XML DTD

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An XML document with correct syntax is called "Well Formed".

An XML document validated against a DTD is both "Well Formed" and "Valid".

Valid XML Documents

A "Valid" XML document is a "Well Formed" XML document, which also conforms to the rules of a DTD:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<!DOCTYPE note SYSTEM "Note.dtd">
<note>
```

```
<to>Tove</to>
<from>Jani</from>
<heading>Reminder</heading>
<body>Don't forget me this weekend!</body>
</note>
```

The DOCTYPE declaration, in the example above, is a reference to an external DTD file. The content of the file is shown in the paragraph below.

XML DTD

The purpose of a DTD is to define the structure of an XML document. It defines the structure with a list of legal elements:

```
<!DOCTYPE note
[
<!ELEMENT note (to,from,heading,body)>
<!ELEMENT to (#PCDATA)>
<!ELEMENT from (#PCDATA)>
<!ELEMENT heading (#PCDATA)>
<!ELEMENT body (#PCDATA)>
]>
```

The DTD above is interpreted like this:

- !DOCTYPE note defines that the root element of the document is note

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- !ELEMENT note defines that the note element must contain the elements: "to, from, heading, body"
- !ELEMENT to defines the to element to be of type "#PCDATA"
- !ELEMENT from defines the from element to be of type "#PCDATA"
- !ELEMENT heading defines the heading element to be of type "#PCDATA"
- !ELEMENT body defines the body element to be of type "#PCDATA"

 #PCDATA means parse-able text data.

Using DTD for Entity Declaration

A doctype declaration can also be used to define special characters and character strings, used in the document:

Example

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>

<!DOCTYPE note [
<!ENTITY nbsp " ">
<!ENTITY writer "Writer: Donald Duck.">
<!ENTITY copyright "Copyright: W3Schools.">
]>

<note>
<to>Tove</to>
<from>Jani</from>
```

```
<heading>Reminder</heading>
<body>Don't forget me this weekend!</body>
<footer>&writer; &copyright;</footer>
</note>
```

Try it yourself »

An entity has three parts: an ampersand (&), an entity name, and a semicolon (;).

Why Use a DTD?

With a DTD, independent groups of people can agree on a standard for interchanging data.

With a DTD, you can verify that the data you receive from the outside world is valid.

If you want to study DTD, please read our DTD Tutorial.

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