

As XML celebrates its 10th Anniversary, it has yet to take its rightful place as a fully fledged business tool, says Griffin Brown.

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The best from XML is still in 'the future' says data quality specialist

While the last ten years has seen a rapid expansion in the technical capabilities of XML it has still not achieved anything like its full potential as the digital format around which companies should build their knowledge-based businesses, according to an article by Alex Brown of Griffin Brown.

As companies rely more and more on the fast, efficient movement of data, whether it is to deliver a service to customers, e-commerce exchanges with partners and customers, or processing data through their own internal workflows, the critical element is the richness and quality of the data. In an Information Age, data is now seen as a highly valuable company asset that needs to be strictly monitored and controlled. Inaccurate data more often leads to system failures than poor programming or software bugs.

To keep up with business demands organisations need to make their data work harder, which means keeping it in an agile format that is easily manipulated and can be re-used many times. XML is now considered the most portable and flexible document format since the ASCII file, supporting many languages. It is flexible enough to be customised for domains as diverse as web sites, e-commerce and voice mail systems. Recent moves by Microsoft to standardise its Office products around XML file formats merely confirms that most valuable business data in the future will be stored in XML.

However, XML is not a panacea, it has no intelligence of its own, and in order to derive business benefit from any data there needs to be validation of the meaning of the data, and a management process for the ensuring the correctness of an organisation's entire XML data holding.

Alex Brown, director of Griffin Brown, an industry leading data quality specialist, says, "For organisations that rely upon data to support their core business, it is important that they store data in a high quality, agile format. Content providers that looked to the future saw that digital content must be adaptable to be supplied online, and today data must be made available to growing number of devices such as mobile phones and BlackBerries."

'Similarly, business that rely on data access for engineers, field workers and mobile employees, need to ensure that their data is stored in a universal format that is easily understood by a wide range of devices. Choosing non-proprietary technology like XML is the future.'

Alex Brown is convenor of the ISO/IEC DIS 29500 Ballot Resolution Process, and has recently been elected to the panel to advise the British Library on how to handle digital submission of journal articles.

For a full version of this article please call Andreina West on 01491 639500 or email

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About Griffin Brown

Founded in 1997, Griffin Brown is based in the heart of 'Silicon Feb' in Cambridgeshire, UK. Griffin Brown provides Data Quality solutions and services to commercial publishers, financial, legal and research organisations and government departments.

XMLProbe offers breakthrough technology for automated XML quality management by providing an effective and flexible XML quality assurance system.

XMLProbe enables organisations to:

- Reduce costs caused by poor-quality XML data
- Ensure standards compliance for submission and receipting systems
- Go beyond the level of validation that XML DTDs and Schemas offer
- Have the means to implement an effective XML data quality policy
- Manage content by producing informative at-a-glance quality reports

Some of the world's largest publishers use Griffin Brown Data Quality software to improve the quality of their structured content and drive down processing costs, including Cambridge University Press, Blackwell Publishing and the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain.

Griffin Brown is privately owned, backed by seed capital from current and former employees.

For more information please visit: www.griffinbrown.co.uk

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