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UN/CEFACT Techniques and Methodologies Working Group (TMWG)

Since the last UN/CEFACT plenary session, TMWG has met three times, Dublin, 15-20 July 2001, Hong Kong, 5-10 November 2001, and Seattle, 4-8 February 2002. TMWG will have an additional meeting prior to the next plenary session in Barcelona, May 20-24, 2002. Because of the workload TMWG has now moved from three meetings a year to four meetings, one per quarter.

During each of its meetings, the priority work item for TMWG was the progression of N090 - UN/CEFACT Modelling Methodology (UMM). The document describes the methodology that has been adopted by UN/CEFACT to model Business Processes and support the development of "Existing" and "Next Generation" information exchange for any type business, be it paper based or electronic.

As a result of UN/CEFACT continuing the ebXML work related to content and context, much time has been spent to work closely together with the Business Process related projects under eBTWG, since their work is based on the UMM meta model. This close relationship has resulted in fine-tuning UMM. In addition to ensure that the linkage between the two groups is effective it was agreed to hold joint meetings. The first joint TMWG/eBTWG meeting was held this year in Seattle. The upcoming Barcelona meeting will be the next.

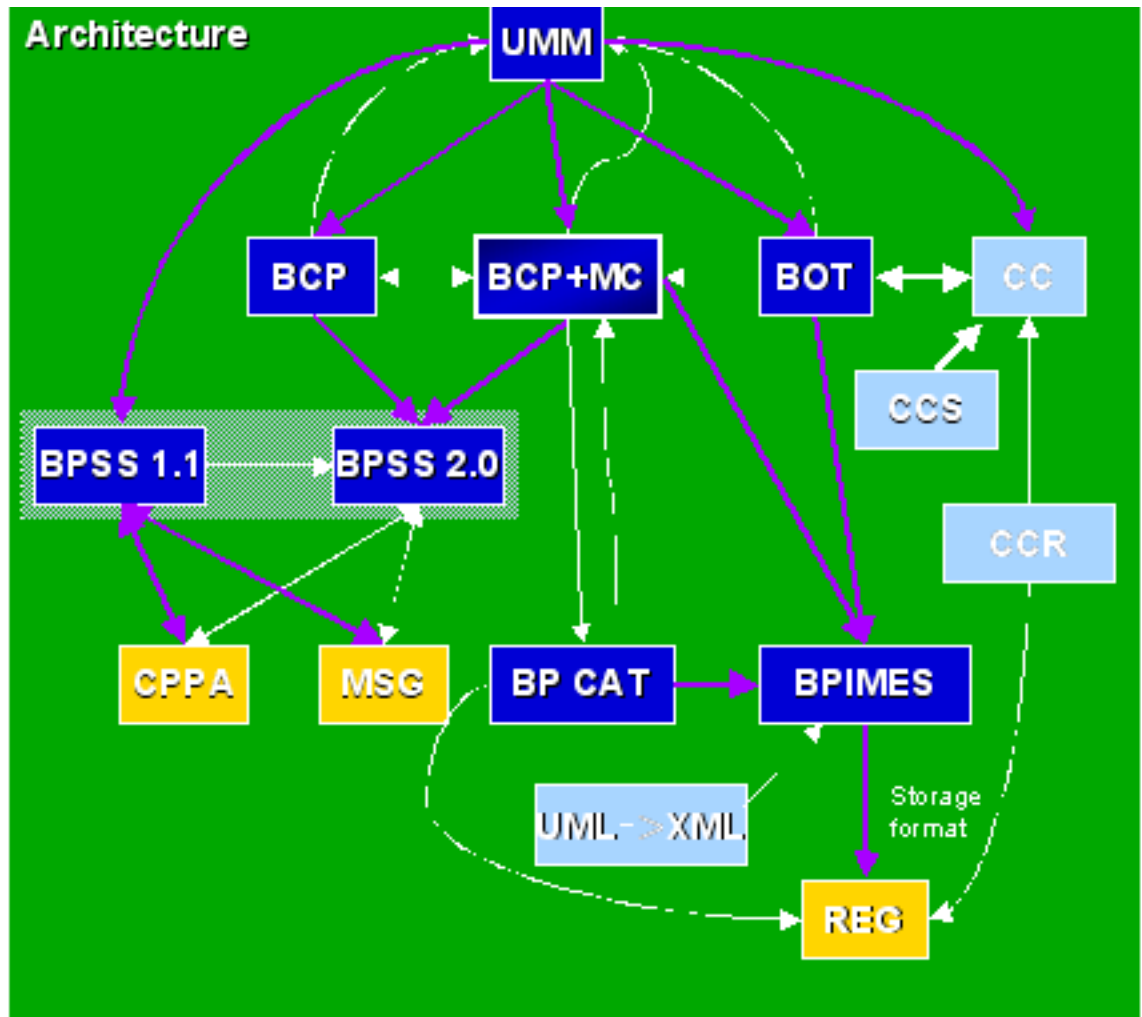
UN/CEFACT electronic Business Transition Working Group (eBTWG)

The eBusiness Transition Working Group (eBTWG) was created by the UN/CEFACT Steering Group (CSG) in July 2001 for the purpose of continuing UN/CEFACT's commitment and responsibility in the ebXML Initiative (phase 2). The group was formed to build on the success of the earlier ebXML Joint Initiative between UN/CEFACT and OASIS, which delivered its first set of specifications in May 2001.

