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CommerceNet to tout advances in e-commerce framework

By Jim Kerstetter, PC Week Online
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CommerceNet and a collection of e-commerce vendors are getting ready for a road show to tout a year's worth of work on an overarching framework for electronic commerce.

The vendors, ranging from Microsoft Corp. to UWI.Com and Veo Systems Inc., have been working on the eCo Framework Project since last fall. The specification will be presented to CommerceNet vendors by the end of June and to the public by the end of the summer.

CommerceNet is an industry association formed to promote advances in interoperable electronic commerce.

The first stop on the tour will be the XML One 1999 conference being held next week in Austin, Texas.

The goal, said Rik Drummond, a project manager at CommerceNet, is to find a way to link disparate e-commerce standards -- such as the Catalog Information Specification, CDF (Channel Definition Format), CBL (Common Business Library, EDI (Electronic Data Interchange), ICE (Internet Content Exchange), OBI (Open Buying on the Internet), OFX (Open Financial Exchange), OTP (Open Trading Protocol) and even Microsoft's BizTalk.

XML is the key

The key to doing all of that will be XML (Extensible Markup Language), said Drummond. The eCo Framework Project is creating a meta-data model that defines the 100 or so basic methods with which businesses talk to each other, such as purchase orders and electronic data interchange. In fact, much of the eCo work will be based on the work of EDI standards bodies such as EDIFACT.

"Our goal is not to force people to tear things out," said Drummond. "We want people to be able to work with what they already have."

CommerceNet can be reached at www.commerce.net.

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