

MODA-ML: the number of intercompany processes that Moda-ML supports is growing

After the 2003-1 version (compliant with CEN/ISSS TexSpin specifications), released in July 2003, a new version, 2004-1, has been released with the XML Schema of documents for the exchange of information between the European Textile/Clothing firms.

After the conclusion of the European contracts TexSpin and Moda-ML, this is the first version that has been totally realised and supported with the contribution of the technical partners and of the firms of the Textile/Clothing sector.

The results are public and immediately available by the firms which are interested in improving their capability and integration with the Information Systems of clients, suppliers and subcontractors.

The main novelties deal with the support of the exchange of information for production and supplying of yarns and subcontracting for dyeing and finishing of fabrics; this new release makes the Moda-ML an even more strong and complete framework for eBusiness.

The Moda-ML activities

MODA-ML activities focused on the analysis of the most important (actual or potential) exchanges of technical, administrative or management information among producers of textiles and clothing manufacturers. A protocol of electronic exchange has been created based on the following:

- standardisation of a number of co-operation **models** among firms
- a set of **XML Schema of documents** necessary to represent exchanged data in international processes
- a front-end demonstration **software** to send/receive XML documents based on ebXML and SOAP (MSH)
- a demonstration software to assist in the creation of testing messages (MCM)
- development and easy maintenance **methodology** for “families” of XML exchange documents.

The technical group (ENEA, Politecnico di Milano, Gruppo SOI, Domina, Institut Français Textile-Habillement) and the MODA-ML pilot users (the wool mills **Fratelli Piacenza**, **Loro Piana**, **Successori Reda**, **Vitale Barberis Canonico** and the clothing manufacturer **Fratelli Corneliani**) exploited their professional know-how and the previous analyses of the EDITEX specifications (based on EDIFACT technology applied to the Textile/Clothing sector) and reshaped them into the Internet and XML context.

This was the basis of the Moda-ML project (European IST funding), that ended in 2003 and whose results contributed to the **standardisation** initiative CEN/ISSS TexSpin (see details in the WEB site).

After Texspin, the technical group and the pilot users have continued to manage analysis activities, and design of new document XML Schema to support new phases of the fabric production process that initially were not supported.

Results availability

As it is known, the MODA-ML results are published (via WEB, through periodical releases) and are freely available for industrial companies as well as technological suppliers; the documentation as well as reference XML Schema are available on the WEB site www.moda-ml.net. Furthermore, modules for training are available, also on-line.

The next steps

Presently the main activities of the Moda-ML workgroup are:

- to consolidate and diffuse the adoption of the already available formats and protocols
- to improve the coverage of the collaborative industrial processes supported by the XML documents, with the contextual enrichment of the reference dictionary
- to develop and study the adoption of the ebXML (and web Services) specifications manage collaborative frameworks, transport messages with different protocols and publishing the description of trading partner agreements necessary to activate an eBusiness process (CPP).

Modelled processes and XML documents

The new version (2004) adds new e-Business processes to those of the previous version (2003-1, that was totally compliant with the CEN/ISSS TexSpin specifications); more specifically, the new *Processes* were decomposed, according with the ebXML approach, in *Activities* and for each of them were defined *Transactions* (and related XML documents).

These models are purely a reference and can be used by the firms to evaluate which exchanges they could implement with their partners; but they are allowed to define mutual agreements to implement them partially or in a different sequence.

Process: Yarn production (new, 2004-1 version)

Activity: Yarn purchase

Yarn purchase order (new)

Yarn order status (new)

Activity: Yarn despatch

Yarn despatch advise (new)

Process: Fabric Supply

Activity: Fabric Choice

Fabric Technical Sheet

Textiles Catalogue

Textiles Collection Forecast

Activity: Purchase of fabrics

Textiles Order change

Textiles Order Response

Textiles Order status report

Textiles Purchase Order

Activity: Despatch of fabrics with groupage (2004-1)

Garment Kit Despatch Advise (new)

Garment Kit Despatch Request (new)

Textiles Despatch advice

Textiles Despatch request

Textiles Invoice (updated)

Textiles Quality Report

Activity: Quality check and Despatch of fabrics

Textiles Despatch advice

Textiles Invoice (updated)

Textiles Quality Report

Textiles Despatch request

Process: Yarn supply (new, 2004-1)

Activity: Subcontracting yarn manufacturing

Yarn despatch advise (new)

Yarn manufacturing order

Process: Fabric production (new, 2004-1)

Activity: Subcontracted fabric dyeing

Textile Dyeing-Finishing Order

Textiles Despatch advice

Textiles Quality Report

Activity: Subcontracted fabric finishing

Textile Dyeing-Finishing Order

Textiles Despatch advice

Textiles Quality Report

Activity: Fabric darning

Textiles Darn Order

Textiles Darn Return

Textiles Despatch advice

Inter-company integration via Internet, why?

- the competitiveness depends upon the performances of the whole supply chain
- the Textile/Clothing supply chain is long, fragmented, heterogeneous and continuously evolving
- the flexibility and timeliness of the supply chain are decisive. SMEs add high specialisation and productive flexibility to the system. But the flow

of data are hampered by the inter-company interfaces and by the difficulties for the organisations to manage ICT technologies.

A public, standard format to exchange data, why?

- every firm has relationship with many partners and is unfeasible to build and manage a different interface towards each of them
- a common standard simplifies the relationships with international partners
- the adoption of a common non-proprietary interface saves costs and avoids to be constrained to a specific supplier.

Samples of the benefits of a better integration:

- the data of the purchase orders are available on digital systems without manual inputting
- the fabric supplier receives collection booking notes from the clothing manufacturers and can improve its production planning
- the clothing manufacturer receives the order status report from the fabric supplier, can improve its planning and receives a digital defects map, ready for his machinery
- the sell-out data flow back along the supply chain

Moda-ML ...

- implements the ebXML specifications and is compliant with European standard specifications CEN/ISSS TexSpin
- is designed to be a common open standard
- does not force to join a proprietary solution
- is freely available to every developer or firm
- is supported by a free demonstrative software to send/receive XML messages, compliant with the ebXML message specifications

More information on www.moda-ml.org or by subscribing the (free) mailing list of Moda-ML.