

ebXML Quality Review Group

Summary of Review of

ebXML Core Components project team submissions:

- Core Component and Business Process Document Overview Version 1.02
- ebXML Methodology: Core Components Discovery and Analysis Version 1.02
- ebXML Convention - Naming Convention for Core Components Version 1.02
- ebXML Concept - Context and Re-Usability of Core Components Version 1.02
- ebXML Specification – Document Assembly & Context Rules Version 1.02
- The Initial Core Components Catalogue Version 1.02
- Initial Catalogue of Context Drivers Version 1.02

Release Date: 23rd March 2001

Report prepared: 6th April 2001

Reviewers: Tim McGrath, Nagwa Abdelghfour, Jon Bosak, Stuart Campbell, Murray Maloney, Bob Glushko, Jim Werner, Ben Van De Walle

Traceability Matrix: Mike Rawlins

The Quality Review team have completed their review of this set of documents from the Core Components project team as submitted on March 23rd 2001.

We recommend that none of these documents go forward for their second round of public review.

Our overall opinion is that the majority of this material requires substantial improvement before it may be considered acceptable for further public comment.

Our general assessment of the material that addresses the ebXML requirements is that it is too immature to be considered a technical specification. Whilst there are many promising ideas and concepts described, the documents do not present these in a consistent and concrete way that would make it possible for their audience to use them.

Many of these issues were raised during the first review period. We wish to state some of them again with further examples. Specific examples are also included in the comments against each document.

- **Incompleteness** – Further to our previous comments, there are still gaps within the overall material. Even after understanding and applying the

methodology and concepts described, we do not see how we could apply core components to real world situations. As an indication, if we take the diagram between lines 90 and 91 of the "Core Component and Business Process Document Overview " document, we would expect this material to address what happens on the lines connecting these boxes.

- **Immaturity** – this material appears to have been developed late in the ebXML process and needs further work within the team to achieve the quality required for a public ebXML document. As further examples, material has been inserted in the document “ebXML Methodology: Core Components Discovery and Analysis” (section 8.1) that is inconsistent with the remainder of the document and jeopardises an already confusing methodology with what appears to be an alternative. The team should have resolved all these matters prior to submission.
- **Out of alignment** – there are numerous occasions where this material does not align with other ebXML components. For example:
 - It is still unclear how the Core Component methodology (lines 156-253) connects with the methodology of the Business Process Analysis team.
 - The document "ebXML Specification – Document Assembly & Context Rules" presents a coherent model that is not obviously related to anything else in these submissions.
 - The document “ebXML Methodology: Core Components Discovery and Analysis” (lines 255-256) does not explain how items can be classified into the ebXML Registry such that they can be found. Is “similarity” supposed to be a classification?
- **Abstract concepts** – many of the concepts discussed here require relevant practical examples to highlight their application to real world scenarios. This may better explain the rationale for various design decisions. As examples:
 - Section 5.6 of the document “ebXML Concept - Context and Re-Usability of Core Components” (lines 292-312) describes the significant concept of reusing core components in a way that neither explains why or how this can be applied to practical situations.
 - The statement in the document “ebXML Concept - Context and Re-Usability of Core Components” (line 140-142) regarding the “inevitable complications” is indicative of conceptual leaps required of the reader without the support of adequate descriptions and explanations.

We suspect that, whilst the Core Components team has had a concentration of energy in identifying industry definitions, insufficient time has been devoted to the bigger picture of tying things together. This has resulted in many isolated (but valuable) concepts presented as fragments with an overall lack of integration of these ideas both within themselves and between the other ebXML components.

Finally, we are disappointed that the concerns raised during the previous review have not been adequately addressed. The change logs submitted with these document do not reflect all the QR comments and indicate that other public comments may not have been properly disposed of. This must happen before documents are resubmitted for review. It is in the overall interests of ebXML that these comments are given the consideration they deserve if we are to exploit the expertise of the ebXML community and their desire to contribute.

On the following pages we have tried to identify major issues with specific documents. These are not supposed to be a comprehensive list of all problems with the document but indicative of the areas where more work is needed. We have not listed the many editorial problems that still exist with this material. Such level of comment will be appropriate when the documents are in a more mature state.

Core Component and Business Process Document Overview Version 1.02

(Designated status: ebXML guideline)

Whilst this document may provide a good overview of the Core Component deliverables, its descriptions are not supported by the underlying documents it introduces.

