



Serving New York's State/Local Government and Corporate IT Leadership

CTG's XML Testbed Project Part Three

This is the third article in a three-part series about the Center for Technology in Government's XML Testbed project. The first two articles talked about XML and its advantages, how it became central to this new Testbed project at CTG, and gave an update on what the agency participants have learned so far. In this article we hope to give readers a better understanding of the value of the prototypes that the agencies have been building as part of the process.

When five NYS agencies came to CTG's Kickoff Meeting for the *Web Site Management Using XML Testbed Project* in July 2005, they came with some very high expectations. The challenge was to address these expectations in a manner that kept everyone on track, working together, and believing in the process. The Testbed process involved more than just individual teams working on individual projects; it involved collaboration. To get the most from the Testbed project, the agency teams would need to learn from each other as well as from CTG staff and outside experts.

For CTG the Testbed model is more than just a series of classes where one learns some skills and then returns to the work place to figure out how to

implement that learning. The Testbed structure situates the participants' learning within the context of their work environment, using their own specific business problems and objectives. A key component of the XML Testbed was the development of a prototype to test assumptions, experiment with implementation issues, and provide a "proof of concept" product that would give each team realistic expectations of what they could successfully accomplish with XML.

Merriam Webster's dictionary defines prototype as "an original model on which something is patterned" and "a first full-scale and usually functional form of a new type or design of a construction (as an airplane)." The prototype itself is not intended to be the pilot phase of a planned implementation, but rather a means to answer-

ing basic questions such as:

- Where should we begin?
- Where will we get the most value?
- What is the size and complexity of the problem?

Inside

Register to Attend: Thinking Beyond Your Web Site: Lessons from the XML Testbed Project	4
NYS Agency's Oracle User's Group Kick-off Event	5
NYS Information Security Breach and Notification Act	6

FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Colleague:

Welcome to 2006!! May it be a productive year for you!

The program year for The Forum was off to a great start as of October 1st. Participation in NYS Forum education and training events held in the first quarter of the new program year represents over 60% of the participation level for the entire previous year. Key to this unusual growth was the conduct of The Cyber Security Awareness Conference held on October 20, 2005.

That conference focused on how to keep children safe while using the Internet and featured an opening keynote address by Governor Pataki. The October event also included two workshops: one workshop designed for parents, educators, legislators, and law enforcement and another designed specifically for school children. There was also a concurrent webcast that drew the largest number of participants ever. The Cyber Security Awareness Conference was supported by the NYS Office of Cyber Security and Critical Infrastructure Coordination, the Jenna Foundation for Non-Violence, the NYS Forum, the University at Albany, the NYS Education Department, the NYS Police, NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services, NYS Lottery, and the South Colonie School District.

Among the more than 20 other NYS Forum events held in the first quarter, was a Web Application Seminar co-hosted with the World Organization of Webmasters, the 2nd Annual IT Executive Session for agency commissioners, deputy commissioners and CIO's held in conjunction with the NYS Office of the CIO at the University Club and an IT Accessibility Seminar held at Monroe County Community College in conjunction with Cornell University, the U.S. General Services Administration and the American Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

This noteworthy start to The Forum's 2005-2006 program year underscores the commitment of committee leadership and members. For that, we are all grateful.

For information on all NYS Forum events and copies of the presentations made, visit: <http://www.nysforum.org/pastseminars/>.

Sincerely,



Greg Benson



Executive Committee

Officers

Chair, Celia Hamblin, Dept. of Labor
Vice-Chair, Leigh Favitta, Dormitory Authority
Sec./Treas., Diane Taylor, OSC

Members

James Bell, NYS Senate
Walter Bikowitz, OGS
JoAnn P. Bomeisl, Insurance Dept.
Vivian Conboy, Dept. of Taxation & Finance
Terri Daly, OFT
Sharon Dawes, CTG
Michael Donovan, OCIO
Thomas Duffy, OCSCIC
Stanley France, Schoharie County
Robert Freeman, Dept. of State
Jeffrey S. Grunfeld, OSC
Christine Haile, SUNY at Albany
Roman Hedges, NYS Assembly
Karl Kelly, DMNA
Robert G. Kelly, DHCR
Kim S. McKinney, NYS LGITDA
Janice Morris, DOT
Nancy Mulholland, WCB
Gene Pezdek, DEC
Joanne Riddett, Thruway Authority
Franklin Slade, Dept. of Civil Service
Timothy Spencer, DOB

