JSON vs XML

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Both JSON and XML can be used to receive data from a web server.

The following JSON and XML examples both define an employees object, with an array of 3 employees:

JSON Example

{"employees":[  
  { "firstName":"John", "lastName":"Doe" },  
  { "firstName":"Anna", "lastName":"Smith" },  
  { "firstName":"Peter", "lastName":"Jones" }  
]}

XML Example

<employees>  
  <employee>  
    <firstName>John</firstName> <lastName>Doe</lastName>  
  </employee>  
  <employee>  
    <firstName>Anna</firstName> <lastName>Smith</lastName>  
  </employee>  
  <employee>  
    <firstName>Peter</firstName> <lastName>Jones</lastName>  
  </employee>  
</employees>

 JSON is Like XML Because

* Both JSON and XML are "self describing" (human readable)
* Both JSON and XML are hierarchical (values within values)
* Both JSON and XML can be parsed and used by lots of programming languages
* Both JSON and XML can be fetched with an XMLHttpRequest

JSON is Unlike XML Because

* JSON doesn't use end tag
* JSON is shorter
* JSON is quicker to read and write
* JSON can use arrays

The biggest difference is:

 XML has to be parsed with an XML parser. JSON can be parsed by a standard JavaScript function.

Why JSON is Better Than XML

XML is much more difficult to parse than JSON.  
JSON is parsed into a ready-to-use JavaScript object.

For AJAX applications, JSON is faster and easier than XML:

Using XML

* Fetch an XML document
* Use the XML DOM to loop through the document
* Extract values and store in variables

Using JSON

* Fetch a JSON string
* JSON.Parse the JSON string