



WS-eCAT Multilingual eCataloguing and eClassification in eBusiness

Title	Minutes of the eCAT Plenary: Project Gen-ePDC 'Generic Product Description and Classification'
Meeting date	9 February 2006
Location	Room 'Schuman', CEN/CENELEC Meeting Centre 35, Rue de Stassart, 1050 Brussels, Belgium
Source	eCAT Secretariat

1 Registration

Participants registered by signing the prepared list of participants.

2 Welcome and administration

Mr. Betz and Mr. Galinski (representing the Chairman, Prof. Schmitz, who was prevented to attend) welcomed the participants. The aim and schedule of the plenary as well as administrative details were then explained. Mr. Betz introduced Mr. Luc Van den Berghe, who is replacing temporarily Ms. Barbara Gatti. Mr. v. d. Berghe explained his tasks as program manager of CEN/ISSS for eCAT. Mr. Betz then explained the way how the necessary contribution in kind for the project can be calculated. It was suggested that OIDD's huge and valuable contribution should be acknowledged by having it registered in the records. E. Lindquist is asked to provide G. Pierra with the form for stating contributions in kind.

3 Introduction

R. Betz drew the attention to the newly formed "Orchid" group and the activities of the CEN/ISSS Workshop "cCatalogue", which are complementary to eCAT. Mr. Galinski mentioned that there are plans to continue eCAT. Mr. Betz added that there is definitely a need in industry for an integrated approach to product data in the broadest sense, which still requires a lot of standardization efforts. He proposed to extend item 11 of the agenda, in order to present the broader picture.

4 Report on Harmonization of Classifications

Mr. Beckmann presented the content of part 1 of the Report of Gen-ePDC on the basis of a PPT presentation. The results presented were largely based on extensive coordination activities with the "horizontal" classification operators eCI@ss, UNSPSC, GPC/GS1 and some "vertical" classification developers (which amount in total to more than 40 if we take the various industry sectors: see enlarged Excel sheet to be published as annex to CWA1). Some of that cooperation is at formal level, others at informal level. Some cooperation takes place at sectoral level. UNSPSC today is maintained by GS1/USA (under the responsibility of Mr. Dennis Harrison).

As the idea of organizing ONE big classification scheme (as suggested in the ePDC project) proved to be neither feasible nor acceptable, the Gen-ePDC project team chose a slightly different approach, by which the main horizontal classification schemes can be harmonized or mapped into each other. By agreeing on a harmonized data modeling methodology even heterogeneous classification schemes thus can become "semantically interoperable".

There seems to exist tools for mapping multiple classification schemes in eCataloguing. According to new requirements such tools need not only to map different classification schemes, but also to migrate data from one system to another. In any case the mapping process in connection with such migration is not easy neither trivial. Mr. Patkai suggested to prepare a common guide for these mapping and migration processes.

5 Draft CWA-1 "The New Properties Library"

Mr. Wilkes presented the content of CWA 1 on the basis of a PPT presentation. He explained how several big players in the field of product data management, such as eCI@ss, DIN (with its product property server), OIDDl, etc. agreed to collaborate in this matter.

6 Draft CWA-2 "Product Classes with sets of Properties" (and hierarchies if standardization required)

W. Wilkes also presented the content of CWA 2 on the basis of his PPT presentation. CWA 2 gives a compilation of the various provisions concerning data dictionaries scattered over different parts of ISO 13584.

The question arose, whether CWA 2, which is largely quoting parts of ISO 13584, can be made freely accessible via the CEN/ISSS server. TermNet taking care of the Secretariat of eCAT will contact ISO/CS with respect to the conditions concerning the copyright of quoted parts of ISO 13584.

7 Report on XML schemas for ontologies

On the basis of a PPT presentation Mr. Sardet presented his work on CWA 3, which is aiming at an XML schema for representing ontologies: OntoML (XML-based – a combination of 3 XML schemas). "Concepts" are identified by properties and relations (and also by classes) – for instance for exchange purposes. OntoML also allows the exchange of instances and values via the "Instances XML Schema". In addition a "Catalogue XML Schema" is provided.

8 Draft CWA-3 "Results of development of multilingual catalogues and their respective data modeling methodology"

Mr. Betz explained how CWA 3 was adapted in order to combine the report of Mr. Beckmann and the catalogue part of the Gen-ePDC project. He then asked the participants to approve the revised structure of CWA 3. He said all subtasks were dealt with among others by taking other initiatives and activities into account. Mr. Wallis said there is no problem with this composition of the CWA.

Mr. Galinski summarised that it needs 3 recommendations in conjunction with the results of Gen-ePDC and the continuation of the eCAT Workshop:

1. to endorse the results of Gen-ePDC as presented;
2. to extend the present working period of eCAT until the review period for the presented CWAs has ended in a couple of weeks and all comments have been taken into account possibly by the end of February; only after the ensuing 60 days period for public comment has ended in May, the project cycle for Gen-ePDC will ultimately come to an end;
3. to continue eCAT with the proposed new projects ePPS and GenMAR as soon as they have been approved by the EU Commission.

