But then – what is it?
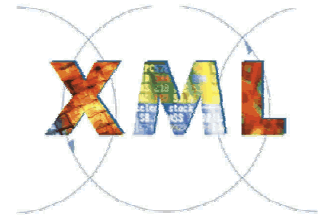
XML is a meta markup language for text documents / textual data

XML allows to define languages („applications") to represent text documents / textual data