

Comparing Protobuf to AMF

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Some historical context

Metadata vs no metadata

Reference

Some historical context

Battle for web dominance

- HTML rules the web. XSL and then SOAP are poorly accepted.
- PHP, unlike ASP or JSP streams page content.
- Macromedia, then Adobe Flash needs streaming for interactivity.
- AMF gives Flash a competitive edge over SOAP.
- AMFPHP first, then others implement AMF.
- Adobe and Mozilla lose standards battle to Google, MS and Apple.
- Protobuf is positioned to replace AMF.

Metadata vs no metadata

AMF: yest to metadata

- Easy debugging.
- No need for codegeneration.
- Some overhead in short messages.
- Potential for references, richer vocabulary.

Protobuf: no to metadata

- Invention of Descriptor (fixed point description of description).
- Extensive infrastrucutre. Pros: more tools. Cons: more work.
 - Special RPC description language.
 - Special language-independent language for binary data description.
- Multiple encoding layers: wire-type, value-type, application-type.

Reference

- Cannasse: EcmaScript 4 and the web
- Cannasse: EcmaScript disharmony
- AMFPHP
- Wikipedia: AMF