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Process Documentation

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**Background**

At the beginning of this assignment I had some knowledge of XML from past PC game modding activities but no formal instruction in its structure or elements. My previous experience involved editing existing lines of code, often just by changing a few numbers or pasting from another document but didn’t involve any element creation. The tutorials and worksheets for this assignment helped me to realize what the elements and attributes I had been editing for years did.

**Learning Process**

I began as I did with the last assignment and viewed the tutorials at Lynda.com before attempting any code writing. The speed and detail of these tutorial videos were not of the same quality as the instruction videos for HTML. After watching these videos and the workshop tutorial from Mai, I began writing out my planned hierarchy for this project. My plan was to create a table of incidents that had 4 basic child elements (time, date, address, type) assigned to each incident. The basic structure of XML proved quite easy to learn and will be easy to expand upon. During the last project I relied primarily on the W3schools.com resources to test the code out but for this exercise I relied on it much less, aside from a few pointers about DTD.

**Development & Limitations**

This table of incidents is to serve as a daily updated feed of local crime activity. Currently much of this information is not made public unless there is an immediate or short term danger to the public and that which is accessible is not stored or accessible in a single location. Under the principle of content convergence, bringing this information into a single page would serve the function of “merging business critical content into a single portal for customers” (Andersen, p.130). This page would be available on the navigation bar of the soon to be updated psecc.umn.edu web site. The element hierarchy is for the moment quite simplified. It is meant to eventually be a long list that takes the basic elements of a CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) XML output and places them into this table. This table could then be adapted for graphing and mapping models to provide a better overall picture of the campus safety environment.

**Further Development**

The primary issue I have run into thus far, and still need to resolve, is how to code the CSS stylesheet to display the table as I intend. Most of the resources on W3schools.com pertain to styling CSS for tables in HTML but offer little for styling XML. I could eventually write a CSS script for an HTML page that the XML data is imported into, but for now displaying the exact style elements to my XML data is proving problematic. The element of ‘type’ will receive restrictions in the DTD to filter out the logged calls that are not of public concern, such as incidents pertaining to public assistance, minor traffic violations, or information requests. Developing this has been quite tedious, as the full list of incidents the CAD can log and thus output is several hundred entries long. I will have to decide if I will simply narrow the list down to the most important incident types or research a means of using XML to filter certain incidents out by a more efficient process.

Initial Heirarchy:

