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xml tutorial

XML is a markup language. The mighty ones who created this acronym cheated a little, as XML stands for eXtensible Markup Language. XML was released in the late 90's and has since received a great amount of hype. The XML standard was created by W3C to provide an easy to use and standardized way to store self-describing data (self-describing data is data that describes both its content and its structure).

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communication between application

XML is nothing by itself. XML is more of a "common ground" standard. The main benefit of XML is that you can use it to take data from a program like MSSQL (Microsoft SQL), convert it into XML, then share that XML with a slough of other programs and platforms. Each of these receiving platforms can then convert the XML into a structure the platform uses normally, and *presto!* You have just communicated between two platforms which are potentially very different!

What makes XML truly powerful is the international acceptance it has received. Many individuals and corporations have put forth their hard work to make XML interfaces for databases, programming, office application, mobile phones and more. It is because of this hard work that the tools exist to do these conversion from whatever platform into standardized XML data or convert XML into a format used by that platform.

In the past, attempts at creating a standardized format for data that could be interpreted by many different platforms (or applications) failed miserably. XML has largely succeeded in doing this.

applications of xml

Although there are countless numbers of applications that use XML, here are a few examples of the current platforms and applications that are making use of this technology:

- Cell Phones - XML data is sent to some cell phones. The data is then formatted by the specification of the cell phone software designer to display text or images, and even to play sounds!
- File Converters - Many applications have been written to convert existing documents into the XML standard. An example is a PDF to XML converter.
- VoiceXML - Converts XML documents into an audio format so that you can *listen* to an XML document.

recommended prior knowledge

We recommend that you know how to Open/Edit/Save a file in Notepad. If you would like a walkthrough on basic file editing, follow our First Web Site Walkthrough that covers all that mumbo jumbo. In addition to file editing, a basic knowledge or exposure to HTML will help. This information is not required to start this tutorial, but it will make the learning process easier.



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