Staff

Editor

Gregory M. Benson, Executive Director

Design & Production

Rebecca J. Buchner, Executive Assistant

Milena Ivanova,
Technical Coordinator

Editorial Office

The NYS Forum
Rockefeller Institute of Government
411 State Street
Albany, NY 12203
Phone (518) 443-5001
Fax (518) 443-5006
Visit our Web Site www.nysforum.org
E-mail info@nysforum.org

Open Forum is a regular publication of the
The NYS Forum.

We welcome editorial proposals and submissions.

- What technical tools are needed and how do we use them?
- What is a realistic timeframe?
- What are the potential outcomes?

As such, a Testbed project affords the necessary time and space for learning, experimenting and understanding fully a particular issue. The measure for a successful prototype in this context then is not so much “does it work?” or “have we moved it into production?” but “has it answered our questions?” or “what has it taught us?”

Among the Testbed participants — some who had vast experience in working with prototypes, others who had very little — they all described the value of a prototype in similar ways:

- identify potential problems early on;
- think through the process more carefully before committing;
- find out if you can actually do something — often it looks good on paper, but knowing in advance that you can do it is advantageous — it's a confidence builder;

...a Testbed project affords the necessary time and space for learning, experimenting and understanding fully a particular issue.

- ensure everyone is thinking about the same thing, refine understanding of what everyone really wants; useful in terms of communication;
- give users the ability to see what they are asking for, because sometimes they find it's not exactly what they wanted;

- discover the possibilities of a new technology; make sure you can do the technical side of it and uncover any potential technical problems;
- gather knowledge to estimate the time a real project will take.

But working with prototypes brings challenges as well, and the project teams found theirs in these areas:

- trying to tackle too big and/or complex a problem to address in the timeframe of the Testbed;
- once built, everyone assumes that all the background processes are in place as well, and that you are closer to the finish than you really are;
- with so much time invested, there's pressure to implement;
- it's perceived as “successful” only if it mimics what will be done in production or turns out to be something that can be implemented.

There are many things the agencies have already learned about XML from building their prototypes. Some have come to the conclusion that

XML will work for them, and they will be able to implement it using pieces from their prototypes. Others know that because of what they have learned building their prototype, once they are able to address larger organizational barriers, they will be using XML because they clearly see the benefits. And, one group has already implemented their prototype on their Web site. They found it worked so



Jon Bosak, a co-inventor of XML and currently a distinguished engineer at Sun Microsystems, spoke about his current XML project at the final CTG XML Testbed workshop back in November.

well that they put it right into production. Even though the code wasn't perfect yet, it immediately saved one staff person almost one day of repetitive work per week — and that savings alone was justification for using it.

Building the prototype in the Testbed environment has also led to many advantages. For most of the agency teams stepping into the room that first day, they had no idea that they were not alone. Every one of them had come to the same juncture, struggling with similar content management problems and, while some thought it was because they had done something wrong along the way, they quickly realized that everyone else was still managing their Web sites in basically the same way. Many described that this gave them comfort in beginning the search for a better way.

As a team, many were in a group of people who had never worked together before and have found this new experience very rewarding. While it was challenging at first, they are now learning more about each other's jobs

and responsibilities and it is resulting in better relationships and communication. And, along the way they have learned through the positive experience of sharing information and expertise in the collaborative environment of the Testbed. Some of the positive outcomes mentioned include:

- the ability to talk things through and brainstorm with others for ideas and possibilities;
- exposure to large agencies with extensive technical expertise and success;

- ability to see what goes on at other agencies of different sizes and technical expertise with lots of skill sets from the Web end to the project management end;
- ability to learn more about other people's jobs at different agencies and different ways to look at new ideas.

As part of the Testbed, CTG will be developing an XML library of shared resources. Many of the technical resources will be taken straight from the agency prototypes. Most are

looking forward to using this library as they move forward to implementing XML at their agencies. They see it as a tool for further brainstorming and triggering of ideas, to see how other agencies have tackled similar problems, and to take snippets of code and business case samples as needed to adapt it to their own applications.

