

## Industry standards

# AdsML 1.0 launched at IfraExpo; industry feedback now crucial

**One of the highlights of this year's IfraExpo in Leipzig was the launch of AdsML 1.0, the comprehensive, international standard for the digital exchange of advertising information. The standard, based on the widely accepted eXtensible Markup Language (XML), is released for public comment and evaluation, an important step for industry feedback, acceptance and implementation.**

As described in earlier articles in newspaper techniques, AdsML 1.0 is the first product of the AdsML Consortium, a new industry association that is supported

by both Ifra and the Newspaper Association of America (NAA). The AdsML standard is designed to help publishers, advertisers and other participants in the advertising supply chain automate many processes that are now performed manually. Implementation of AdsML will shorten deadlines, save time and money, reduce errors and create new business opportunities for all concerned. AdsML 1.0 defines an XML message format that provides a straightforward and easy-to-implement mechanism for exchanging advertising information between software systems.

This first version of the AdsML standard is tailored to the specific requirements of newspapers and magazines and inserts for these publications as well as classified, SMS and MMS. The next release, expected

in early 2004, will set standards for ads for broadcast and other media, including banner, pop-up and classified ads for the web, billboards and outdoor advertising as well as onscreen advertising in movie theatres.

You can think of AdsML as a large envelope into which other envelopes are placed. These other envelopes carry items such as ordering information, creative content, payment and invoicing information. An "AdsML Processor" takes this information from the business applications that created it, determines where and how it is to be sent. The packages are properly addressed and passed to the appropriate communications systems for actual transport.

At the receiving system the reverse happens. Once the authenticity of the sender is verified, the messages are unpacked and passed to the appropriate application for processing.

### From documents to software

Like any digital information standard, AdsML 1.0 is just a set of documents. It won't deliver concrete benefits until vendors and integrators provide systems that support the AdsML architecture.

For most vendors this will involve adapting their existing applications so that they can communicate with an AdsML Processor, or in some cases adding the full functionality of an AdsML Processor into their systems. A few suppliers have indicated that they might also develop a stand-alone AdsML Processor, once it becomes clear that the marketplace will support their efforts.

Following this launch, AdsML 1.0 enters a six-month period of public comment and evaluation. During this time we expect to see several prototype implementations involving publishers and advertisers in both European and U.S. markets. These early installations will give us the first concrete evidence of just how well the AdsML architecture will deliver on its promises.

If you want to learn more about AdsML, please visit the initiative's web site at [www.adsmml.org](http://www.adsmml.org). <

## Ad\Venture jumps on board AdsML

The AdsML Consortium and the Ad\Venture project, a regional initiative of media agencies and publishers in the Netherlands, announced an agreement last month to share information on business process analyses and leverage each other's efforts to bring order to the complexities of advertising in local and global markets. The two standards-developing groups will focus on bringing their complementary standards into alignment.

AdsML and Ad\Venture plan to pool technical and other resources to streamline business processes and avoid duplication of effort. The Ad\Venture and AdsML approaches and mechanisms are fully compatible and complementary, according to the developers. The organisations represent two different approaches to the challenges facing the industry and work at different levels of the advertising workflow.

AdsML takes a global, umbrella-like approach and, with the release of AdsML 1.0, has developed a mechanism for distributing messages via open communications across borders. AdsML 1.0 is designed to solve problems related to communications between a potentially unlimited set of global trading partners using the internet as their network. Ad\Venture currently limits its scope to the order fulfillment process for print media in the Netherlands. In its initial implementation, it will use an online, third-party communications network that is protected and open only to participants. (Participation is open to the industry.) Within this environment, it has constructed a dynamic model for fulfilling orders and administratively handling contracts. Ad\Venture implemented the first phase of their standard during October, making it one of the first organisations in the world to demonstrate the benefits of standards-based integration of media agencies' and publishers' systems.