

# THE GILBANE REPORT

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## XML vs. SGML: A CAUTIONARY TALE

We have remarked before that all the attention XML is receiving from the press has the disadvantage of creating unrealistic expectations about what you can do with XML. Even more dangerous is the potential for many IT managers to conclude that building XML applications is *easy* since everyone seems to be doing it and all products seems to support it. Because XML *is* so important, even industry insiders familiar with the complexities of managing unstructured data and working with markup languages often fall prey to the hungry evangelism. This month we hear from Mike Maziarka, an SGML veteran who knows from experience why SGML was difficult, and who has an aversion to hype. Mike explains why XML should not be considered all that much easier to implement.

## BLUEBILL ADVISORS TO PUBLISH GILBANE REPORT

You'll notice some changes in the masthead this month. Your editor has started a new company and taken over publication of the *Gilbane Report*. The focus of the report remains the same. A new website with additional information should be up by the time you read this at [www.gilbane.com](http://www.gilbane.com).

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# XML vs. SGML: A CAUTIONARY TALE

During the closing keynote at the XML Europe conference in Granada, Spain, Lou Burnard from Oxford University joked that a panelist in one of the sessions made the statement "XML is great for reusability. I've been able to reuse all of my old SGML presentations." Everyone laughed, but those coming from the SGML community have made jokes like that for some time. All kidding aside, it raises the very important question "is XML really any different than SGML?"

In some respects the answer is "yes." XML, unlike SGML, has garnered tremendous press and industry attention. Why is that? I believe that it is principally because Microsoft has thrown their weight behind it, both by developing products around it and in some cases, adding support for it, and more importantly, putting marketing dollars into promoting it. Marketing muscle can make or break a product — or a standard, in this case. As a result of Microsoft's marketing efforts, vendors — especially those outside of the traditional "document" market — have jumped on the bandwagon, announcing their XML support or planned support.

But the promise of XML — as compared to SGML — was supposed to encompass more than widespread vendor support. XML is supposed to be less complicated, and as a result, easier to implement than SGML. Is this really turning out to be the case? To date, this could easily be debated.

To answer this question, I think we need to look at several pieces of the puzzle:

- ▲ the standards, themselves
- ▲ software products that support the standards; and
- ▲ the service component necessary to implement a system using the standards.

## THE STANDARDS

Most sane people would agree that SGML and its related standards, HyTime and DSSSL, are overly complex. They contain syntax and constructs that are rarely used, much less implemented by the software vendors. Why is SGML so complicated? The reasons really don't matter now, although at one time, the arguments and reasons were probably very valid. In any case, the standard did not evolve with the times — specifically meeting the demand to reduce the time to implement systems. So, although its concepts can be applied to solve today's problems, it has the baggage of being perceived as overly complex and cumbersome. Even simplifying the standard probably would not help in the eyes of the industry — it's branded: complex and only for high-end document applications.

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So, we now have XML. Doing an apples-to-apples comparison, XML is magnitudes easier than SGML. (This gives credence to the argument that the SGML standard itself is overly complex. My rough guess — having spent over 10 years in the SGML community — is that somewhere between 75-90% of all SGML applications could easily transition to XML applications with very little effort because they use only a fraction of the standard.)

But what about all of the corollary XML standards such as XSL, Xpointer, Xlink, Xschema, *et al*? Are they simple and easy to understand? Even without delving into the standards themselves, it's enough to make my head spin just thinking about which standards solve which problems and which standards complement others. I can just imagine the confusion that a newcomer to the industry must go through. Once you add up all of the related XML standards and SGML standards, is XML still less complex?

Granted, XML is solving problems that SGML does not even begin to address. Is this enough to get the industry to be more tolerant towards its complexity?

Perhaps it doesn't matter. You could certainly argue that it *shouldn't* matter whether the standards themselves are easy to understand. Personally, I don't believe that is what makes — or will make — XML different from SGML. I think it comes down to implementation and ease of use, both in terms of the products and the services needed to use the standard.

***"It's really too early to tell whether XML-supporting software is any easier to implement or to use than SGML products..."***

## THE SOFTWARE

It's really too early to tell whether XML-supporting software is any easier to implement or to use than SGML products — principally because many of the first XML available products *are* the SGML available products with some changes. (We could break this discussion into products versus tools — with a claim that XML tools are easier than SGML tools.) But clearly the range of available products that support XML has grown exponentially over those supporting SGML. And that will continue as long as the market is prime for such products. (Also, our market research<sup>1</sup> shows that there are no clear winners in the XML product arena yet. For now, barriers to entry are low.)

General market conditions dictate that with more products available, users will select products that better suit their needs (*i.e.*, are easier to use), driving the "ease of use" requirement even farther. Again, this has yet to be seen, but most likely will happen.

