

Subj: **Request R03023**
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From: Peter Schneider
To: [NAESB office](#)

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: XML standard for the exchange of Gas Measurement data.

In the gas measurement business there has been a historical disconnect between corporations and there exchange of electronic data. Though there is some exchange of data it is predominantly in proprietary formats and requires extensive interpretation. These formats also require development of conversion utilities that are costly and require additional effort to cope with changes made to the formats. It is also important to note that the data contained within the file can also contain errors of random nature. These errors can come from a variety of potential reasons. Most predominately it relates to corporations writing their own tools and not taking the time to properly test their operation. Another source is the use of dissimilar formats between vendors and in-house developed measurement systems. In many cases though data is still faxed and then manually entered. Both of these options are costly to both the source company and the target company to administer and maintain.

Schneider Information Services Inc. has been assisting Public Service Company of New Mexico to automate the loading of their data and as a result has implemented data conversion tools. These tools have provided many benefits but require maintenance as operations change between corporations or measurement equipment. From our experience the result of improved data exchange has the following benefits to corporations:

- Greater accuracy in the data entered into systems.
- Increased amount of data being used since the time to enter is no longer a concern.
- Reduced or elimination of operator error for data entry.
- Quicker turnaround times for access to data.
- Reduced labor costs with reduction in time required to enter data.
- Reduction in lost gas due to missing or inaccurate data.
- Reduced cost in gas due to improvements in lost gas calculations and reductions in labor.
- Enabling operators to concentrate on true delivery of gas problems and less on the problems related to the collection and manipulation of data.

The introduction of an XML standard would significantly improve the exchange of data between corporations. Some of the reasons to use XML as the standard for data exchange are:

- IT/IS standard. XML has become the standard for new system development of data exchange.
- XML is independent of all software and operating systems.
- Makes available the use of web services which enables the next generation of automation. Web services enable systems to communicate with each other securely through corporate firewalls to exchange data absent of operators.
- XML is a relational format and would more accurately represent the data and its associations. The nature of the format ensures that each record is complete and further operations are not required to locate and associate related data.
- XML is intuitive to read.

- There are many development tool sets available for unique and custom needs of the data. These tools allow IT/IS departments to extend the use of the data to other systems if they choose. It also allows them to more easily integrate the data into legacy systems that may not work with XML. Even in the absence of tools the format is extremely easy to work with.
- The format is very flexible and would allow for greater levels of data to be exchanged.
- The format can support versioning of the structure to enable additions and modifications over time yet allowing for prior systems to maintain support of the format. The schema of the file can reference a version and specify the content structure based on the version.
- Use of style sheets (XSLT, an extension of XML commonly used with XLM) can enable for the format to be translated into other formats.
- Measurement system and hardware vendors have resources and technologies available to easily integrate XML processes.
- XML is one of the backbone structures in the Microsoft .Net framework and is also strongly supported by the Java community.

With the proliferation of XML as a data exchange format for the information technologies sector we are also starting to see measurement manufacturers making the move. RTU's are now becoming available that utilize the XML format for their output and enable them to more intuitively report on the activities of their operation. Introduction of a standard would extend its potential to enable more effective integration and automation of metering data collection within the corporation as well.

The use of XML has been entrenched in the IT/IS world as the interoperability format of choice. It allows for the development of complex, yet relational, data structures and reduction of costs. It is now time that all the benefits of a common format are experienced by corporations so that they can reduce their costs, improve accuracy, and be free to choose the tools that best benefit their operations.

Sincerely,

Peter Schneider

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