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1999 Charleston Conference Call for Papers

Editor

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Call for Ideas/Papers/Speakers/etc.

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If you are interested in leading a discussion, acting as a moderator, coordinating the lively lunches or simulation rooms, or would like to make sure we discuss a particular topic, please let us know. The Charleston Conference prides itself on creativity, innovation, flexibility, and informality. If there is something you are interested in doing, please try it out on us. We'll probably like it...

The planning Directors for the **1999 Charleston Conference** include — **Barbara Dean** (Arlington County Public Library), **Robin Lent** (U. of New Hampshire), **Heather Miller** (SUNY-Albany), and **Katina Strauch** (College of Charleston).



Send ideas by **June 30, 1999**, to:

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to create "custom" documents or reports with the most recent information formatted and delivered any way they want it.

Support

Microsoft (<http://www.microsoft.com>) is working with the W3C XML Working Group and other companies to help develop the XML standard; ensure interoperability on multiple systems and browsers; and support developers, authors, and users. The company offers XML Notepad to create XML files quickly without hand coding. The existing version is free, but it only creates "well formed" (syntactically correct) XML documents. It does not yet support creating or editing "valid" documents. Microsoft is working with **DataChannel, Inc.** (<http://www.datachannel.com/>) to produce an XML parser written in Java which will enable the integration of a variety of data and applications.

Microsoft's Internet Explorer 4.0 already supports some XML applications; and Explorer 5.0 and **Netscape's Navigator 5.0** will both support XML fully. Microsoft has also announced that the next version of Office will use XML as a native file format to maintain formatting while moving documents between Office and the Web. Users will be able to switch back and forth between data in an Excel spreadsheet, for example, and the same data in HTML tables in a Web browser.

ArborText (<http://www.arbortext.com/>) **ADEPT v.7** also reads and writes native XML and can automatically convert documents between XML and SGML. The company also produces **XML Styler** for creating and modifying XSL stylesheets. In addition to **ArborText**, **BackWeb Technologies, Inc.** (<http://www.backweb.com>), **Chrystal Software** (<http://www.chrystal.com/>), **Inso** (<http://www.inso.com/>), **OmniMark Technologies**

(www.omnimark.com), **POET Software Corp.** (<http://www.poet.com/>), **Microstar Software** (<http://www.microstar.com/>), **Texcel Research, Inc.** (<http://www.texcel.no>), and **WebMethods** (<http://www.webmethods.com>) produce tools for authoring, editing, and storing XML documents or generating DTDs. **Aeneid, Allaire Corp., ExperTelligence Inc., InterMax Solutions Inc., Pictorius Inc., Powersoft Corp., and SoftQuad Inc.** have also committed to providing XML support in their products.

Software producers such as **Interleaf** (<http://www.interleaf.com>), **Marimba, Webcasters, PointCast, DataChannel Inc.** (<http://www.datachannel.com/>), **Chrystal Software, UserLand Software** (<http://www.scripting.com/frontier5/xml>), **POET Software Corp., and Vignette Corp.** (<http://www.vignette.com/>) have tools for database publishing, content management, and data management.

Because XML is slimmed-down SGML, we might suppose that existing SGML publishing systems would work with XML without any modifications. This is not the case, however. XML's simplifications and different way of interpreting white space require developers to tweak the code. Those who don't

want to mess with the code can use authoring tools like **Microstar Software Ltd's Near & Far Designer** that support conversion to and from various DTD formats and have drag-and-drop features that let users copy structures in one DTD and paste them into another. XML is both vendor-neutral and media-independent, but, because it was designed to accommodate all world languages, it is case sensitive.

Prognosis

XML is not a single, fixed format like HTML, nor is it a replacement for HTML. XML is a metalanguage that lets users design their own markup languages to meet specific application or industry needs. It provides a standard way for describing and exchanging data regardless of its nature, how the sending system stored it, or how the receiving system will use it.

HTML will continue in use for the foreseeable future because of the cost and labor to tag existing documents. The change will be evolutionary; but its impact will be revolutionary. Versions of HTML subsequent to HTML 4.0 will use XML syntax and support XML tags. As Web pages get updated and modified, the code will gradually get converted to XML, producing a richer, more relevant, and better organized Web. 🐼

Dr. W.C. Minor was among the most prolific of the thousands of volunteer contributors whose searches into word origins and meanings were crucial to the Oxford English Dictionary's creation. Dr. Minor was an inmate of the Broadmore Criminal Lunatic Asylum for more than twenty years.

— See "The Strange Case of the Surgeon at Crowthorne," by Simon Winchester, in *Smithsonian* magazine, September 1998, pp. 88-92, 94, 96, 98-99.