More importantly, what I do *not* see happening — and what I believe is the main reason for SGML's downfall — is support for dynamically changing data models. For XML to truly be successful products *cannot* require absolute data definition up front. SGML products require that, and as I've pointed

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<sup>1</sup> CAP Ventures' report on the *XML Early Adopter Market*, June, 1999.

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out, the standard is doomed to limited success as a result. Realistically, companies will balk at having to completely define their data models up front. It's difficult to accomplish, and often is just not practical.

## THE SERVICES

Since we are in the early stages of XML adoption, it's not surprising to see service costs rivaling those for SGML. Services are necessary in an infant market. That is why it is not surprising to see XML product vendors such as DataChannel merging with SGML service vendors such as Isogen. Innovators expect to need a large amount of services to get a system up and running. But, will that be acceptable in the long-term?

***"A change to the DTD often dictates a number of people making modifications to the system — and then retesting all system components."***

In my experience with SGML-users, often the most difficult justification for using SGML is not the product cost, but the service component necessary to implement and, equally important, maintain an SGML system. An excruciating amount of time is spent developing DTD's up front because, as everyone knows, you don't want to get that wrong. Making mistakes during document analysis can be deadly.

Why is it necessary to get the definition correct up front? Primarily because any later changes to a DTD often require system changes such as:

- ▲ modifying the DTD
- ▲ changing the FOSI (Formatting Output Specification Instance - a style sheet standard created for CALS), or style templates, for your SGML editor
- ▲ making your document or content management system understand the DTD changes (depending on which system and the scope of the changes, this could be a simple or major undertaking)
- ▲ extracting attribute values and other data components to be used for indexing, TOC's, *etc.*
- ▲ modifying your composition styles
- ▲ changing your transformation mappings to convert data into formats necessary to feed other systems, such as CD, Web (HTML), and paper
- ▲ possibly retrofitting existing data to fit the new model (if done correctly, this step can often be avoided)

Making these changes is where the real costs come into play. These changes cannot be done in an hour, or even a day, in most cases. A change to the DTD often dictates a number of people making modifications to the system — and then retesting all system components.

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For this reason, I was dismayed to hear a presentation from an XML software vendor that sent the message "you need to get your data analysis done right up front or pay the consequences later." I know that's true today with SGML-based systems. If it's true tomorrow with XML, then we've done nothing but re-brand SGML.

## CROSSING THE CHASM WITH INDUSTRY STANDARD DTD'S

Today's opium for the XML masses is the notion that establishing "industry-standard" DTD's (or DCD's) and having some type of keeper for these data models will get XML over the hurdle into mainstream usage. I'm in favor of such an effort, and believe that OASIS (Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards, the successor to SGML Open) should take the ball and run with it. But this solves only part of the problem. Really, these DTD's/DCD's/data models act only as a starting point, bringing down some of the up front investment — starter kits that *will* be modified for nearly every implementation.

### CALS: Case In Point

Let's revisit CALS, the DoD initiative to bring down weapons acquisition costs and maintenance through electronic delivery and sharing of information. CALS tried to do a similar thing using SGML — but just for its documents, not for all the business data that XML will be tackling (*ie.*, it was a "smaller" problem). It was initially thought that a few DTD's, focused on the *structure* of the documents, could be written to support weapons systems documentation. Within a year or so, it became clear that those DTD's were too generic to meet the needs of all documents and all intended uses of the data. So *content-specific* DTD's became the rage. DTD's were then expected to number in excess of 50 (remember: this is one industry solving one problem, documentation).

With numerous committees off writing DTD's, the next problem that arose was that although, in theory, all suppliers wrote their documents to conform to military specifications, in practice exceptions were the rule. Content-specific DTD's written to match the specification actually matched very few documents. Consequently, anyone wanting to use them had to make a number of modifications to suit their needs.

So having over 50 DTD's really didn't solve the problem. Ultimately, having a registry for element names and attributes became more popular, the philosophy being "at least we'll get everyone calling a *part number*, a *part number*." But even that did not completely fix the problem.

In the end, to meet CALS requirements, the U.S. military services would reach agreements individually with their contractors on what would be delivered. Often, that meant that either the service or the contractor needed to massage the data either after or before delivery, respectively. This was and is costly, because each of those transformations needs to be

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**"Essentially, software products must supply a way to map into and out of different data storage models."**

developed and maintained— quite often through programming or scripting languages. In some sense, this is not unlike the EDI dilemma: tremendous cost benefits for those that could afford to implement; very costly for those that could not achieve the payback necessary to implement such a system.

