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XML: ITS IMPACT ON DATA MANAGEMENT, ADMINISTRATION AND ARCHITECTURE

PETER AIKEN

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Overview

XML is to data what Java is to programming languages

– so how do we take advantage of its capabilities?

We have perhaps witnessed the excitement of the possibility of developing application programs using a single programming language that will run on multiple platforms. "Write it once and run the application anywhere" has been the rallying cry.

Those of us concerned with data challenges (such as delivery, integration, quality, interchange, etc.) now have access to a technology that allows us to attack these problems in a somewhat similar manner – Extensible Markup Language (XML). XML technologies enable data personnel to wrap and deliver organisational data that is described with accompanying metadata. By transmitting the metadata with the data – a number of data challenges may be addressed effectively by architecting classes of problem solutions instead of more expensive point-to-point, one-time solutions.

With XML, many applications that were difficult to implement before – now become possible. For example, organisations can agree on metadata descriptions used by a variety of supplier inventory systems. This enables the organisations to place orders via the Internet directly with those supplier systems, moving towards automated product order fulfillment. At the other end of the standardisation schedule, NIST (the US National Institute of Standards and Technology) is facilitating the development industry-specific XML-tags in anticipation of the strategic value of the savings to domestic industries.

XML-based solutions can solve classes of problems instead of individual problem instances. XML-wrapped data can be understood by any application that has been XML-enabled. The existence of the XML data-wrappers offers us the ability to extend traditional relational data management capabilities into other dimensions including unforeseen query capability and management of previously unstructured data. XML capabilities will transform data management, data administration, and data architecture activities in profound ways.

XML can be to data what Java is attempting to be to programming languages. Wrap an application's data once with XML-based metadata and utilise it with any XML-enabled application! XML-based data integration will soon be the norm. In many cases XML permits a simple to use and inexpensive to implement yet more robust means of electronically exchanging data than – electronic data interchange (EDI). Some say that XML is EDI for the rest of us!

XML is sufficiently mature to have been architected into the core of Microsoft Office 2000. In Office, XML is used to represent the internal formats and styles used by the integrated applications. This permits versions of Office 2000 documents to be saved as .html files and then subsequently re-opened by office components without losing relevant formatting detail. More importantly, it represents one important new source of previously unstructured data that – using XML – data administrators can begin to incorporate into existing corporate data assets.

XML-capabilities are being added to an increasing group of products and XML-architecting has become significant aspect of system development. XML represents a critical future direction for the management of metadata, data, business rules and will play an increasingly important role in business and systems engineering. Several organisations have already begun to carry the promise of XML to its ultimate conclusion – standardised delivery of organisational data via an XML-based Portal.

Using an XML-based portal architecture as a central point of integration permits organisations to begin accruing tangible savings on many aspects of organisational information delivery. XML provides a means of integrating unstructured data with existing structured information kept in organisational data stores whether they are in warehouse or transaction systems. Portal success stories indicate that organisations currently save hundreds of millions of (US) dollars annually by delivering data

directly from data administration groups. XML-based Portals have become vital development capabilities. The technology is becoming so powerful that virtually all organisations in industry, academia, and the public sector will need to develop portal capabilities to remain competitive.

"Envision the enterprise information portal as a browser-based system providing ubiquitous access to business related information in the same way that Internet content portals are the gateway to the wealth of content on the web." [InfoWorld Electric] Web site

"Portals are applications that enable organisations to more rapidly interchange internally and externally stored information, and provide users a single gateway to personalised information needed to make informed business decisions. Portals are an emerging market opportunity; an amalgamation of software applications that consolidate, manage, analyse and distribute information across and outside of an enterprise (including business intelligence, content management, data warehouse and mart, and data management applications." [Merrill Lynch: [SageMaker] Web site]

Audience

CIOs, CTOs, IT & IRM Managers, Project Managers, Data Architects, Data Administrators, Data Base Administrators, Business Analysts, Systems Analysts, Webmasters, Workflow Engineers, BPR Engineers, Document Specialists

Assumes no prior knowledge of XML and no knowledge of any specific programming language.

Learning Objectives

- How XML and metadata management are inextricably linked as "the" new way of delivering data solutions to enterprise information challenges.
- How the existing XML component architecture ensures that it can provide the basis for solving many forms of data integration that have been challenging organisations for years.
- Why XML-based architectures enable organisations to implement solutions that are solid foundations for future development and not just the latest "silver bullet."
- Why XML is already the cornerstone of e-business and e-commerce – without it your organisation cannot participate in

this important business revolution.

- How XML will cause us to rethink the role of traditional data management tools such as CASE tool and repositories.
- How the data group can develop and deliver complete information delivery solutions to organisational clients – solving forever the "what have you done for me lately" problem.
- How most organisations can easily profit from XML-based information delivery portals.

Seminar Outline

XML Basics

What XML is? What XML is not? How does it work as a meta-language? Basic XML Syntax?

XML Usage

What business problems XML was designed to solve? How it is being used by organisations to solve them?

XML Architecture

How does XML work from an architectural perspective? Definition of XML Elements; Definition of XML Attributes; Definition of XML Entities; Overview of XML Architectural Components: DTDs, DOM, XSL, XLL, RDF, XLinks, XPointers

XML Technologies

What types of XML-based tools have been developed to assist in the development of XML applications and other tasks. Highlighted by a comparison of BizTalk and EB-XML. What can we expect to see in the near future?

