



Australia
(Formerly EAN Australia)

GS1 Australia position on XML standards used in B2B eMessaging

Why are XML standards so important?

The wide spread use of XML has led to many “standards” being created and it was not until the collaboration of UN/CEFACT (the custodian of the UN/EDIFACT EDI standard, on which EANCOM® is based on) and OASIS (Organisation for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards) in late 2000, that a structured approach to XML became available. This initiative, ebXML (Electronic Business XML) was a project to standardise XML business specifications and to develop the technical framework that would enable XML to be utilised in a consistent manner for the exchange of all electronic business data.

The ebXML project delivered a number of specifications, one of those was the Message Service Specifications (ebMS v2.0) defining the set of services and protocols that enable business applications to exchange data. An advantage of the Message Service Specification is that it is XML message and protocol neutral.

GS1 Australia position

GS1 Australia recognises there are many XML ‘standards’ being talked about, used and promoted. In all the industry verticals GS1 Australia is currently involved with, business-to-business (B2B) XML uptake has been slow with companies reluctant to invest in resources and commit to standards that continue to evolve. EDI (EANCOM) is still the standard of choice.

Companies wishing to adopt B2B XML standards need to understand that in a majority of cases it is not just a syntax they are taking into their company, but also a process modelling methodology and the development framework which surrounds the syntax.

Prominent standards such as RosettaNet used in the high-tech sector, ebXML and derivations of ebXML such as the GS1’s Business Message Standards (BMS) and Schemas are accompanied with process modelling methodologies and development frameworks. For many companies the successful adoption of a new standard will mean a paradigm change for the company. Traditional standards such as UN/EDIFACT were message and data centric, leaving out the choreography of various transactions involved in the fulfilment of a business process.

GS1’s Business Message Standards and Schemas have been developed following the eBusiness Methodology (eBMethodology – GS1’s own methodology). The methodology draws from international standards, parts of ebXML, the UN/CEFACT Modelling Methodology (UMM) and the World Wide Web consortium (W3C).

The eBMethodology is broken down into 4 areas;

- EAN.UCC Modelling Methodology - using UMM and UML (Unified Modelling Language) notation to document business needs.
- EAN.UCC Core Components methodology - based on ebXML (Core Components Technical Specification).



Australia
(Formerly EAN Australia)

- XML Design rules for EAN.UCC - standard way to convert class diagrams to XML representation, GS1 have now built a new tool called Autogen for UML to XML conversion using Java, XML/XSD technologies.
- EAN.UCC XML communications architecture. – specifies how to build a standard business message for sending. Also recommending use of UN/CEFACT SBDH (Standard Document Business Header)

GS1 Australia will continue to work and align itself with GS1 Head Office and offer the latest Business Message Standards and Schemas to Australian industry.

Currently at release 2.0.2 cover the business areas of:

- Align (Data Alignment)
- Global Data Synchronisation (GDSN)
- Deliver
- Order
- Pay
- Plan

GS1 Australia can work with all industry verticals to build extensions to meet the specific needs of each particular industry. The XML extension strategy will ensure that different industries are able to take advantage of the Business Message Standards.

RosettaNet Global B2B Standards – Industry positioning

As GS1 Australia is the host for RosettaNet Australia and its global B2B process standards, it should be noted that GS1 Australia will only target these standards to the high technology, electronics, semi conductor and its supporting sectors e.g. customs/logistics. EANCOM and GS1's Business Message Standards and Schemas will continue to be promoted and targeted at all existing verticals. Where there are touch points across different verticals, the decision will be left to industry to decide.

GS1 Australia position on XML used in B2B messaging

The developments surrounding XML based standards and associated technologies continuing to evolve. Furthermore without adopting a centrally managed strategy (ebMethodology) could lead to GS1 Australia being accused of non-standard practices. This is something that we do not want the organisation doing, as we continue to provide open, global and multi-sectorial standard solutions to our members.

In addition, the current Business Message Standards and XML Schemas have been updated to include the best practices from W3C. This will ultimately deliver a higher level offering to our members.

Therefore the position of GS1 Australia and in relation to the Business Message Standards is to be in alignment and support the strategy being undertaken by GS1 Head Office.

The Global Standard Management Process (GSMP) and ebMethodology are both developments of GS1 and constitutes a major step. This combination provides the vital process and mechanism to analyse and "plug" local/regional data requirements as extensions in the overall XML Architecture.