



Naming and Capitalization Conventions for Elements and Attributes in Legal XML Documents

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Abstract

This Unofficial Note proposes some basic conventions for naming and capitalizing XML elements and attributes in DTD's or schema for XML Legal Documents.

Status of Document

This is a Legal XML Work Group Unofficial Note for review and discussion by interested Members.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Problem

This Unofficial Note proposes some conventions to guide developers in naming and capitalizing XML element tags and XML attributes in DTD's or schema for XML legal documents. There are no established formal conventions for naming or capitalizing XML elements or attributes.

The absence of formal conventions for naming or capitalizing XML elements and attributes can lead to needless confusion and can complicate efforts to develop names for XML elements and attributes in DTD's or schema for legal documents.

The XML Specification allows users virtually unlimited freedom to create names for XML elements and attributes. Thus, different authors might use the tags <Phone>, <telephone_number>, <phonenumber>, <Tel> or <PhoneNumber> to describe the same item of information without running afoul of the XML specification. The use of different abbreviations also is permitted in XML. However, allowing a plethora of tag names and/or abbreviations for information in an XML Legal document adds unnecessary and unwanted complexity to efforts to develop standard tags.

Further, XML is case-sensitive so that a tag named <Phone> is different from a tag named <phone> for purposes of naming an element or attribute. The flexibility and freedom that XML allows in creating element and attribute names can complicate the creation of standard element and attribute names for Legal XML DTD's or schema that will be used by a wide range of users.

1.2 Proposed Solution

Legal XML elements and attributes should have "semantically meaningful" names describing the information they contain and consisting of one or more words strung together without spaces. Abbreviations should be avoided in element and attribute names.

Each word in the name of a Legal XML element or attribute should begin with a capital letter.

1.3 Assumptions

The names of Legal XML elements and attributes should semantically describe the data or information they contain. Employing "semantically meaningful" tag names with few or no abbreviations makes the tags easier to use. It is less confusing and more intuitive to use element and attribute names that are descriptive and meaningful instead of too abbreviated.

Employing naming and capitalization conventions in the creation of names for XML elements and attributes in Legal XML DTD's or schema and in XML legal documents will promote consistency in their development and make them easier to use. Using naming and capitalization conventions in the creation of names for Legal XML elements and attributes will avoid unnecessary complexity and help simplify the development of Legal XML DTD's or schema.

Naming and capitalization conventions are arbitrary to a degree, but are useful to the extent they promote consistency and standardization in the creation of XML elements and attributes.

Legal XML element and attribute naming and capitalization conventions should be substantially similar to naming and capitalization conventions generally followed in XML DTD's or schema developed by other industry groups.

XML DTD's or schema under development for a number of major industries typically use verbose, descriptive element and attribute names consisting of a string of one to four words that semantically describe the data or information they contain. Further, these DTD's or schema generally capitalize the first letter of every word in the element and attribute names, although a few use "camelBack" capitalization (first word in the name string in lower case and subsequent words in the name string capitalized).

1.4 Dependencies

The W3C's XML standard is available at:

[Extensible Markup Language \(XML\) 1.0 \(W3C Recommendation 10-February-1998\)](#) - Example element and attribute names in the W3C's XML Specification typically include abbreviations and are in all lower case.

There are no definitive standards concerning the naming and capitalization of elements or attributes in XML DTD's or schema. However, various approaches taken in XML DTD's under development for a number of major industries, including the following, provide helpful examples:

[Common Business Library \(CBL\) version 2.0 \(Copyright 1999 Commerce One\)](#) - The Common Business Library (CBL) uses semantically meaningful names (with some easily recognized abbreviations) and capitalizes each word in an element name and each word in an attribute name.

[Real Estate Transaction Specification \(RETS\) DTD \(DRAFT Document Version 1.0 05/11/1999\)](#) - The Real Estate Transaction Specification (RETS) Draft DTD uses semantically meaningful names with very few abbreviations and capitalizes each word in element and attribute names.

[XFRML for Financial Statements Version .8.02 \(Copyright \(c\) 1999 AICPA - American Institute of Certified Public Accountants\)](#) - The XFRML DTD uses semantically meaningful names and capitalizes each word in element names, but uses "camelBack" capitalization for attribute names.

[XMLife DTD for OLifE specification 2.0.00 \(July 14, 1999\)](#) - The XMLife DTD of the ACORD Standards Subcommittee, an insurance industry group, generally uses semantically meaningful names (with some abbreviations) and capitalizes each word in element and attribute names.

[OPEN TRADING PROTOCOL DTD VERSION 0.99-1 \(Copyright Open Trading Protocol Consortium, 1998\)](#) - The Open Trading Protocol DTD uses a mix of abbreviated and semantically meaningful names and capitalizes each word in element names and each word in attribute names.

[Commerce XML \(cXML\) version 1.0 \(Copyright © Ariba, Inc. 1999\)](#) - Commerce XML (cXML) uses semantically meaningful names and capitalizes each word in element names, but uses "camelBack" capitalization for attribute names.

