

XML - Part 1

STAT 133

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XML

XML & HTML

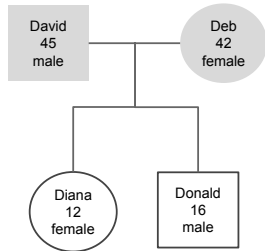
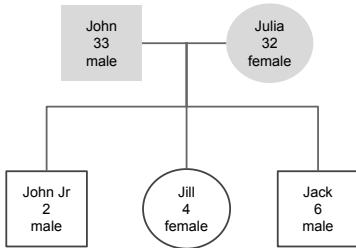
The goal of these slides is to give you a **crash introduction to XML and HTML** so you can get a good grasp of those formats for the following lectures

Motivation

Two main limitations of field-delimited files

- ▶ In plain text formats there is no information to describe the location of the data values
- ▶ There is no recognizable label for each data value within the file
- ▶ Serious limitations to store data with hierarchical structure

Hierarchical data



Hierarchical data

Field-delimited files have limitations with hierarchical data

		John	33	male
		Julia	32	female
John	Julia	Jack	6	male
John	Julia	Jill	4	female
John	Julia	John jnr	2	male
		David	45	male
		Debbie	42	female
David	Debbie	Donald	16	male
David	Debbie	Dianne	12	female

XML format

XML advantages

- ▶ XML is a storage format that is still based on plain text
- ▶ In XML formats every single value is distinctly labeled
- ▶ Moreover, every single value is self-described
- ▶ The information is organized in a much more sophisticated manner

Hierarchical data

An example of hierarchical data in XML

```
<family>
  <parent gender="male" name="John" age="33" />
  <parent gender="female" name="Julia" age="32" />
  <child gender="male" name="Jack" age="6" />
  <child gender="female" name="Jill" age="4" />
  <child gender="male" name="John jnr" age="2" />
</family>
<family>
  <parent gender="male" name="David" age="45" />
  <parent gender="female" name="Debbie" age="42" />
  <child gender="male" name="Donald" age="16" />
  <child gender="female" name="Dianne" age="12" />
</family>
```


XML and HTML

Why should you care about XML and HTML?

- ▶ Large amounts of data and information are stored, shared and distributed using HTML and XML-dialects
- ▶ They are widely adopted and used in many applications
- ▶ Working with data from the Web means dealing with HTML

XML

eXtensible Markup Language

Some Definitions

“XML is a markup language that defines a set of rules for encoding documents in a format that is both human-readable and machine-readable”

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/XML>

“XML is a data description language used for describing data”

Paul Murrell

Introduction to Data Technologies

Some Definitions

“XML is a very general structure with which we can define any number of new formats to represent arbitrary data”

“XML is a standard for the semantic, hierarchical representation of data”

Deb Nolan & Duncan Temple Lang

XML and Web Technologies for Data Sciences with R

About XML

XML

XML stands for **eXtensible Markup Language**

Broadly speaking ...

XML provides a flexible framework to create formats for describing and representing data

Markups

Markup

A **markup** is a sequence of characters or other symbols inserted at certain places in a document to indicate either:

- ▶ how the content should be displayed when printed or in screen
- ▶ describe the document's structure

Markups

Markup Language

A markup language is a system for **annotating** (i.e. *marking*) a document in a way that the content is distinguished from its representation (eg LaTeX, PostScript, HTML, SVG)

LaTeX example

```
\documentclass{article}
\usepackage{graphicx}

\begin{document}

\title{Introduction to XML}
\author{First Last}
\maketitle

\section{Introduction}
Here is the text of your introduction.

\begin{equation}
\label{simple_equation}
\alpha = \sqrt{\beta}
\end{equation}

\subsection{Subsection Heading Here}
Write your subsection text here.

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=3.0in]{myfigure}
\caption{Simulation Results}
\label{simulationfigure}
\end{figure}

\end{document}
```


Markups

XML Markups

In XML (as well as in HTML) the marks (aka *tags*) are defined using angle brackets: `<>`

`<mark>`Text marked with special tag`</mark>`

Extensible

Extensible?

