

## ebXML Quality Review Group

### *Summary of Review of*

# ebXML Business Process & Core Components submissions:

- Core Component and Business Process Document Overview Version 1.01
- ebXML Methodology for the Discovery and Analysis of Core Components Version 1.01
- ebXML CC Dictionary Entry Naming Conventions Version 1.01
- ebXML The role of context in the re-usability of Core Components and Business Processes Version 1.01
- ebXML specification for the application of XML based assembly and context rules Version 1.01
- The Initial Catalog of Core Components Version 1.01

**Release Date: 16<sup>th</sup> February 2001 (revised 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2001)**

Report prepared: 6<sup>th</sup> March 2001

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

The Quality Review team have completed their review of the revised set of documents from the joint Business Process and Core Components teams as submitted on March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2001. These recent revisions addressed many of the editorial concerns of the Quality Review team (but not all).

This report details the more significant structural and technical concerns of the Quality Review team with respect to these documents.

**The concerns of the Quality Review team will need to be addressed as part of this first round of public review. In addition, we encourage any party commenting on these documents to consider their comments in the light of those expressed here.**

Our overall opinion is that the majority of this material requires substantial improvements before it may be considered acceptable by the Quality Review team in its next round of review.

The key areas of concern for the Quality Review team relate to:

- **Incompleteness** – this material does not appear to have enough explanation to allow core components to be applied and extended. In many instances the

methodologies and specifications are too informal to be considered technical specifications.

Each document needs to provide a general description at the beginning of what intends to be communicated to the reader by the time they completed reading the document. This description should include the major areas to be covered and include its relevance to other specifications with appropriate cross-references. For example, we would expect this material to reference:

- ebXML Requirements Specification Version 1.0 (sections 1.5, 2.1, 3.3 and 3.5 at a minimum).
  - ebXML Technical Architecture Specification Version 1.0.4 (sections 5, 6.2, 6.3, 8.2, 8.3 and 9 at a minimum).
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- **Immaturity** – some areas appear to be lightly addressed and/or are features still under discussion. Our initial consideration was that this material had been hastily prepared. However, based on the results of recent revisions, we are concerned that some of the actual work may not yet be ready for publication.
  - **Scope** – there appears to be overlap and gaps with work of other specifications and within these documents themselves. Apart from a description in the Overview document there are only minor references to the Business Process Specification Schema and no reference to the Schema models that directly relate to the Core Component metamodel.
  - **Theoretical comment** - some material seems to be completely abstract, appearing to be comments and even with the examples provided are difficult to comprehend.
  - **Consistency** – terminology is used inconsistently and sometimes without prior definition. There appear to be a range of synonyms and homonyms applied across these documents. For example, several documents define the concept of “Core Component”, “Basic Information Entity”, “Aggregate Entities” and “Functional Sets” but use slightly different terms, meanings and usage throughout their content.
  - **Focus** – some of the material describes the organisation and work plan of the project team(s) rather specifying the concepts or processes they were addressing.
  - **Out of alignment** - we are concerned that these documents still appear to be the result of isolated teams at work. For example, the two most mature specifications, “ebXML CC Dictionary Entry Naming Conventions” and “ebXML specification for the application of XML based assembly and context rules” are not in alignment. Furthermore, the structures used in the “ebXML specification for the application of XML based assembly and context rules” and the “The Initial Catalog of Core Components” also appear not be in alignment. At least the document, “The role of context in the re-usability of Core Components and Business Processes Version” confesses its lack of harmonisation (line 21)

The Quality Review team have prepared an overview of each document submitted. For the sake of brevity, we have not made reference to every instance of issues raised, but identified representative cases instead.

- **Core Component and Business Process Document Overview Version 1.01**

We had hoped this document would provide a guide to how to apply the specifications presented, a high level view of the subject matter, its role within the ebXML Technical Architecture and the relationships or interfaces between the various concepts presented. This would also be the place to introduce a case study to be used throughout the referenced material.