### Lesson Learned

Companies are not going to change the data models and systems that are already in place to exchange data with customers, partners, or other departments — it's too costly. If I've called something a widget for 50 years, and you've called it a gadget for 10 years, and we need to exchange data, neither of us is going to change our storage repositories to match the other. (Mostly because chances are that you are not the only one I'm exchanging data with — and each calls it something different.) Instead, I want/demand an easy way to map incoming data into my data model and map outgoing data into a determined DTD/DCD, keeping what I want and throwing away what I don't need.

## WHERE'S THE MAP?

It's still early to think XML should be crossing the early market chasm into the mainstream. It's not however, too early to talk about what it will take. Industry-standard DTD's won't provide enough support to push XML over the hump. For XML to be successful, the XML industry needs to solve the problem of exchanging information when different data models are in use. Essentially, software products must supply a way to map into and out of different data storage models. I believe that this will be true for departments to share data, companies to share data with customers, and organizations to share data within trading networks. XML's success cannot be dependent upon systems, either across companies or just between departments, all using the same data models. That is just not going to happen. Systems will need to provide mapping facilities that are:

- ▲ Easily configurable;
- ▲ GUI, menu, or forms-driven;
- ▲ Accessible and usable by an ordinary user (*ie.*, not a programmer);
- ▲ Flexible enough to permit changes to the underlying storage structure to capture new information; and
- ▲ Extensible to support complex data models (*ie.*, support a 1:1 mapping; 1:many mapping; many:many mapping; and many:1 mapping).

When I've spoken to others in the industry about this issue, I've heard responses such as "sounds like a great application for transformation engines" or "data-mining tools." That may be true, but I think that this is a much more complex issue. The Document Management Alliance (DMA) tried, unsuccessfully I would argue, to solve this very problem of

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interchanging information between different document management systems. Ultimately, I think that is because this is more than a "middle-ware" problem. To really solve this, tools that support XML will need to have more flexible models for accepting, changing, and delivering the same core information using alternate data models (DTD's/DCD's).

I suspect that many vendors are already looking at this problem. Perhaps that is why the biggest news at XML Europe was that Microsoft has hired Allen Brown (one of the patent holders for Chrystal's SGML/XML content management engine) and Adam Bosworth has moved his group into the "storage" team. I wonder what that might mean.

**--Mike Maziarka  
maz@capv.com**

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# INDUSTRY NEWS

Additional news is available at [www.gilbane.com](http://www.gilbane.com)

## BACKWEB AND SAP FORM AGREEMENT

**5/27/99**

SAP AG and BackWeb Technologies announced an agreement to leverage BackWeb's Internet communication infrastructure and selected application modules as part of the SAP Customer Relationship Management offerings. The SAP Sales, SAP Service, and SAP Marketing solutions together make up a CRM solution designed to manage the entire life cycle of customer relationships. The combined solution provides customers with intelligent information gathering from the Internet and intranet that is easily delivered to the desktop for efficiency and enhanced decision-making capabilities. Specifically, the agreement with BackWeb includes bundling the BackWeb Foundation, the Automated Marketing Encyclopedia and the Market Intelligence Manager with both the SAP Sales and SAP Service solutions. The BackWeb Foundation, BackWeb's Internet communication infrastructure, is a priority communications system based on a set of technologies that enable an organization to capture information from any data source and efficiently and reliably deliver it throughout the extended enterprise. The Market Intelligence Manager automatically gathers information about competitors, customers and the marketplace from any Internet or intranet location. The Automated Marketing Encyclopedia automatically delivers large documents to multiple users reliably and securely. BackWeb enables companies to adapt quickly to changing market conditions through direct interaction with their sales and service personnel, thereby accelerating the execution of their business processes [www.backweb.com](http://www.backweb.com)

## OASIS LAUNCHES XML.ORG

**5/25/99**

OASIS announced the creation of XML.ORG, a global XML industry portal to be operated by a non-profit corporation devoted to open information exchange. Over 23 industry-leading corporations, organizations and individual experts have voiced support for the formation

of XML.ORG. Central to XML.ORG will be an open industry XML registry and repository offering automated public access to XML schemas. The registry/repository will play a critical enabling role in the use of industry-defined XML applications for electronic commerce, business-to-business transactions, and tools and application interoperability. The debut of XML.ORG signifies a major step in OASIS' ongoing registry and repository efforts, work that has been in progress for the last the 12 months. In keeping with its consensus-focused mission, OASIS will strive to ensure interoperability with existing and emerging XML initiatives, and will continue to actively solicit participation by any similar efforts. Companies who fund the XML.ORG web site are called XML.ORG partners. Founding partners will be given the one-time opportunity to join the XML.ORG Steering Committee, which is responsible for setting XML.ORG priorities, defining the technical direction of the portal, and determining what kinds of XML specifications are in or out of scope for the XML registry. [www.oasis-open.org](http://www.oasis-open.org)