9 Comments received on the draft CWAs

Comments made by the participants were very positive. It was suggested by several experts present to further develop arguments in terms of ROI (Return on Investment) in order to convince decision makers in industry and public administration to shift to the harmonized approach as has been developed in eCAT. It was recommended to urge also the American and Far Eastern Workshop members to provide editorial comments on the CWAs (by means of an electronic process). Workshop members agreed to this suggestion.

10 Workshop eCAT – next step?

R. Betz drew the attention to the newly formed “Orchid” group and the activities of the CEN/ISSS Workshop “cCatalogue” activities. He presented the broader picture of product description and the things to do next on the basis of a PPT presentation. He mentioned that there will be a meeting at the Commission on 17 February to present several activities in CEN/ISSS related to product description and classification, such as eCAT, CEN/EEG1, cCAT, etc.

Mr. Betz explained, how closely product identification, data dictionaries, product classification, eCatalogues, and transactions are related to product description – the focus of the eCAT Workshop. It needs a harmonized approach to product description and the respective methodology standards to assure a smooth functioning of eBusiness at large. Mr. Koens highly valued the efforts of the experts in eCAT to involve large industry groups in cooperation towards a harmonized approach in product description, and raised the question to a strategic and political level, so that other players do not “re-invent the wheel”. The market situation at present shows a very complex and confusing picture. The eCAT results are a good basis for reducing this complexity – and prepare a good argumentation in terms of ROI for the eCAT approach.

A lively discussion on “certification” ensued. Mr. Galinski reported on the discussion within MoU/MG on “standards conformity and interoperability assessment” (not the self-claimed “certification”, which has become common on the market and is not much esteemed by industry).

11 Invited presentations: 1. ISO 13584 / IEC 61360 PLIB: Where are we?

(Mr. Guy Pierra)

Mr. Pierra explained PLIB as a model for (1) a (multilingual) dictionary or product ontologies, (2) product libraries, (3) domain dictionaries/libraries. There is also a mechanism to exchange information (e.g. for building corporate ontologies). In addition, the coordination between PLIB, OntoML and UN/CEFACT's EDI has been secured. By applying the PLIB concept, the number of products used on the production lines will be reduced at Renault and PSA from 500.000 to 30.000 (including also the number of items in the items database). Mr. Pierra reckons that within the next 5 years all global players will shift from item databases to PLIB-based databases. eProcurement, eEngineering and eCommerce are pushing this development.

12 Invited presentations: 2. "Successful implementations of ONLINE-dictionaries" with examples from PROLIST, eCI@ss, DIN, ISO and lessons learned (Mr. Reinhard Pohn, Paradine)

For engineering purposes in industry companies need lots of data, which are not necessarily needed for business. For business they may need additional data (e.g. concerning disposal requirements or transport of dangerous goods, etc.). But increasingly it has been found out that they need a harmonized approach with a view to an integration of various product information systems with different data models into one integrated and unified approach for within the enterprise as well as for the exchange of data with customers, suppliers, users, etc. Mr. Pohn emphasized how important “unified” terminology is in this process.

13 Invited presentations: 3. PI-Project and collaboration with classification systems

(Mr. Klaus-Dieter AXT of CECED – European Manufacturers of Domestic Appliances – not present)

Mr. Betz said that M. Beckmann had taken into account in his presentation the content of what Mr. Axt was supposed to present, since Mr. Axt could not participate.

14 Any other business

Since the Commission is extremely late in deciding on new projects, Mr. Betz proposed to discuss with industry in order to proceed faster – possibly in the field of healthcare.

It was emphasized that while approving the CWAs as presented, there will be a further possibility for editorial comments (via an electronic process) on the CWAs by the Workshop members – especially by those residing abroad. Workshop members will also have the possibility to express their support to the CWAs during this period. The Chair and Vice-Chair, Workshop Secretary and CEN Programme manager will discuss with the Project Team the comments received and will decide whether the comments can be accommodated. Only if the resulting changes to the document are not of a purely editorial nature, there will be organized a further round of approval by the eCAT Workshop.

In addition to these comments by the registered Workshop participants, this final draft will also be made available for a period of 60 days for public comment. Again the Chair and Vice-Chair, Workshop Secretary and CEN Programme manager will discuss with the Project Team the comments received and decide whether the comments can be accepted and easily accommodated.

The deadline for both periods (Workshop member approval and public comments) is 2 April 2006.

(The official closure of Project Gen-ePDC as project is on 16 February 2006.)

15 Meeting closure

Mr. Betz and Mr. Galinski thanked the participants for their constructive discussions and closed the meeting at 17:30.