

United Nation center for trade facilitation and electronic business (UN/CEFACT)

November 29, 2021 meeting:

John Sullivan (Retiring HOD)

Dan Pomeroy (GSA) John's boss

Sue Probert – CEFACT core component library owner

What is CE/FACT – common semantics focused on international trade and shipping industry, commercial supply chain, customs, taxes, etc...

Potential opportunity with NIEM?

Potential Mapping between the standards to complement each other.

Christina and Scott's input:

About your bullet re beneficial cooperation and using some of the information from UN/CEFACT messages and making it available in conforming NIEM messages, I was thinking the same thing. Had wondered if we could load the UN/CEFACT content and generate it out like regular NIEM properties and types, rather than wrapping them with adapters the way we do with GML and other external standards currently in NIEM. Sue said they didn't mandate specific syntaxes or representations, so we might be able to leverage and integrate their component names, definitions, structures, and codes more tightly than we do with GML without trying to copy their content and put it under NIEM governance. There would still be issues with the content not being harmonized (e.g., a NIEM Person and a UN/CEFACT Person are going to look different) but mapping the areas of overlap might help with that.

--Christina

From: Dr. Scott A Renner <sar@mitre.org>

Sent: Monday, November 29, 2021 12:00 PM

To: Escobar, Katherine B CIV JS J6 (USA) <katherine.b.escobar.civ@mail.mil>; Sullivan, Stephen M CTR JS J6 <stephen.m.sullivan14.ctr@mail.mil>; Medlin, Christina <Christina.Medlin@gtri.gatech.edu>; beth.l.smalley.civ@mail.mil

Subject: thoughts on NIEM and UN/CEFACT

I've been reading about UN/CEFACT for many years, so there were no surprises in the slides. Here are a few thoughts about NIEM and UN/CEFACT:

- UN/CEFACT is quite a bit older than NIEM.
- UN/CEFACT is larger than NIEM, both in terms of available resources (\$\$\$) and number of participants; probably also larger in data definition count

- UN/CEFACT is smaller in subject-area domain than NIEM. UN/CEFACT is pretty much limited to commerce: Buy/Ship/Pay. NIEM does not have any subject-area limits.
- UN/CEFACT manages more aspects of data exchange than NIEM. I'm pretty sure that some UN/CEFACT specifications include interaction sequences; that is, A sends X to B, then B sends Y to A. NIEM doesn't attempt to specify anything other than the content and meaning of the X and Y messages.
- There is a fair amount of data definition overlap; for example, both provide definitions for some of the same properties of a Person.
- UN/CEFACT also defines a great many data components that do not appear in NIEM core or domains
- Since they can produce each kind of message in multiple serializations (XML, etc.), I infer that they have their own version of a common model format. (It's not really a new idea, I saw something like it at least twenty years ago in HL7 version 3.)
- Trying to absorb UN/CEFACT into NIEM (or the converse) is madness, of course
- The most likely form of beneficial cooperation is to take some portion of the information available in existing UN/CEFACT messages and make it available in conforming NIEM messages.
- We might also find something to borrow from the way they handle RESTful APIs
- I would try to avoid involvement in UN/CEFACT governance/mangement. I just don't see any benefit to NIEM in that.

Does any of that seem wrong or incomplete? Please let me know...

cheers,

-- scott