Appendix A

XML Basics

A.1   The XML Language

An *XML document* consists of a prolog, a number of elements, and an optional epilog (not discussed here).

A.1.1   Prolog

The prolog consists of an XML declaration and an optional reference to external structuring documents. Here is an example of an *XML declaration*:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-16"?>
```

It specifies that the current document is an XML document, and defines the version and the character encoding used in the particular system (such as UTF-8, UTF-16, and ISO 8859-1). The character encoding is not mandatory, but its specification is considered good practice. Sometimes we also specify whether the document is self-contained – that is, whether it does not refer to external structuring documents:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-16" standalone="no"?>
```