The mission of the eBTWG is to identify specific work items to facilitate the completion of the activities related to the ebXML Business Process and Core Components Projects and to oversee the further development of those items. Detailed information about these work items can be found on the ebXML Web site: www.ebxml.org. In addition, this group is responsible for developing and maintaining the UN/CEFACT eBusiness architecture to ensure consistency with the ebXML architecture specification.

During the first meeting a project overview diagram was created that showed the relationships amongst the various projects. This diagram served as reference during this meeting and was used to review those relationships. It has by default become the high level eBTWG Overview (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1. eBTWG Project Overview



eBTWG consists of eleven project teams as shown in Fig. 1:

- UN/CEFACT eBusiness Architecture (UEA)
- Business Process Specification Schema (BPSS)
- Business Collaboration Patterns and Monitored Commitments (BCP&MC)
- Business Entity Library (BEL)
- Business Collaboration Protocol Specification (BCP)
- Common Business Process Catalog (BP CAT)
- Business Process Information Model Exchange Schema (BPIMES)
- Core Components (CC)
- Core Components Supplement (CCS)
- Core Components Realization (CCR)
- UML to XML Design Rules (UML2XML)

The UN/CEFACT Modeling Methodology (UMM) provides the framework under which the eBTWG project teams concurrently develop technical specifications that fit seamlessly together with sufficient detail for eBTWG conformant implementation. Thus the interfaces between UMM and BCP&MC, BEL, and BCP. As direct users of the UMM, the emphasis of the BCP&MC, BEL, and BCP project teams has been to validate and refine the Business Requirements View (BRV) of the UMM metamodel to fully support the commitment - fulfillment activities of a business process collaboration. Thus the feedback link to UMM from these projects.

An ebXML business process and information model draws from reusable

- common business process models as provided for in a reference library by BP CAT (imported from various levels of business process models, i.e., transactions, collaborations, processes),
- simple “best in class” business collaboration patterns as determined from industry examples by BCP&MC,
- pieces of collaboration patterns, e.g., patterns of how commitment categories are specified, resources are described, etc., as determined in BCP&MC,
- business transaction patterns as already established in the UMM Business Transaction View (BTV),
- business entity types, defined by BEL as business information objects that each have a life cycle that transitions through defined states in the fulfillment of the commitments in a collaboration,
- core components/business information entities as defined by CC.

It is evident that BCP&MC must coordinate with BP CAT, BEL, and CC, as well as with the TMWG in proposed UMM updates.

BCP will show how all layers and patterns of the business collaboration should be integrated into a "protocol" of business information and business signal exchanges that can be implemented in compatible business service interfaces by business partners. Thus, BCP draws heavily from the business collaboration requirements and patterns as determined by BCP&MC, and in turn provides the Implementation Framework View (IFV) of the UMM.

CC and BPSS are carried over from ebXML Phase 1, and are now coming into fruition in Phase 2 with the benefit of much iteration of revisions and comments. Information required to enter and determine successful execution of a business collaboration or transaction, i.e., states of business entities, will benefit from the CC library as a reference for conceptual information entities.

Business entities in the UMM BRV (requirements workflow) will then be normalized in on-the-wire business documents as business information entities in the UMM BTV (analysis workflow). CCS provides independent validation of the CC Technical Specification through industry applications of the CC methodology. In turn, reusable blocks of core components/business information entities are harvested in creating the initial content of a CC library. CCR provides the technical specification for "realizing" conceptual core components/business information entities in XML format so that they can be stored and retrieved in (from) the ebXML REG/REP

BPSS is a semantic subset of the UMM metamodel that supports the specification of the business process elements necessary to configure a runtime system capable of executing ebXML business transactions (in BPSS 2.0) and business collaborations (in BPSS 3.0). Thus, we have the BPSS 2.0 interaction with UMM, and CPPA and MSG of the ebXML infrastructure in configuring a runtime system among pairs of business partners. The additional input of BCP&MC and BCP is required for BPSS 3.0 to incorporate the UMM BRV model.

The runtime BPSS must necessarily be accessible in XML format in the ebXML REG/REP. BPIMES will facilitate this by providing the requirements for storage and exchange schema for ebXML business process and information models. UML2XML provides production rules for mapping UML-based business process and information models, as assembled by BCP&MC, into a BPSS. Together BPIMES and UML2XML provide the specification for production, storage and exchange of business process and information models in XML format.

UEA provides the umbrella specification that covers the work of all of the UN/CEFACT eBusiness projects. As such it elaborates on the eBTWG projects discussed in this overview and shows how they relate to the other eBusiness activity in UN/CEFACT.