

DGI UPDATE

November 2005

A newsletter from Drummond Group Inc. <<http://www.drummondgroup.com/>>

To subscribe or unsubscribe, see bottom of newsletter.

=====
=====

CONTENTS

Commentary: The Value of Interoperability Testing

Press Releases

- **The Global Data Synchronization Network (GDSN) Positioned for Significant Global Adoption**
- **GridWise™ Architecture Council Announces Constitutional Convention**

Test Programs Supported by DGI

FAQs about CSOS

DGI's 2006 Test Calendar

DGI Research Report Services

- **AS2, ebXML or SOAP: Which Messaging Standard to Select for Your Supply Chain and Why**
- **Making Sense of AS2: An Implementation Guide**

=====
=====

Commentary—The Value of Interoperability Testing

Interoperability basically means “entities working together in a seamless manner.” It is an end-to-end process that is not realized if any link is broken. Within real-world supply chains, interoperability requires all trading partner relationships between manufacturers, distributors, retailers and other entities to work together in their implementation of a message standard or protocol. Interoperability testing simulates realistic supply chain implementation of a communication protocol. It works by implementing a full-matrix test process where each vendor participant both sends and receives messages with every other participant. The participants act as supply chain entities sending and receiving messages. The test messages cover the requirements of the standard and the testing scenarios mimic live supply chain communication. The end result is a product group that is both individually conformant and proven interoperable.

Interoperability is often confused with conformance, but the two are different. Conformance is an individual designation describing a single product implementation of a standard while

interoperability is a group designation describing two or more products interacting with each other. Parts of a technical standard may be ambiguous, conflicting or incomplete, so two products could be considered conformant to the standard as it is written, but not fully interoperable with each other. For standards as complex as AS2 or ebXML, any two products verified as technically conformant would likely be only 80-90 percent interoperable over real-world supply chain trading. And even 90 percent interoperable means problems for the supply chain. Supply chains have told Drummond Group that products which have undergone our testing are significantly easier to get up and running, whereas products that have not been certified have taken up to three months to work through the bugs.

Once an interoperable product group is tested and verified, supply chains are much more likely to adopt the tested standard and implement the products. The value of interoperability testing for successful market adoption is best demonstrated with the Applicability Statement 2 (AS2) standard. AS2 interoperability testing began in 1998 with a small group of products. At that time, AS2 was relatively new and not significantly implemented by end users. After each test, more users, especially in the Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG)/Retail vertical industry, began to realize interoperable AS2 products were of value and worth using. As supply chain interest grew, more AS2 vendors joined the interoperability test. The number of interoperable participants increased and AS2 became even more widely adopted in CPG/Retail. Since interoperability amongst products had been verified, users and their trading partners were willing to invest in AS2 because of the high return-on-investment (ROI).

Even once a market adopts a standard, interoperability testing is valuable for continued market growth. For example, it is part of the natural life cycle of software products to make code changes and system upgrades with different version releases. These slight changes can create unforeseen results producing non-interoperability. In addition, new vendors enter the market as potential trading partners and need testing opportunities. Finally, market requirements may change or new markets appear that require variations or specific profiles for the standard and thus unique interoperability testing. For example, the Petroleum Industry Data Exchange (PIDX), which is the American Petroleum Institute's (API) committee on electronic business, was interested in AS2, but needed support of multiple attachments within AS2 messages. A small standard explaining how this was done in AS2 was conceived and then tested to ensure products were interoperable over this new feature. Industry profiles also have been done within ebXML for the automobile and health-care industries.

Various vendors compete with each other and have conflicting interests, so a neutral party is needed to test and verify interoperability. Drummond Group Inc. (DGI) fills this need as a vendor-, industry- and standards-neutral organization. By participating in DGI's interoperability test rounds, vendors and supply chains benefit from a neutral forum. This allows vendors to be equal partners in their debugging and testing, and also provides a valuable marketing tool for their sales team. Supply chains have the interoperability they need verified by a neutral third party without the resource investment in debugging interoperable issues. DGI's interoperability testing is a win-win opportunity benefiting all parties.

=====
=====

Recent Press Releases

The Global Data Synchronization Network (GDSN) Positioned for Significant Global Adoption

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM—Oct. 25, 2005—GS1 GDSN, Inc. announced today that 26 Data Pools and the GS1 Global Registry™ successfully passed the Global Data Synchronization Network (GDSN) Interoperability Certification test. The GDSN, supported by GS1, leading companies and industry groups worldwide, is a global, Internet-based initiative that enables retailer and Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG) manufacturer trading partners to quickly and efficiently exchange supply chain data that is accurate, up-to-date, and compliant with the universally supported GS1 System of standards.