Instead, this document acts merely as an index, with introductory text taken from each specification copied into the relevant headings (lines 96-194).

This overview should not be an exercise in editing, but an opportunity to explain the big picture of the material provided. We cannot tell from this document why or how this material will be used and why it is useful to us. The one original diagram used (between lines 94 and 95) is not explained adequately to make it of value.

- **ebXML Methodology for the Discovery and Analysis of Core Components Version 1.01**

After considerable debate, the team feel the need to make some serious observations about the material in this document:

- **Unclear Objective**

What does this document mean by the term “discovery”? Is it identifying the components needed for a specific business process (lines 212-220) or how to navigate a registry (lines 169-173)?

Does this document aim to be address both Core Components and Business Processes in the discovery and analysis phases? (lines 125-129, 141, 145, 150)

- **Poor Structure**

Fragments of methodology are scattered in various parts of the text interspersed by rhetoric and comment. There is no clear path to describe the end-to-end process of either discovery or analysis.

- **Inadequate case study**

The case study shows promise (although it includes some material more suitable for the methodology and objectives rather than the case study (lines 348-406)). However, it concentrates on basic data modelling and analysis principles (lines 409-549) and avoids describing the critical step of turning these concepts into core components (lines 552-554).

Our overall opinion is that whilst there are some fragments of valuable information, this document is not salvageable in its current form. The joint Business Process and Core Components team need to address the purpose, scope, objectives and intention of this material and find a logical, consistent and concise method of presenting it.

As it stands, this document will only add to the confusion surrounding the methodology for the discovery and analysis of Core Components, rather than explain it.

- **ebXML CC Dictionary Entry Naming Conventions Version 1.01**  
Whilst several editing comments did not seem to be applied in the recent revision, this document is considered a suitable standard for a technical specification. The list of Representation types (lines 196-197) needs to show how it was derived and ratified.

- **ebXML The role of context in the re-usability of Core Components and Business Processes Version 1.01**

The opinion of the Quality Review team is this document attempts to be:

- a. A discussion/white paper on the use of context (lines 117-183, lines 543-657).
- b. A requirement document of the type definitions to be supported by the ebXML Registry Information Model (lines 195-264, lines 660-672).
- c. A catalogue of 'core' contexts (lines 346-541).

Unfortunately, it does not achieve any of these objectives to the detail necessary. There is also material that may be in the wrong place (out of "context"?). For example, the metamodel used as "Context-controlled Core Component Metamodel" (lines 185-193 and detailed in Appendix 1) appears to be the entire Core Component metamodel. This is important enough to be described at a higher level somewhere else in this documentation set and not just in this subsection.

Overall, this material needs to be restructured and possibly incorporated into other documents.

- **ebXML specification for the application of XML based assembly and context rules Version 1.01**

This document may be better retitled as "Rules for Implementing Core Components in XML Syntax". Whilst it could benefit from a better overview description, incremental presentation, and some structural changes it represents a 'usable' document of a standard suitable for a technical specification.

This specification does, however, establish the need for an EDI equivalent to this document (an ebXML Requirement).

Of further significance is that there appears to be an alignment issue between the Analysis Field Headings of the "Initial Catalog of Core Components" and those attributes of a core component required for the CreateElement element in this specification. It is unclear how you can make one from the other.

Finally, examples of core components used in this document do appear to follow the conventions specified in "ebXML CC Dictionary Entry Naming Conventions Version 1.01" (lines 428-489 and lines 491-564).

- **The Initial Catalog of Core Components Version 1.01**

This document needs to be clearer on its objectives (line 83-87), definition (lines 100-102) and scope (lines 95-97). Some section headings are not relevant to this document.

Finally, whilst we acknowledge the varied skill sets of the sub-teams and their specialised areas of knowledge, we would encourage the Team Editors to consider the consolidating this material into one document. This may help reduce problems with alignment, consistency and scope and provide a more coherent structure for the audience.