

Press Contact:
Layna Fischer, General Manager
Workflow Management Coalition
2436 N. Federal Highway #374
Lighthouse Point FL 33064 USA
Tel: +1 954 782 3376
wfmc@wfmc.org



WfMC Announces Release of Workflow Standard Interoperability Wf-XML Binding Version 1.1

Lighthouse Point, FL February 11, 2002: The Workflow Management Coalition (WfMC) is pleased to announce the release of Workflow Standard – Interoperability: Wf-XML Binding version 1.1. This document represents a specification for a language based on the eXtensible Markup Language (XML), designed to model the data transfer requirements set forth in the Workflow Management Coalition (WfMC)'s Interoperability Abstract specification.

“The release of this proven XML-based standard provides organizations with an interoperability standard that facilitates a consistent method of interfacing between disparate workflow engines. This means that organizations will be able to simply and effectively implement Business to Business process integration as well as maximizing their existing investment in BP technology and legacy applications,” said Jon Pyke, Chair of the WfMC and CTO Staffware Plc. “There is no doubt that take up of this standard will enhance the availability, quality and timeliness of management information regardless of location and technology deployed.”

Edited and coordinated on behalf of the WfMC by Program Manager, Joint Computer-aided Acquisition and Logistic Support (JCALS) with technical support from Michael Rossi, Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC), Rainer Weber, SAP and Mike Marin, FileNET, Wf-XML version 1.1 incorporates the following enhancements:

- Support for batch processing—This allows multiple requests/responses to be delivered within a single message.
- Enhanced support for Parallel-Synchronized processing—The new Notify operation allows for the notification of arbitrary events as they occur in the lifecycle of a business process.
- Context-specific data structures—A new recommended content model for context-specific data is specified that enhances interoperability through standardization.
- Enhanced support for asynchronous processing—This processing model is now addressed more explicitly through the addition of a new message type (Acknowledgement), as well as specification of structures in the Transport section of the message useful for correlation of messages.

The release of Wf-XML version 1.0 was a landmark achievement for the WfMC in that it represented the Coalition's initial entry into the XML arena. With this release, the WfMC has further defined the fundamental protocol elements required to support interoperability among workflow systems over any transport mechanism (such as HTTP, SMTP, TCP/IP, etc.), whether synchronous or asynchronous.

This specification is based on previous work completed by the Workflow Management Coalition (WfMC), the Object Management Group (OMG) and many vendor organizations in an effort to define the functionality required to achieve interoperability among workflow systems.

At a high level, these are the goals of this specification:

- Support chained, nested and parallel-synchronized models of interoperability
- Provide for both synchronous and asynchronous interactions
- Support individual and batch operations
- Remain implementation independent
- Define a light, easy-to-implement protocol

The availability of this standard to industry will allow vendors of workflow products and distributed systems to implement innovative new solutions never before possible, by loosely coupling system components. Additionally, Wf-XML version 1.1 allows these systems to be easily integrated with third-party products using an open, structured messaging syntax, while allowing each system to provide differentiating features sets through its extensible architecture.

This release coincides with a point in the development of XML at which several protocols, including Wf-XML, are providing input to the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) to support their development of a standardized XML protocol (SOAP). As this activity progresses, even broader support for this already widely adopted standard can be expected.

This specification is intended for use by software vendors, system integrators, consultants and any other individual or organization concerned with interoperability among workflow systems. Furthermore, it will be of value to those concerned with the design and implementation of integrated and/or distributed systems, as a protocol for the interaction of generic (possibly remote) services.

Described as *Document WfMC-TC-1023*, the full specification will be published in the forthcoming *Workflow Handbook 2002*, launching on Wednesday 6 March at the AIIM Conference and Expo in San Francisco. It may also be downloaded from the Coalition's website at <http://www.wfmc.org/standards/docs.htm>.

About the Workflow Management Coalition (www.wfmc.org)

The WfMC, founded in August 1993, is a non-profit, international organization of workflow vendors, users, analysts and university/research groups. The Coalition's mission is to promote and develop the use of workflow through the establishment of standards for software terminology, interoperability and connectivity between workflow products. Consisting of over 300 members, spread throughout the world, the Coalition has become established as the primary standards body for this rapidly expanding software market.