The concept of *extensibility* means that we can define our own marks, the order in which they occur, and how they should be processed. For example:

- ▶ `<my_mark>`
- ▶ `<awesome>`
- ▶ `<boring>`
- ▶ `<cool>`

About XML

XML is NOT

- ▶ a programming language
- ▶ a network transfer protocol
- ▶ a database

About XML

XML is

- ▶ more than a markup language
- ▶ a generic language that provides structure and syntax for representing any type of information
- ▶ a meta-language: it allows us to create or define other languages

XML Applications

Some XML dialects

- ▶ **KML** (*Keyhole Markup Language*) for describing geo-spatial information used in Google Earth, Google Maps, Google Sky
- ▶ **SVG** (*Scalable Vector Graphics*) for visual graphical displays of two-dimensional graphics with support for interactivity and animation
- ▶ **PMML** (*Predictive Model Markup Language*) for describing and exchanging models produced by data mining and machine learning algorithms

Keyhole Markup Language example

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<kml xmlns="http://www.opengis.net/kml/2.2">
<Document>
<Placemark>
  <name>New York City</name>
  <description>New York City</description>
  <Point>
    <coordinates>-74.006393,40.714172,0</coordinates>
  </Point>
</Placemark>
</Document>
</kml>
```

Scalable Vector Graphics example

```
<svg width="100" height="100">  
  <circle cx="50" cy="50" r="40" stroke="green" stroke-width="4" />  
</svg>
```

```
<svg width="400" height="110">  
  <rect width="300" height="100" style="fill:rgb(0,0,255)" />  
</svg>
```

Minimalist Example



XML Example

Ultra Simple XML

```
<movie>
```

```
    Good Will Hunting
```

```
</movie>
```

XML Example

Ultra Simple XML

```
<movie>  
  Good Will Hunting  
</movie>
```

- ▶ one single element *movie*
- ▶ start-tag: `<movie>`
- ▶ end-tag: `</movie>`
- ▶ content: Good Will Hunting

XML Example

Ultra Simple XML

```
<movie mins="126" lang="en">  
  Good Will Hunting  
</movie>
```

- ▶ xml elements can have **attributes**
- ▶ attributes: **mins** (minutes) and **lang** (language)
- ▶ attributes are *attached* to the element's start tag
- ▶ attribute values **must be quoted!**

XML Example

Minimalist XML

```
<movie mins="126" lang="en">  
  <title>Good Will Hunting</title>  
  <director>Gus Van Sant</director>  
  <year>1998</year>  
  <genre>drama</genre>  
</movie>
```

- ▶ an xml element may contain other elements
- ▶ *movie* contains several elements: *title*, *director*, *year*, *genre*

XML Example

Simple XML