## SOFTQUAD SHIPS XMETAL 1.0

**5/25/99**

SoftQuad Software Inc. has started shipping XMetal 1.0, a full-featured, easy-to-use XML authoring tool. XMetal is an advanced, simple to deploy XML authoring tool for customers working with XML and SGML. Modeled on common word processing applications, it offers a familiar, easy-to-use, authoring environment that virtually eliminates unnecessary learning curves and training costs. By easily creating XML content, XMetal eliminates the need to convert documents authored in traditional word processors, streamlines the publishing process and substantially reduces conversion expenses. XMetal's extensive customization features enable the authoring environment to be optimized for any DTD, in many instances without programming. Its COM-based architecture and support for any Windows scripting language ensure that XMetal can be extended and integrated into any existing



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publishing infrastructure. Its comprehensive support of SGML and web technologies makes XMetaL a tool for any hybrid SGML/XML environment. XMetaL is shipping today and is available at a cost of U.S. \$495 per single user license. The product will be sold both directly and through VARs and OEMs. Volume discounts, site licenses, partner programs and on-site training are all available. [www.softquad.com](http://www.softquad.com)

## MICROSOFT ANNOUNCES BIZTALK SPECS, BIZTALK.ORG

**5/24/99**

Microsoft Corp. announced availability of the first draft specifications of the BizTalk Framework, a new BizTalk.Org Web site and charter members of the BizTalk steering committee. These BizTalk Framework initiatives aim to accelerate the widespread adoption of XML for electronic commerce and application integration. Draft specifications for BizTalk Framework Tags and BizTalk Framework Documents have been published on the BizTalk.Org Web site at [www.biztalk.org/](http://www.biztalk.org/). The draft BizTalk Framework specifications outline XML design guidelines for developing and implementing BizTalk Framework schemas and provide organizations with an initial blueprint for building BizTalk-enabled software. The BizTalk steering committee, composed of industry-leading vendors, standards bodies and corporate customers, will independently manage the BizTalk.Org Web site and provide guidance on the future direction of the BizTalk Framework. Charter members include American Petroleum Institute, Ariba Inc., The Baan Co., The Boeing Co., Commerce One Inc., Concur Technologies Inc., Data Interchange Standards Association (DISA), J.D. Edwards, Merrill Lynch & Company Inc., Microsoft, Open Applications Group (OAG), PeopleSoft Inc., Pivotal Software Inc. and SAP AG. The BizTalk.Org Web site serves as an open repository for the submission and publication of BizTalk Framework schemas that will allow organizations to easily integrate applications and exchange documents such as product catalogs, purchase orders, and product and promotional information. This Web site will serve as the online reference for BizTalk Framework specifications, schemas, reference materials, tools, sample applications and a community newsgroup. [www.microsoft.com/industry/biztalk](http://www.microsoft.com/industry/biztalk).

## CONSORTIUM OF TRAVEL SUPPLIERS ANNOUNCE XML APP

**5/13/99**

Travel suppliers from the air, car and hotel industries with the support of the Air Transport Association (ATA) and The Hotel Electronic Distribution Network Association (HEDNA), announce the formation of the Open Travel Alliance (the Alliance). The Alliance is a travel industry group, assembled to create and promote new electronic commerce standards that improve the way information is exchanged between suppliers, distributors and consumers. This new initiative, led by air, car and hotel suppliers, has set as its initial goal the delivery of a directory of common industry data labels to be exchanged among the travel supplier, distributor, and customer reservations computer systems. The Alliance's goal is to include participation from air, car, hotel and other travel suppliers, but also global distribution systems and travel agencies, as well as many other developers of travel-oriented products and services. Open communication standards between the industries, developed by the Alliance, will facilitate a cost-effective exchange of information and will ultimately reduce duplication of efforts and create new innovative distribution opportunities. One of the Alliance's first steps in moving toward this goal is the creation of an "open" set of standard XML definitions to facilitate communication between users. This "thesaurus" of terms will allow users to choose how they communicate between systems. Companies currently participating in the Open Travel Alliance are: Alaska Airlines, American Airlines, Continental Airlines, Delta Air Lines, Midwest Express Airlines, Northwest Airlines, Trans World Airlines, United Airlines, Vanguard Airlines, Bass Hotels and Resorts, Hilton Hotels, Hyatt Corporation, Marriott International, Sterling Hotels, Swissotel, Alamo Rent A Car, Avis Rent A Car, Budget Rent-A-Car, Dollar Rent A Car Systems, Inc., Hertz Corporation, National Car Rental and Thrifty Car Rental. [www.opentravel.com](http://www.opentravel.com)

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## WEBMETHODS JOINS OBI CONSORTIUM