XML and Data

What role will XML play in an expanded definition of data? The requirements and promise for integration of management of unstructured data along with traditional organisational data stores. These point to more complex data challenges and associated technologies to be mastered by data managers.

XML and Data Management Technologies

XML implications for organisational CASE tool, modelling, and repository usage.

XML-based Portal Technology

How do XML-based portals give data managers the ability to leverage XML and Inter/Intranet technologies in support of advanced data delivery solutions? How investments in this technology can be quickly quantified. How data portalling can lead directly to tangible organisation cost savings.

XML Lessons Learned

What can be learned from the experiences of XML adopters?

METADATA RECOVERY: PLANNING FOR XML-BASED IMPLEMENTATION

2-DAY SEMINAR

London
27-28 September 2001

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14-15 March 2002

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Hilton London Paddington
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Overview

Metadata recovery is a necessary prerequisite to any XML-based implementation. Every XML-based initiative that begins with metadata recovery also begins with a clear **understanding** of the information content of the subject data. This "understanding" becomes a quantifiable measurable property of your organisational metadata. This seminar will focus on understanding the essential set of metadata – this provides a framework for measuring project progress but also by focusing these aspects of an XML-based data engineering challenge, organisations can be assured that they move forward fully equipped with detailed understanding of the nature and meaning of the data structures in question.

Audience

CIOs, CTOs, IT & IRM Managers, Project Managers, Data Architects, Data Administrators, Data Base Administrators, Business Analysts, Systems Analysts, Webmasters, Workflow Engineers, BPR Engineers, Document Specialists.

This seminar is intended for systems practitioners and technical staff who are charged with implementing XML-based projects, and the business managers who will use the results of the XML-based engineering. While not required – knowledge of data modelling concepts will be helpful.

Data engineering principals enable us to formulate an approach to these types of challenges using structured techniques – where the form of the problem can be used to guide the form of the solution. The resulting framework-based solution provides a system of ideas for guiding the analyses; a means of organising the project data and metadata; a data integration priorities decision-making framework and a means of assessing progress toward project goals.

The essential steps in metadata recovery can be described as follows. First of all the required metadata must be identified and located. Next it must be transformed in a manner that is somewhat analogous to data normalisation procedures. These transforms can typically be economically applied in "component-sized" batches of system parts of various sizes and shapes. Identification of these components is key to project viability. A further challenge arises, as these components need to be integrated after their contents have been transformed.

Each data engineering solution should be – by definition – unique. After all – coding the solution once should enable us to reuse it to solve each of this type of need. In order to illustrate the great variety of possible solution approaches, participants will learn by studying a combination of instructor and delegate supplied case study situations illustrating a variety of approaches and applications of technology as organisation recover their metadata as preparation for implementation of XML-based data engineering solutions.

Learn experiences will be geared toward ensuring that delegates are able to develop a toolkit of XML-based approaches to data engineering. Different situations will require applications of different tools to achieve different objectives. Delegates will come away able to design data management components that will help them to leverage the required XML-based metadata into effective and efficient data delivery solutions.

Attend XML: Its Impact on Data Management, Administration and Architecture and Meta Data Recovery; Planning for XML-Based Implementation and save £250. Fee for both seminars = £1740 & VAT (304.50) = £2044.50

Learning Objectives

- The key role that metadata engineering plays in XML-based solution development.
- How to use metadata recovery technique to prepare for a variety of XML-based projects?
- How to prepare the recovered metadata so that it can become a key component in the delivery of information to organisational users?
- What is the essential set of metadata required in order to proceed with a verifiable understanding of the existing data assets?

Seminar Outline

Introduction

- Introduction
- XML-based Solution Concepts
- XML-based solutions
 - data integration challenge
 - legacy system migration
 - ERP implementation
 - delegate supplied example(s)

Solution-basis

- The nature of understanding
- Common Metadata
- A Common Metadata Model

Metadata Solution Engineering

- Metadata-based Transformation Engineering
- Parity Subsetting
- Eight required transformations

Core XML Technologies

- The state of repository technology
- CASE-based technologies
- Translation-based technologies



Peter Aiken, Ph.D.

Peter Aiken, Ph.D. is the Founding Director of the Institute for Data Research and an Associate Professor of Information Systems, Virginia Commonwealth University. His research has widely explored the area of data engineering and its relationship to systems and business engineering. He is the author of Data Reverse Engineering and Clive Finkelstein's co-author of Corporate Information Portals (McGraw-Hill 1996/99). A new collaboration with Robert Abate and Joseph Burk titled Achieving EAI with Service-Based Architectures (ISBN: 0471415154) is scheduled for publication by John Wiley in Autumn 2001. His research publications have appeared in the IBM Systems Journal, IEEE Software and many others. He is a member of the ACM and a Senior Member of the IEEE. In 2001 he was awarded the DAMA International Achievement Award and he has been a DAMA International Advisor since 1999. He earned his Ph.D. in 1989 from George Mason University and has lectured internationally on this and related topics.

"Excellent – brings practical experience and examples."

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XML: ITS IMPACT ON DATA MANAGEMENT, ADMINISTRATION AND ARCHITECTURE

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METADATA RECOVERY: PLANNING FOR XML-BASED IMPLEMENTATION

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