

XML – The pipeline perspective

Implementation

The use of XML in the gas industry for communicating data would give the customer another method to send/receive data to/from the service provider. The physical route that the data takes in getting to the service provider's database could be through the existing route used by the X12 and FF format files. Using this path would cause the least changes needed by the service provider. It would require that the customer have capabilities of posting and receiving datasets and the encryption and decryption of them. The service provider would need to create a method of then posting/extracting the data to/from their database.

Another possible method of using XML would be for the application creating the XML data to convert it into a X12 document. This document would then be transmitted like the current X12 documents.

Issues

If the current EDM method were not used to transfer the data, the service provider would need to create another way to transfer the data. This could take additional resources for the service provider that would then be reflected in the rates charged to all customers when the service may only be used by a few.

How many customers will be using this method? How many transactions will be sent this way? If the transactions are sent one at a time, this could cause many files (transmissions) to be sent to the service provider using a batch method of communications. The response time for this EDM process is 15 minutes. Will the customer want to wait that long for a response?

Concerns

How many different methods of receiving/transmitting data is the service provider going to be required to support? Currently there is X12, FF and the customer activity screens.