**5/13/99**

webMethods, Inc., announced at the Open Buying on the Internet (OBI) Consortium's Quarterly Members Meeting that the company has joined the OBI Consortium, a non-profit organization dedicated to developing open standards for business-to-business e-commerce. webMethods will include support for OBI in the 3.0 release of webMethods B2B, which will be released mid-summer. As an OBI Consortium member, webMethods will collaborate with Intelisys to champion future OBI support for the XML. Together, webMethods and Intelisys will deliver the combined benefits of XML and OBI to buyers and suppliers that want to implement B2B e-commerce solutions and automate business procurement over the Internet. The OBI Consortium is a non-profit organization dedicated to developing open standards for business-to-business Internet commerce. Membership in the Consortium is open to buying and selling organizations, technology companies, financial institutions, and other interested parties on an annual fee basis. The Consortium provides a forum for standards development, education, and compliance certification. [www.openbuy.org](http://www.openbuy.org)

## EXCALIBUR ANNOUNCES OEM AGREEMENT WITH PTFS, INC.

**5/13/99**

Excalibur Technologies announced that it has signed an integration and OEM agreement with Progressive Technology Federal Systems, Inc. (PTFS). The agreement calls for PTFS to integrate Excalibur RetrievalWare, Excalibur's high performance search and retrieval application, into PTFS's AVATAR Digital Asset Management System (ADAMS). ADAMS is a Web based solution for archiving, managing, retrieving and disseminating 100% of an organization's digital assets ranging from archived photographs, rare books, full text imaged and electronic documents, digital video/audio, and virtually any type of digital object. [www.ptfs.com](http://www.ptfs.com), [www.excalib.com](http://www.excalib.com)

## LOTUS ANNOUNCES DOMINO.DOC 2.5. BETA

**5/12/99**

Lotus Development Corp. announced the posting of Domino.Doc 2.5 beta to the Lotus Web site. The Domino.Doc 2.5 release is highlighted by compatibility with Lotus Notes and Domino R5 as well as improved performance, scalability, usability and administration. In addition to working with R5, following are some of the major features and enhancements in Domino.Doc 2.5: Support for multiple Domino.Doc libraries on one Domino server; Partitioned server support and cross domain replication; A new query-by-form capability; And additional e-mail integration; Domino.Doc's administrator can now create file cabinet templates each with specific parameters, and global profile fields that can be used across all document types in a given file cabinet. [www.lotus.com/dominodoc](http://www.lotus.com/dominodoc)

## STERLING COMMERCE ANNOUNCES NEW WEB SUITE

**5/12/99**

Sterling Commerce, Inc. unveiled its new GENTRAN Web Suite, a family of Web integration components designed to enable business process integration reliably and securely via the Internet. Through partnerships with webMethods and Cyclone Software, Sterling Commerce will add two new components, Real-time Integration and Internet Data Exchange, to GENTRAN Web Suite. Internet Data Exchange -- Developed in partnership with Cyclone Software, facilitates simplified inter-enterprise messaging because it can communicate with other interoperable solutions that support the S/MIME and EDIINT standards. Real-time Integration -- Via the new partnership with webMethods, uses XML to enable an organization to integrate its business applications with the Web sites, ERP applications and business systems of its partners. [www.sterlingcommerce.com](http://www.sterlingcommerce.com)

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## MICROSCRIPT CORPORATION ANNOUNCES BIZTALK SUPPORT

**5/12/99**

MicroScript Corporation announced that it has endorsed and will support Microsoft's BizTalk standards initiative for cross platform integration in e-commerce. MicroScript Corporation, whose Enterprise Application Integration (EAI) development tools are based on Microsoft's ActiveX/COM/DCOM architecture, is used for application integration in healthcare and other markets. BizTalk is a new cross-platform e-commerce framework that makes it easy for businesses to integrate applications and conduct business over the Internet with trading partners and customers. The BizTalk framework is based on new XML schemas and industry standards that enable integration across industries and between business systems, regardless of platform, operating system or underlying technology. [www.microscript.com](http://www.microscript.com)

## WESTLAW INTEGRATES WITH IMANAGE

**5/12/99**

iManage and West Group announced that the iManage LegalOffice Document Management System (DMS) now will be able to access Westlaw through westlaw.com, West Group's web-based legal research service. This will give iManage users instant Internet access to Westlaw, the legal research service, while working within the DMS. With the completion of the integration, users of iManage LegalOffice will be able to conduct research on Westlaw without leaving the DMS, find the needed information and then import it directly back into the DMS. Once uploaded into iManage LegalOffice, users can manipulate the research text as if it were any other document within the DMS. iManage LegalOffice customers looking to take advantage of westlaw.com will be able to do so in second half of this year. [www.imanage.com](http://www.imanage.com)

## NETCENTRIC SOLUTIONS CHOOSES OBJECTIVITY FOR NEW WEB CONTENT MANAGEMENT PRODUCT

**5/12/99**

Objectivity, Inc. announced that Netcentric Solutions Ltd, selected Objectivity/DB to serve

as the database engine in its new Web content management solution, Lychee. Netcentric debuts Lychee today at the Webmaster trade show, Stand 144, in London Olympia, U.K..