♀

Register to Attend CTG's Upcoming Event

Thinking Beyond Your Web Site: Lessons from the XML Testbed Project

*Wednesday, January 25, 2006
8:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.*

Five New York state agencies have discovered the strategic advantage of using XML technology for content management. Come hear how they learned the value of creating a single source, open standard document to achieve streamlined workflow processes, content consistency and reusability, and multichannel publishing. Representatives from each of the agencies (NYS Department of Civil Service, NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal, NYS Higher Education Services Corporation, NYS Office of Cultural Education, and NYS Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) will participate in a panel discussion to share the organizational, fiscal, and technical benefits of XML.

The keynote speaker for the event will be Tim Bray, co-inventor of XML and currently director of web technologies at Sun Microsystems. Attendees will also have the opportunity to speak one-on-one with all of the agency team members at a poster session representing their individual team projects.

For more information or to register online by January 20, 2006, please go to www.ctg.albany.edu/projects/xmltb-registration.

New York State Agency's Oracle User's Group Kick-off Event

You may remember New York State Agency's Oracle User's group. It is being renewed and will once again be offering educational programs for Oracle users or those of you who want to learn about Oracle use. NYS Agency volunteers in conjunction with The NYS Forum and Oracle Corporation, is pleased to be cohosting a series of quarterly educational events. These events will be presented for New York State Agency Oracle users and are designed to share knowledge and best practices among people who use Oracle tools and databases.

These presentations will be offered at varying degrees of technology sophistication. And, some will be customized to address specific user challenges.

The first meeting is being hosted by the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS), 1450 Western Avenue, Albany, on Tuesday, February 7, 2006. OASAS will be presenting an overview of how they have implemented Oracle software and databases to provide a Data Warehouse using Discoverer, Oracle Application Server and Portal, Oracle Internet Directory, JDeveloper and even Forms!

Agenda for February 7th Kick-Off Event

- 9:30 – 10:15 am Kick-off Notes and a Brief overview of OASAS Oracle Architecture**
- 10:15 – 10:30 am Break – Q&A**
- 10:30 – 11:15 am Oracle Presents: *Security, What's New***
- 11:15 – 11:30 am Q&A**

In the future, we would like to showcase different agency's implementations. Agency staff may volunteer or suggest topics that are of interest to them. For example, an agency may be interested in implementing Oracle Application Server. We can contact an agency that currently has this software running in a production environment and ask them to showcase their implementation.

If you have any questions, please contact Polly Roddy at OASAS via email pollyroddy@oasas.state.ny.us or phone at (518) 485-2356 or Cliff Goggins at Oracle via email cliff.goggins@oracle.com or (518) 257-7410.

**To register visit: www.nysforum.org
click on NYS Agency's Oracle User's Group Kick-off Event**

Register early, as space is limited!

NYS Information Security Breach and Notification Act

The New York State Information Security Breach and Notification Act was passed to add a public element of accountability for government and private agencies charged with the stewardship of New York state resident's private information and to help protect New York state residents from unauthorized access to their private information stored in electronic format. This law considers private information to be personal information in combination with any of the following data elements when those data elements are not encrypted or the encryption key has been acquired: (1) social security number; (2) drivers license num-

ber or nondriver identification card number; or (3) account number, credit or debit card number, in combination with any required security code, access code, or password which would permit access to an individual's financial account.

This law requires New York State government entities to disclose, without unreasonable delay, any breach of security, unauthorized access, or unauthorized release of personal computerized data to any NY State resident (NYS policy also required notification of this information to nonresidents) when this information was or is reasonably believed to have been

acquired without valid authorization (see Policy P03-002 V2.1.-Part 12 at: http://www.cscic.state.ny.us/policies/cs_policyp03-002v2.1.pdf).

When notification is necessary, the State entity or person or business conducting business in NY must also notify three (3) NYS offices: the NYS Attorney General (AG), the NYS Office of Cyber Security & Critical Infrastructure Coordination (CSCIC) and the NYS Consumer Protection Board (CPB). The form for reporting these breaches is available at: <http://www.cscic.state.ny.us/security/securitybreach/ReportForm.pdf>. ☞