This document should also be the forum to provide the linkages between each part of the Core Component specifications and other ebXML specifications including Business Process and Registry and Repository.

ebXML Methodology: Core Components Discovery and Analysis Version 1.02

(Designated status: Technical Specification)

We still feel a reader would not have an understanding of how to use this material. For example, lines 156-160 suggest automated tools for 'discovery' of core components. Are we expected to believe this is a practical option? We would have expected a more heuristic approach to this problem.

There appears to be several methodologies described here. For example, the rules defined in lines 340-426 do not appear to relate to methodology described in either lines 559-616 or lines 162-172.

This document does not explain how items can be classified into the ebXML Registry such that they can be found (line 255-256). Is "similarity" supposed to be a classification? The assumptions listed (lines 258-262) should not be necessary in a specification document.

Despite the disposition comments in the change log, the case study still does not explain the critical step of turning the data modelling concepts into core components.

ebXML Convention - Naming Convention for Core Components Version 1.02

(Designated status: Technical Specification)

The change log does not include the previous QR comments and leaves the disposition of several public comments blank.

ebXML Concept - Context and Re-Usability of Core Components Version 1.02

(Designated status: Technical Specification)

As suggested in our previous comments, this document has the greatest number of structural problems.

This document should specify the “first level” for specifying context rules. For example, does it start with a large set and take away redundant items or start from a minimal set and add necessary items to it.

Section 5.5 (lines 281-291) identifies a gap in the definition of business documents. Whilst it defines documents as collections of “context constrained information entities” it does not address how the relationships between these entities may affect the structure of the business document (cf. comment in “ebXML Specification – Document Assembly & Context Rules” Section 5 (lines 164-171)).

Section 5.1.2 lines 195 - 196 seem inconsistent with list of representation types in “ebXML Convention - Naming Convention for Core Components” section 6, line 195. It is not clear how these are reconciled.

Our previous comments are not included in the change log. We also believe the disposition of many public comments is inadequate. Some dispositions are comments to the team members, whereas others show a misunderstanding of or ignore selected parts of a comment. For example, the point of [BRA97] is to help the reader (and the team) in identifying what the SHOULD, MUST, etc. of creating and extending core components, building documents, discovery of components and documents, analysis, contexts, etc. That is, to formalise the vocabulary of the specification.

We are puzzled as to why this material does not reflect the concrete work consistently demonstrated by members of the Core Components team.

ebXML Specification – Document Assembly & Context Rules Version 1.02 (Designated status: Technical Specification)

This specification identifies the need for rules but fails to suggest what they may be. It concentrates on the syntax required but not the semantics.

This specification still fails to address the requirement for EDI instantiation (see attached Traceability Matrix).

Section 5 (lines 164-171) has insufficient description or explanation of the considerations with respect to assembling a document. The rules and relationships between the “pieces” within the document during its assembly process need to be identified and elaborated on (cf. comment on “ebXML Concept - Context and Re-Usability of Core Components” Section 5.5 (lines 281-291)).

The introduction (lines 97-133) belongs in the “Core Component and Business Process Document Overview” and not here.

The Initial Core Components Catalogue Version 1.02

(Designated status: Discussion paper)

It appears none of our previous comments have been addressed. Our comments about functionality (lines 98-100) and scope (lines 103-105) relate to these sections applying to the functionality and scope *of this document* not the overall core components initiative. Perhaps this would be clearer if section 6. "System Overview" were renamed "Catalogue Overview".

This document focuses on the process and not the result. The comments about what the teams did, their meetings, members, sub groups, etc. is not relevant to the material (lines 81-82, 113, 109-110, 113-114). This document should present the results instead of leading the reader through the procedural considerations during the analysis that led to the results.

This document also highlights a potential cause for concern about the rigour of testing the ebXML Core Components methodology...
"The domain groups used various processes and methodologies in examining their current business processes to determine which data components are essential to meeting their business requirements." (lines 82-84)

Initial Catalogue of Context Drivers Version 1.02

(Designated status: Discussion paper)

This majority of this document was extracted from the previous document entitled "ebXML The role of context in the re-usability of Core Components and Business Processes Version 1.01". There are no line numbers.

Sections 6 and 7 do not belong with this rest of the material in this document. These address part of the ebXML requirements and should remain with the specification material. The diagram that is currently Section 7 needs an explanation.