Netcentric developed Lychee to remove the bottleneck in the flow of information to the Web by allowing users to publish information on their Internet, intranet, or extranet sites quickly and easily. Through the use of templates, Netcentric's Lychee enables non-technical information owners to maintain specific areas of a Web site. The information follows the normal document workflow channels and is immediately updated on all relevant Web pages after sign-off. This ensures the timely publication of quality Web documents. Prior to using Objectivity/DB, Netcentric used its own file system, which was unable to deliver the performance or the scalability the company needed long-term. To optimize performance, Netcentric determined that Lychee, which is written in Java, needed an object database. Netcentric evaluated several object databases and selected Objectivity/DB for its performance, distribution and scalability. [www.netcentric-solutions.com](http://www.netcentric-solutions.com)

## DATACHANNEL ANNOUNCES NEW ENTERPRISE INFORMATION PORTAL SOLUTION

**5/11/99**

DataChannel announced the next-generation of its Solution Software for Enterprise Information Portals (EIP). DataChannel has developed its enhanced EIP application server based entirely on XML. The server includes XPages, an implementation of a transformation engine that converts data from heterogeneous sources into XML-ready schema. This transformation engine directly addresses the challenges of data interoperability across and beyond the Enterprise. This data may span unstructured data sources like documents, spreadsheets, and web content, as well as structured data sources like databases, legacy systems, and customized mission critical applications. The addition of XPages offers a dynamic application environment that allows users to combine information from disparate sources into a single presentation on the desktop and interact with the data by updating the back-end systems. Once the data is transformed using XPages, it is ready for web delivery to any audience anywhere. [www.datachannel.com](http://www.datachannel.com)

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## INTRAACTIVE SOFTWARE TO UNVEIL ACTIVEFORUM 2.0

**5/11/99**

IntraActive Software Corp. announced that it would unveil ActiveForum 2.0 at Microsoft Tech-Ed '99. ActiveForum is a community-building platform that enables developers to quickly and easily add threaded discussion forums to their Web applications. ActiveForum is based on software component technologies and designed to support open Internet standards. The out-of-the-box, high performance solution gives developers complete freedom in controlling the look and feel of the site. This enables developers to leverage the distinct visual identity of their web sites in their discussion forums. Based on server side Java and XML technologies, ActiveForum features a rich detailed object API, providing developers with full access to all forums, messages and user attributes. This allows developers to pick and choose the storage medium from relational databases to news servers to file systems. The COM components also take advantage of the advanced object management and transaction services provided by Microsoft Transaction Server (MTS) for exceptional performance, scalability and reliability. As a result, ActiveForum can support an unlimited number of messages, forums and users. [www.iasoft.com](http://www.iasoft.com)

## CLOUDSCAPE SELECTED BY CAPELLA FOR PORTABLE PUBLISHING SOLUTION

**5/11/99**

Cloudscape, Inc, announced that Capella Computers Ltd., has selected the award-winning, Cloudscape database for PubliShare. Capella's PubliShare is an authoring and publishing solution for eBusiness. When combined with the Cloudscape database, PubliShare enables the creation of highly portable applications that can easily retrieve and present content for eBusiness catalogs and multimedia solutions in real time. The new version of PubliShare that includes the Cloudscape database will be available through Capella and its distribution channels in the fourth quarter of 1999. Using the Cloudscape database, Capella can offer customers the latest electronic catalog information through the Internet, regardless of the platform. With the

Cloudscape data management solution, Capella can deploy, maintain, and refresh its eBusiness publishing solution to a vast number of computing infrastructures outside of their domain. [www.cloudscape.com](http://www.cloudscape.com)

## VIGNETTE TO ACQUIRE DIFFUSION 5/11/99

Vignette Corporation announced that it has signed a definitive agreement to acquire Diffusion Inc., The acquisition adds an important component in broadening the capability of Vignette's StoryServer technology by enabling companies to exchange information with their customers through any preferred media, including Web, e-mail, fax, telephone and pager. The result is closed-loop communications between companies and their customers leading to increased customer satisfaction and improved returns on companies' online investments. Vignette will acquire 100 percent of the outstanding stock and assume all stock options of Diffusion in exchange for approximately 400,000 shares of Vignette common stock. Vignette will account for the transaction using purchase accounting and expects to close the acquisition by June 30, 1999, subject to approval by the shareholders of Diffusion and other customary closing conditions. Vignette expects to incur one-time acquisition costs and integration related charges associated with the transaction which include costs associated with product integration, cross training, and other merger related costs. Additionally, Vignette anticipates a portion of the purchase price will be allocated to In Process Research and Development and expensed upon the consummation of the transaction. Diffusion technology will enable Vignette customers to manage the distribution and delivery of personalized information across any delivery channel, including the Web, e-mail, fax, pager and telephone, regardless of the channel the communication originates from or is routed through. The result is multi-channel information delivery solutions for automating personalized, closed-loop interaction between an enterprise and its client. For example, through this integration, a financial services company could immediately and proactively alert a client, via the client's preferred method, when trading events, such as confirmation of block trades, buy/sell decisions, IPO filings and stock price changes. If the customer cannot be reached through the primary channel, the