```
<movie mins="126" lang="en">
  <title>Good Will Hunting</title>
  <director>
    <first_name>Gus</first_name>
    <last_name>Van Sant</last_name>
  </director>
  <year>1998</year>
  <genre>drama</genre>
</movie>
```

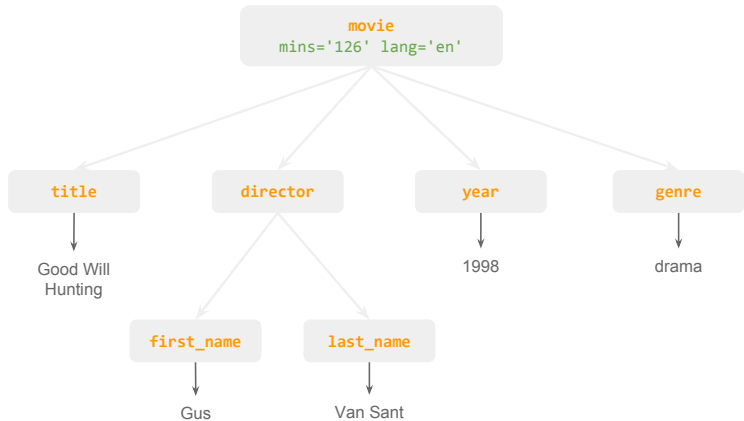
- ▶ Now *director* has two child elements: *first_name* and *last_name*

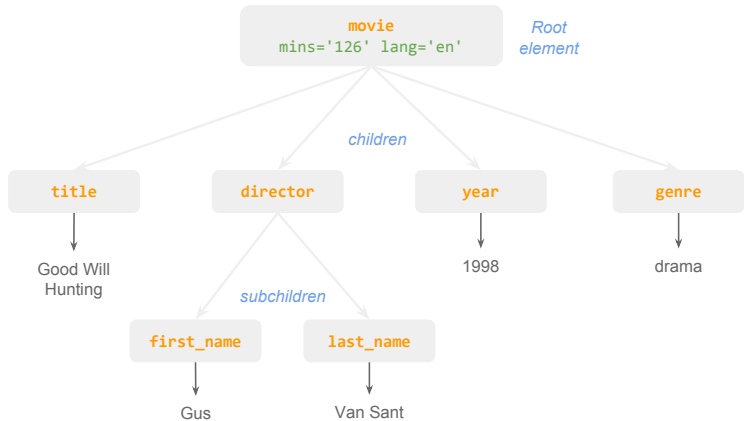
XML Hierarchy Structure

Conceptual XML

```
<Root>  
  <child_1>...</child_1>  
  <child_2>...</child_2>  
    <subchild>...</subchild>  
  <child_3>...</child_3>  
</Root>
```

- ▶ An XML document can be represented with a **tree structure**
- ▶ An XML document must have **one single Root** element
- ▶ The Root may contain child elements
- ▶ A child element may contain subchild elements





Well-Formedness

Well-formed XML

We say that an XML document is **well-formed** when it obeys the basic syntax rules of XML. Some of those rules are:

- ▶ one root element containing the rest of elements
- ▶ properly nested elements
- ▶ self-closing tags
- ▶ attributes appear in start-tags of elements
- ▶ attribute values must be quoted
- ▶ element names and attribute names are case sensitive

Well-Formedness

```
<movie mins="126" lang="en">  
  <title>Good Will Hunting</title>  
  <director>  
    <first_name>Gus</first_name>  
    <last_name>Van Sant</last_name>  
  </director>  
  <year>1998</year>  
  <genre>drama</genre>  
</movie>
```

Well-Formedness

Importance of Well-formed XML

Not well-formed XML documents produce potentially fatal errors or warnings when parsed.

Documents may be well-formed but not valid. Well-formed just guarantees that the document meets the basic XML structure, not that the content is valid.

Additional XML Elements

Some Additional Elements

```
<?xml version="1.0"? encoding="UTF-8" ?>
<![CDATA[ a > 5 & b < 10 ]]>
<?GS print(format = TRUE)>
<!DOCTYPE Movie>
<!-- This is a comment -->
<movie mins="126" lang="en">
  <title>Good Will Hunting</title>
  <director>
    <first_name>Gus</first_name>
    <last_name>Van Sant</last_name>
  </director>
  <year>1998</year>
  <genre>drama</genre>
</movie>
```

Additional Optional XML Elements

Markup	Description
<?xml >	XML Declaration <i>identifies content as an XML document</i>
<?PI >	Processing Instruction <i>processing instructions passed to application PI</i>
<!DOCTYPE >	Document-type Declaration <i>defines the structure of an XML document</i>
<![CDATA[]]>	CDATA Character Data <i>anything inside a CDATA is ignored by the parser</i>
<!-- -->	Comment <i>for writing comments</i>

DTD

Document-Type Declaration

The Document-type Declaration identifies the **type** of the document. The *type* indicates the structure of a **valid** document:

- ▶ what elements are allowed to be present
- ▶ how elements can be combined
- ▶ how elements must be ordered

Basically, the DTD specifies what the format allows to do.

Wrapping Up

About XML

About XML

- ▶ designed to store and transfer data
- ▶ designed to be self-descriptive
- ▶ tags are not predefined and can be extended

Characteristics of XML

XML is

- ▶ a generic language that provides structure and syntax for many markup dialects
- ▶ is a syntax or format for defining markup languages
- ▶ a standard for the semantic, hierarchical representation of data
- ▶ provides a general approach for representing all types of information dialects

XML document example

Simple XML

