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# XML Document Formats

C. Len Bullard

## Abstract

As world events and business opportunities collide, the requirements for interoperable document formats become increasingly evident.

Mandating XML for systems is a first step, but real information can't be shared effectively without a common understanding on the semantics and usage of the markup. One solution is to use agreed-on custom schemas. Another is to cite well-standardized formats such as XHTML, or deploy more specific XML formats such as Microsoft Office XML or the OpenDocument Format. None of these latter formats were written with a particular semantic usage in mind. They are of more general applicability than custom-built schemas, can be used for human-readable documents, and can be built into specific tools.

This town hall debates the merits of different approaches to approaching this challenge to leverage XML to meet the requirements for enabling sustainable, evolvable information and communication technologies. The types of questions that may be raised include: How can custom-defined schemas be used in the document environment? Is XML+stylesheet enough for human-readable documents whose semantics is not really encoded in the markup, but in the actual content? What changes as more and more machine-processable data is added to the content? How much de facto acceptance and support must a purported standard have before it can be treated as a real basis for shared information?

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# 1. Town Hall Meeting

The moderator did not prepare a summary of the Town Hall meeting for the proceedings.

# Biography

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Len Bullard is a veteran markup specialist currently employed by the Intergraph Public Safety Corporation. He is an author, a working musician and composer, was the founding director of the [IrishSpace](http://www.digitalspaceart.com/irish) [<http://www.digitalspaceart.com/irish>] team that created the world's first VRML epic, and is the married father of two children. He records and publishes his own musical CDs. To contact Len, write him at [clbullar@ingr.com](mailto:clbullar@ingr.com) or [cbullard@hiwaay.net](mailto:cbullard@hiwaay.net).