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communication will be escalated to the next level, until the customer receives the message. The company then receives confirmation of delivery, an additional benefit in mission-critical business situations. [www.vignette.com](http://www.vignette.com)

## INTERSHOP TO BE PARTNER IN MYSAP.COM E-COMMERCE PORTAL

**5/11/99**

Intershop announced its partnership in the SAP mySAP.com business-to-business e-commerce portal. Other partners in mySAP.com announced by SAP are IBM, Pandesic, and Microsoft. Hosting directories, information services and industry-specific content and services, mySAP.com is the Internet business strategy that creates collaborative markets and facilitates dynamic business relationships through industry business yellow pages, online catalogs and e-commerce for more than 10 million users and many partner organizations. Intershop software adds fully automated business-to-business procurement to mySAP.com by connecting purchase managers who use SAP software with suppliers, who offer products and services on the Internet. Sellers are not required to use SAP R/3 standard software. Intershop e-commerce applications integrate with most legacy and ERP systems such as SAP R/3, Oracle Applications, Sage KHK, Baan, JD Edwards and Peoplesoft. Intershop embraces the new XML data exchange format that is expected to replace the old EDI standard. Using XML technology, Intershop's back-office will connect to the SAP material management application, allowing order information to pass directly from the system of the buyer to the seller. [www.intershop.com](http://www.intershop.com)

## MICROSOFT AND Ariba JOIN FORCES ON E-COMM STANDARDS

**5/10/99**

Microsoft Corp. and Ariba Inc., announced plans to work together to accelerate the adoption of XML-based standards for e-commerce. The companies will join together to integrate Commerce XML (cXML), an emerging standard for business-to-business e-commerce, with the Microsoft BizTalk framework to define schema for communicating operating resource transactions, such as catalogs and orders. In addition to collaborating on BizTalk and cXML,

Ariba and Microsoft plan to work together to implement these e-commerce frameworks into products offered by both companies. Ariba will support the BizTalk framework in Ariba e-commerce solutions, and Microsoft will integrate support for cXML into upcoming releases of the Microsoft Commerce Server and BizTalk Server. This collaboration will enable integration between Ariba e-commerce solutions and the multitude of supplier Web sites based on the Microsoft commerce platform. The joint work will provide the opportunity for Microsoft and Ariba customers to more easily and efficiently conduct business-to-business e-commerce with business partners worldwide. As a member of the core group of organizations that will drive the development of BizTalk, Ariba plans to collaborate with Microsoft on the continued development of operating resource transaction cXML schema. Under the planned development, Ariba will use XML-Data Reduced (XDR), the preferred syntax for BizTalk, in the next version of cXML. [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com), [www.ariba.com](http://www.ariba.com)

## OBJECT DESIGN ANNOUNCES OBJECTSTORE 6.0

**5/10/99**

Object Design, Inc. announced ObjectStore 6.0, the newest release of the company's data management system. ObjectStore 6.0 offers a broad range of new features that result in unprecedented scalability and performance for large-scale Java and Internet electronic business (e-business) applications. In addition to its traditional database deployment capabilities, ObjectStore 6.0 includes a variety of new features to support deployment as a data server, where it is used in the middle tier of multitier applications to "re-stage" enterprise data in formats compatible with Java, C++ and Web applications. ObjectStore 6.0 includes: New Java data management capabilities; Enterprise JavaBean (EJB) Integration; And higher Performance and Scalability. ObjectStore 6.0 is available now. Pricing begins at \$4,500. ObjectStore supports Windows 98, Windows NT and all major Unix operating environments. [www.objectdesign.com](http://www.objectdesign.com)



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## MICROSOFT RELEASES XML PARSER