```
<?xml version="1.0"?>
<!DOCTYPE movies>
<movie mins="126" lang="en">
  <!-- this is a comment -->
  <title>Good Will Hunting</title>
  <director>
    <first_name>Gus</first_name>
    <last_name>Van Sant</last_name>
  </director>
  <year>1998</year>
  <genre>drama</genre>
</movie>
```

XML Tree Structure

Each Node can have:

- ▶ a Name
- ▶ any number of attributes
- ▶ optional content
- ▶ other nested elements

Traversing the tree

There's a **unique** path from the root node to any given node

HTML

HTML

About HTML

- ▶ HyperText Markup Language
- ▶ standard markup language used to create web pages
- ▶ HTML describes the structure of a website semantically along with cues for presentation
- ▶ Web browsers can read HTML files and render them into visible or audible web pages

Hello World example

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html>
  <head>
    <title>This is a title</title>
  </head>
  <body>
    <p>Hello world!</p>
  </body>
</html>
```


HTML

- ▶ Open a new text file
- ▶ Add some HTML content (e.g. hello world example)
- ▶ Save your file with extension `.html`
- ▶ Click on your html file
- ▶ Should be displayed in your browser

Header Element

Header of the HTML document: is declared with the tag

`<head>...</head>`

```
<head>
  <title>The Title</title>
</head>
```

Headings

HTML headings are defined with the `<h1>`, `<h2>`, ... `<h6>` tags:

```
<h1>Heading level 1</h1>
<h2>Heading level 2</h2>
<h3>Heading level 3</h3>
<h4>Heading level 4</h4>
<h5>Heading level 5</h5>
<h6>Heading level 6</h6>
```

Paragraphs

Paragraphs are defined with the `<p>` tag:

```
<p>This is the first paragraph</p>
```

```
<p>
```

```
  This is the second paragraph.
```

```
  The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.
```

```
</p>
```

Links and comments

Links require the anchor tag `<a>` and the attribute `href=`

```
<a href="https://www.wikipedia.org/">A link to Wikipedia!</a>
```

Comments:

```
<!-- This is a comment -->
```

```
<!--  
  This is also a comment  
-->
```

Images

Images are included with the `` tag and the attribute `src=`:

```

```

Image with a link:

```
<a href="http://example.org">  
    
</a>
```

HTML Example

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html>
  <head>
    <title>This is a title</title>
  </head>
  <!-- this is a comment -->
  <body>
    <h1>Heading level 1</h1>
    <h2>Heading level 2</h2>
    <h3>Heading level 3</h3>
    <h4>Heading level 4</h4>
    <h5>Heading level 5</h5>
    <h6>Heading level 6</h6>

    <p>Hello world!</p>
    This is a link</a>
  </body>
</html>
```

Some References

- ▶ XML Files website (<http://www.xmlfiles.com>)
by Jan Egil Refsnes
- ▶ XML in a Nutshell
by Elliotte Rusty Harold; W. Scott Means
- ▶ XML Tutorial (<http://www.w3schools.com/xml/default.asp>)
by w3schools
- ▶ Introduction to Data Technologies
by Paul Murrell
- ▶ XML and Web Technologies for Data Sciences with R
by Deb Nolan and Duncan Temple Lang