The GDSN Interoperability Certification event began June 27, and was conducted by Drummond Group Inc. (DGI), a leading interoperability and conformance testing company.

For the complete release, please see:

<http://www.drummondgroup.com/pdfs/GS1-GDSN-Certification-Press-release-10.25.05.pdf>

=====
=====

GridWise™ Architecture Council Announces Constitutional Convention

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Sept. 26, 2005—The GridWise™ Architecture Council (GWAC), a collaborative effort among an extensive scope of industry stakeholders with an interest in the technological advancement of the electric power grid, announced today a Constitutional Convention to frame the debate on interoperability for stakeholder communication and decision-making will be held Dec. 6-7, 2005, in Philadelphia.

GWAC expects between 100 and 150 North American electric grid stakeholders to attend the convention, primarily consisting of senior technologists and company executives, trade associations and government organizations that have significant interest in defining the future operation of the North American electric grid, from generation to consumption. Many of these delegates have already participated in the formation of an initial list of principles through an interview process. Those seeking to participate as delegates to the Constitutional Convention will be asked to undergo a similar interview or briefing by the council and the organizing team to familiarize themselves with the directions of the group and ensure an invested and engaged audience is assembled to discuss and further this very important subject.

“The GridWise Constitutional Convention and its ultimate success is reliant upon the vested interest of the industry stakeholders involved in this project,” said Rik Drummond, GWAC chair. “The input we’ve received from each and every industry sector has provided us an abundance of insight into the issues facing power system modernization, strengthening the core of the constitution.”

See full release: < <http://www.drummondgroup.com/html-v2/press.html> >

=====
=====

Test Programs supported by DGI

Drummond Certified. Test and auditing of the CSOS standard. Current information and test results are listed at: <http://www.drummondgroup.com/html-v2/csos-cert.html>

eBusinessReady. Testing standards AS1, AS2, AS3, ebMS, CPFR, UCCnet and RosettaNet. Current test results are listed at:
<http://www.ebusinessready.org/results.html>

Global Data Synchronization Network. Current information and interoperability test results are listed at: <http://www.gs1.org/>

=====
=====

Frequently Asked Questions about CSOS –

< <http://www.drummondgroup.com/html-v2/csos-faq.html> >

=====
=====

DGI's 2006 Test Calendar is posted!

It may be viewed online as it is located directly under the 2005 Test Calendar at:
<http://www.drummondgroup.com/html-v2/test-calendar.html#2005>

For additional information about interoperability test rounds in 2006, please contact:

Yoko Nakagawa

Email: yoko@drummondgroup.com

Telephone: (512) 826-2938

=====
=====

DGI Research Report Services

1) "AS2, ebXML or SOAP: Which Messaging Standard to Select for Your Supply Chain and Why" – now only \$199 USD -

<<http://www.drummondgroup.com/html-v2/research/soap.html>>

DGI research continues as it highlights three Internet messaging standards: AS2, ebXML and SOAP. It offers in-depth comparisons on which standards to implement based on technology and business criteria, and illustrates how they can accommodate the majority of today's business messaging needs.

2) "Making Sense of AS2: An Implementation Guide" - \$95 USD
<<http://www.drummondgroup.com/html-v2/research/as2-guide.html>>

In a balanced, vendor-neutral manner, "Making Sense of AS2" provides an introductory overview and covers the basics of AS2 implementation. Guidance includes how to resolve common technical issues faced by network administrators while implementing this technology to securely and reliably transport data over the Internet.

++++
++++

Copyright (c) 2005 Drummond Group Inc.

Drummond Group Inc. (DGI) is an independent, privately held company that works with software vendors, vertical industries and the standards community to drive adoption for standards by conducting interoperability and conformance testing, publishing related strategic research and developing vertical industry strategies. Founded in 1999, DGI represents best-of-breed in the industry on linking horizontal infrastructure technologies, standards and interoperability issues with the needs of vertical industries such as retail, grocery, health care, transportation, government and automotive. For more information, please visit www.drummondgroup.com, or email: info@drummondgroup.com.

To subscribe or unsubscribe from this elist, use the subscription manager: <
<http://www.drummondgroup.com/html-v2/newsletters.html> >