Definition for ebXML compliance

Summary

It is important to note that the ebXML participants are drawn from many of the very groups that two years ago doubted the future of XML for serious business interchanges. The 125 participants are seasoned veterans of twenty years of electronic business combined with the new guard of the .COM era. The excitement, energy, commitment and innovation were self-evident as the various working groups focused this week on the real technical specifications required to meet the mission focus.

Orlando this week has been the catalyst for a sea of change within the information industry. The ebXML initiative has laid the foundation that will underpin next generation electronic business. Now ebXML itself is undoubtedly set to deliver the vision of 'Creating a Single Global Electronic Market'.

With the first draft of the 'Conceptual Architecture' being available in a week, ebXML will have put a stake in the ground that will show that this effort is substantial. By the time the group will meet again in Brussels, at least 5 more draft specifications will have been put out for review.

The dates and location for the meetings in 2000 are:

- *8-12 May, Europe - Brussels*
- *7-11 August, USA - TBD*
- *6-11 November, Japan - Tokyo*
- *January/February, USA - TBA*
- *May, Europe - TBA*

Personal Comments

This week has been deeply satisfying to see that when something is done well, our global community stands to benefit enormously. I look forward to the point when I am able to use the first ebXML compliant interchanges in a live system across the Internet.

I agree with David Webber, North American Chair of the XML/edi Group, when he states:

'This may very well prove to be a major event of the new millennium, revolutionizing how business transactions are tracked, effecting worldwide environmental impacts, removing the paper from the process, and by empowering people to create whole new work models.'

Issues

The issue was raised during the meeting in regard to the fact that ebXML is developing a set of specifications on 'How to create a mouse trap' but will itself not 'create the mouse trap'. Some participants are raising the question if there should not be a phase two that will create the mouse trap. The executive committee will address this issue in order to present its view to the group at the Brussels meeting.

Information Web Site Location

For information on ebXML please visit www.ebXML.org. You will find the participants list and soon all the presentations and contributions from the first meeting.