

## Applicability of XML to GISB

XML would be applicable to GISB in the following areas:

- As a replacement for ANSI X12 EDI
- As a new file download format (instead of or as an alternate to comma-delimited files)
- As a means of enhancing the Web page
  - Display basis
  - Data exchange

XML files may be easier and cheaper to produce than ANSI X12 EDI files. As a result, there may be less resistance to the implementation of XML batch files than there is to EDI flat files.

XML files could be used as an alternative to GISB's comma-delimited flat files. In the near future, XML may be a more useful format for our users, since it is anticipated that many tools will be able to render XML in a format suitable to the tool. For example, both spreadsheets and word processors may be able to present XML files in a more readable fashion than comma-delimited files. This is because these tools will have label information for each piece of data that can be used to determine how to lay out the data for human readability.

If XML were used for the display of Web pages such as Informational Postings, it would likely improve the consistency of the data presentation from TSP to TSP. This would be most likely if the XML is used in conjunction with an HTML Style Sheet which describes how to render the data. While GISB has done a good job of describing how data should be laid out, the use of XML may offer the opportunity to do it even better.

The use of XML for data exchange is mainly applicable to Customer Activities data entry forms. Data that is collected from the form could be put into the XML format for sending to the server when the user clicks the 'Submit' button. That way, the input for, say, a nomination would be formatted the same as it would be in the batch (EDI) scenario. This would allow the receiver of the transaction to have a single back-end "engine" capable of processing input from either batch or on-line sources. This could help to reduce the amount of program code to be maintained. Furthermore, this improves the chances that this data is in a format which may already be in use for internal data exchange between applications.