

Technology Subcommittee

July 16, 2002

Present: Beth McInerney, Jeff Carlson, Paul Backes (BenNevis), Poul Elverum (BenNevis), Mary Henschel, Jim Campbell, Larry Dalien, Scott Loomer, Mark Yelich, David Arbeit, Mike Ryan, Bill Mori, Bert Black, Carmen Bramante (phone), John Jones (phone), Gabe Minton (phone)

Meeting called to order at 1:36.

1. Schema and DTD

Gabe provided a brief personal background. He is a software engineer working at the Mortgage Bankers Association in DC. He works with MISMO and was involved in 1.0 release of the MISMO e-recording standards.

A brief history of where the technology is today:

DTD's hold only character data, don't convey data types

Schema is one step further – it describes data types

There is no right answer to DTD or Schema – the standards need to address the largest group, accommodate the most users of this technology

Schema has down sides:

It is new – only ratified by W3C within last 12 months

Schema has been seen as unstable in some instances

Not as easily compatible with certain PC software packages

Version 1.1 is set to fix some bugs

People are manually validating files, so schema's advantages are not being realized.

A joint DTD / Schema solutions is recommended and it should plug and play with national files

Paul Backes provided a brief background of his firm. His firm includes over 160 consultants who focus exclusively on designing, developing and integrating eBusiness solutions for Global 3000 clients. They have implemented over 100 DTD/XML based systems and scores of schema/XML based systems. They have developed IBM Redbooks, and are members of W3C and other standards organizations.

They have not seen the problems with schema that have been discussed. Gabe cited that the inconsistencies he mentioned were in implementation of namespaces, for example.

Performance issues are also not seen as an issue. They have experienced transaction volumes many times what Minnesota's largest counties will experience. They are able to process 25 transactions per second on a 3 year old mid-size server. Translating that, it would equal about 1 minute per day for a county the size of Hennepin.

Jeff Carlson identified that it seems to be that we need to add DTD to Schema in the standards. Bert added that we need to pilot test both types if we do this.

Paul suggested we discuss how you would do both. Submitters will decide which mode to use, counties will most likely be receiving both.

If you have XML created from a DTD, it can be extracted into a schema format, then processed is as if it were a schema. For this approach to work, the XML will need to indicate that it was created using a DTD, and what type of transaction it contains. Gabe confirmed that this would work.

2. Tag Naming Conventions

Gabe added that containment structure is the important aspect. Mark Yelich identified that structure and tags are more important than schema and DTD. Paul agreed but said that means that the same name tags must be used as those on the national level. Gabe added that Minnesota should focus on common structure of terms so that all business data is defined and named the same as the national groups. There should be an allowance for flexibility at the implementation level, focus on the lowest denominator, DTD with the option to translate to schema and process. Bill Mori asked Paul to help make this transition work and to include others in this conversation including Gabe, Mark Yelich, Jeff Carlson, Larry Dalien and others.

Bill asked how to get the MN requirements into the national picture. Gabe explained that Minnesota specific elements should be added using MN in the front of the element name. Gabe indicated that the rules for extension have been included in the latest draft of the Design Guide. Bill asked how to request a copy of the design guidelines, Gabe offered to send him the most recent copy. Larry asked about the "license". PRIA DTD is proprietary to PRIA with a royalty free license to use.

3. Inclusion / Exclusion of Unused Data Elements

Paul asked whether we should include elements not used by MN. It was decided that the unused fields should be included in the schema, and that the pilot trusted submitters should be made aware that they do not need to put information into those fields. Larry asked what should you do with data that is optional? If the information is available in the county's indexing system, it should be put into the system. The optional data will appear on the image that is created from the transaction.

This could all be managed using an Implementation Guide (I Guide). The I Guide can stipulate mandatory or optional fields. The MN Standards document is the basis for our eventual I Guide.

4. Version Control

Gabe offered a software package to support the documentation and flow of version control. Beth will look at the software and evaluate and report back.

5. Other Items

Carmen stated that everyone should use standards and use the copy right language with them. There will be no charge. This is only for protection against someone taking them as their own. But does MN own what it creates if it is based on another copy right standard? Bert will look into this and contact an IP person at the AG's office.

Summary of Meeting

Bill Mori summarized the meeting results:

It was agreed that pilot activity should support both DTD and Schema. In order for this to work most effectively for the counties, trusted submitters and vendors, we need to use common terminology and common structures between DTD and Schema.

- Minnesota will use the name tags and structure of the MISMO/PRIJTF DTD.
- Minnesota will include all of the PRIJTF elements that are not needed for Minnesota.
- Minnesota will ultimately publish an Implementation Guide, but for the purpose of pilot activity, BenNevis will create a Word document that identifies the fields that are not needed for Minnesota.
- Additional fields required for Minnesota will be identified by using MN in front of the tag name.
- Gabe Minton will send the latest MISMO Design Guide to Bill Mori.
- Bert Black will follow up on the Intellectual Property, licensing issues identified at this meeting.
- BenNevis will meet with Gabe Minton, John Jones, Mark Yelich, and other Task Force members wishing to be included, to discuss the standards and how to implement the DTD and Schema in Minnesota.
- Version Control – Beth will receive software for evaluation and will report to the Task Force on this.

Next meeting will be Tuesday the 30th. Updates from BenNevis will be presented.