5/7/99

Microsoft Corp announced the release of the Microsoft XML Parser for incorporation by third-party developers into their applications. The Microsoft XML Parser, which is freely redistributable and compliant with the W3C XML 1.0 specification, allows developers to support XML in any or all of the presentation, business logic or storage elements of an application. ISVs, including Allaire Corp., Novell Inc. and Object Design Inc., announced their intent to use the Microsoft XML Parser to build XML support into next-generation products. The parser is available for download at <http://msdn.microsoft.com/xml/> at no charge. In addition to enabling ISVs to incorporate the Microsoft XML Parser into any part of their applications, Microsoft is also working to integrate the parser directly into all of its products used for building Windows Distributed interNet Applications (Windows DNA). XML support and integration is available today in other Microsoft software. By virtue of its componentized design, it is easily integrated with any Windows operating system-based application and programmed using any programming or scripting language such as ECMAScript, Java, Perl, Python, SQL, the Visual Basic development system, the Visual C++ development system or VBScript. Further, it supports the W3C XML Document Object Model (DOM), the XML Stylesheet Language (XSL) W3C working draft and the XML 1.0 Namespaces Recommendation. In addition to developing software for manipulating XML data, Microsoft is also working to facilitate the open definition of standard XML vocabularies for specific industries and applications through the BizTalk initiative. BizTalk is an XML framework for both application integration and electronic commerce that defines a common set of guidelines for how Microsoft, its associates and other industry groups can standardize the interchange of business data between applications. [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com)

## OBJECT DESIGN AND SILVERSTREAM PARTNER FOR XML-BASED WEB APPLICATIONS

5/7/99

Object Design, Inc., and SilverStream Software, Inc., announced that they have forged a strategic partnership. This partnership allows the two companies to deliver a solution enabling companies to build and deploy powerful new enterprise e-business applications that fully exploit the extensible data capabilities of XML. The SilverStream Application Server allows for the rapid development and deployment of distributed HTML and Java enterprise Web applications. Object Design's eXcelon is a dynamically extensible data server for caching, managing and extending XML in distributed e-business application environments. When the products are coupled together, the result is an e-business application solution that leverages the extensibility of XML. As part of the agreement, SilverStream and Object Design have jointly created a SilverStream Data Source Object (DSO) that integrates eXcelon into the SilverStream application development environment and automates connectivity between the two products.

[www.objectdesign.com](http://www.objectdesign.com), [www.silverstream.com](http://www.silverstream.com)

## MICROSOFT JOINS WAP FORUM

5/5/99

Microsoft Corp. announced it has joined the Wireless Application Protocol (WAP) Forum, a consortium of more than 90 firms focused on developing wireless information and telephony services for digital mobile phones and other wireless terminals. Microsoft will work with WAP Forum members to accelerate the deployment of wireless mobile devices, as well as a broad range of wireless data services based on broadly supported Internet standards from the W3C, including XML. [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com)

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## PC DOCS ANNOUNCES ENCRYPTED E-MAIL

**5/5/99**

PC DOCS/Fulcrum, and MAZ Technologies announced the release of iMail, an encryption product integrated with DOCS Open that is both customizable and transparent in the DOCS Open environment. With iMail, users can avoid security risks by sending encrypted e-mail attachments to DOCS and non-DOCS users without disrupting their regular workflow. iMail is the latest member of a full suite of IntelliGard security encryption products from MAZ Technologies designed for integration with DOCS. As part of a special promotion, PC DOCS/Fulcrum users can now download a 21-day evaluation copy of iMail from [www.maztechnology.com/files/main.html](http://www.maztechnology.com/files/main.html). Users must enter the registration code: pcdocs (all lower case letters with no spaces). [www.pcdocs.com](http://www.pcdocs.com)

## ALPNET TO ACQUIRE STORK TPS

**5/5/99**

ALPNET, Inc. announced that it has signed a Letter of Intent with Stork N.V. in the Netherlands, which is expected to lead to the acquisition of Stork's \$7 million Stork TPS business unit before the end of May 1999. Completion of the transaction is subject to due diligence, board approval, and the execution of a definitive acquisition agreement. Stork TPS is a business active in industrial information consulting and translation services. Stork TPS also provides high-end SGML publishing solutions to international corporations like Volvo, Daf Trucks, Philips Medical Systems, and Eurocopter. The purchase price will be paid in shares of ALPNET common stock. In 1998, Stork TPS was profitable and the acquisition is expected to be accretive for ALPNET. [www.alpnet.com](http://www.alpnet.com)

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## XML EARLY ADOPTER STUDY (Available June 99)

Will XML be just another technology fad? When will corporate adopters begin XML-Based projects? What applications will be among the first to utilize XML? Which XML standards and vocabularies are being incorporated into project plans?

***You can find answers to these questions and other important information in the CAP Ventures XML Early Adopter Study. This study will provide:***

- Vital market information for software vendors and service providers, collected from 250 corporations
- Useful information for end-user companies who are evaluating the viability of XML
- The business and technology reasons organizations are employing XML
- Spending considerations and expectations for XML projects in 1999 and beyond.

***For more information contact [dss@capv.com](mailto:dss@capv.com) or call +781 871 9000***

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