[DocBk XML V3.1.2 DTD \(Copyright \(C\) 1998, 1999 Norman Walsh\)](#) - The DocBk XML DTD uses abbreviations extensively and capitalizes each word in element and attribute names.

[TEI Lite XML ver. 1.3 \(7 July 1999\)](#) - The Text Encoding Initiative TEI Lite XML DTD uses abbreviations extensively and uses "camelBack" capitalization for element and attribute names.

1.5 Requirements

There are no requirements specifically applicable to naming and capitalizing XML element or attribute names.

1.6 Definitions

XML attribute, XML element, DTD

XML Attribute

A qualifier on an XML element that provides additional information about the data in the element.

XML Element

A unit of XML data, defined by opening and closing tags. An XML element can enclose other elements, which are called its child elements, or it can be empty.

DTD

Document Type Definition. The DTD specifies constraints on valid XML elements and attributes and their sequences for use in an XML document.

2. Specification

2.1 Naming and Capitalization Conventions for Elements and Attributes in DTD's or Schema for XML Legal Documents

2.1.1 General Rules.

Legal XML elements and attributes should have "semantically meaningful" names describing the information they contain and consisting of one or more words strung together without spaces.

Abbreviations should be avoided in element and attribute names.

Each word in the name of a Legal XML element or attribute should begin with a capital letter.

2.1.2 DTD Syntax Examples ("casecitation.dtd")

```
<!ELEMENT Legal (CaseCitation)+>
<!ELEMENT CaseCitation (CaseName*, (OfficialCite | UnofficialCite)
*)>
<!ELEMENT CaseName (#PCDATA)>
<!ELEMENT OfficialCite (#PCDATA)>
<!ATTLIST OfficialCite
  VolumeNumber CDATA #REQUIRED
  Reporter CDATA #REQUIRED
  PageNumber CDATA #REQUIRED
  Court CDATA #IMPLIED
  Year CDATA #REQUIRED>
<!ELEMENT UnofficialCite (#PCDATA)>
<!ATTLIST UnofficialCite
  VolumeNumber CDATA #REQUIRED
  Reporter CDATA #REQUIRED
  PageNumber CDATA #REQUIRED
  Court CDATA #IMPLIED
```

```
Year CDATA #IMPLIED>
```

2.1.3 Mark-Up Examples ("casecitation.xml")

```
<?xml version="1.0" standalone="no"?>
<!DOCTYPE Legal SYSTEM "casecitation.dtd">
<?xml-stylesheet type="text/xsl" href="casecitation.xsl"?>

<Legal>

<CaseCitation>
  <CaseName>Hartley v. Ballou,</CaseName>
  <OfficialCite VolumeNumber="286" Reporter="N.C." PageNumber="51"
Year="1974"></OfficialCite>
  <UnofficialCite VolumeNumber="209" Reporter="S.E.2d"
PageNumber="776"></UnofficialCite>
</CaseCitation>

<CaseCitation>
<CaseName>Broussard, et al. v. Meineke Discount Muffler Shops,
Inc., et al.,</CaseName>
<OfficialCite VolumeNumber="123" Reporter="F.3rd" PageNumber="333"
Court="4th Cir." Year="1998"></OfficialCite>
</CaseCitation>

</Legal>
```

2.1.4 XSL Stylesheet Example ("casecitation.xsl")

```
<?xml version='1.0'?>
<xsl:stylesheet xmlns:xsl="http://www.w3.org/TR/WD-xsl">
<xsl:template match="/">
<HTML>

<HEAD>
  <TITLE>Legal XML Case Citations</TITLE>
</HEAD>

<BODY>

  <xsl:for-each select="Legal/CaseCitation">
    <DIV STYLE="display:block; margin-top:0.5cm">
      <DIV STYLE="display:inline; font-weight:bold">
        <xsl:value-of select="CaseName"/>
      </DIV>
      <xsl:value-of select="OfficialCite/@VolumeNumber"/>
      <xsl:value-of select="OfficialCite/@Reporter"/>
      <xsl:value-of select="OfficialCite/@PageNumber"/>
      <xsl:apply-templates select="UnofficialCite"/>
      ( <xsl:value-of select="OfficialCite/@Court"/>
      <xsl:value-of select="OfficialCite/@Year"/> )
    </DIV>
  </xsl:for-each>

</BODY>
</HTML>

</xsl:template>
<xsl:template match="UnofficialCite">
```

```
, <xsl:value-of select="@VolumeNumber"/>
<xsl:value-of select="@Reporter"/>
<xsl:value-of select="@PageNumber"/>
</xsl:template>

</xsl:stylesheet>
```

2.1.5 Comments

The preceding examples illustrate the use of the proposed element and attribute naming and capitalization conventions in the context of citations to reported appellate court opinions. In the examples, the XML elements and attributes have been given semantically meaningful names. No abbreviations are used, and each word in an element or attribute name string begins with a capital letter.

The examples are for illustration of the proposed naming and capitalization conventions only. They are **not** intended to propose a DTD for Legal XML case citations.

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