Standards Development Organization®

Standard Business Reporting

As organizations process and exchange information for an increasing myriad of purposes, it is too often inconsistently and redundantly replicated in purpose-specific formats. Artificial intelligence, distributed ledgers, and machine-readable structured information offer unprecedented opportunities to automate many information exchanges within and between organizations.

In most countries, organizations are required to submit formal information to one or more regulators regarding their business or financial performance, compliance and a myriad of risk exposures. These reports have traditionally been documents that use standard forms or templates defined by each regulator.

Recent years have seen the emergence of Standard Business Reporting, an approach that supplements traditional form-based documents with machine-readable versions containing structured data of the same content (see sidebar). The structured data, with identifiable fields (as opposed to electronic "e-paper" documents in formats like PDF), is important to allow the data to be stored, analyzed and compared. The widely-accepted standard for business information exchange is XBRL (eXtensible Business Reporting Language), which allows the definition of different report structures based on the tagged markup language, XML (eXtensible Markup Language).

The Standard Business Report Model Specification

Standard Business Report Model (SBRM) is a forthcoming specification from Object Management Group® (OMG®) that builds on XBRL to further increase its usability and applicability, while retaining full interoperability. SBRM makes it easier for organizations to make use of world class standards and provide a standard approach to safely, reliably, and effectively automate information exchange.

SBRM formally documents a logical conceptualization of a business report in both human-readable and machine-readable models. This enables a machine-readable report represented using any technical syntax , like XBRL, JSON (JavaScript Object Notation) and RDF (Resource Description Format) or others, to be tested to see if it is consistent with that logical conceptualization using reliable automated processes.

Business Usability

Through the use of models, business experts can define the structure and the content of their reports and extensions using high-level logical business report objects, possibly presented as semantic spreadsheets and pivot tables, rather than with lower level technical syntax. Using a model defined by SBRM, the technical XBRL formats can be generated in a reliable manner without the need for bringing in technology specialists, and existing XBRL formats can be reverse-engineered into SBRM models.

Quality and Consistency

SBRM will allow business experts to create machine-readable forms or flexible reports and define rules that address structural coherence and integrity between standard and extension report components to ensure compliance of the report with statutory, regulatory and internal reporting constraints. Thus, report flexibility and variability can be effectively controlled.

Shared Meaning and Reuse

At the moment many organizations must file multiple different reports, meaning that common data items (such as company name, address, financials, key officers, etc.) end up being represented in different report-specific ways and stored multiple times across multiple databases, at both the submitting and receiving organizations.

SBRM will allow fields in different report definitions to be associated with common models or ontologies that define their meaning – either enterprise-specific models or industry standards such as FIBO (Financial Industry Business Ontology®).

Information Supply Chains

Common, shared models representing the meaning of report fields can also be used for the meaning of existing database and message fields within enterprise IT, in both submitting and receiving organizations. This facilitates the collation of information for inclusion in reports and eliminates redundant silos of data specific to single reports as well as errors generated from manual data entry.

SBRM encourages use of enterprise information models or ontologies that are independent of arbitrary personal preferences as to how information is presented in different reports. This makes it easy to create a wide variety of business reports and ensures that a given element (such as net income) is used consistently across all reports. And, through the shared meaning, SBRM ensures that the information submitted has the same interpretation as that used internally by the submitting organization. This is also of great benefit to regulators trying to compare data across different organizations, or organizations dealing with many partners.

Object Management Group® (OMG®) is an international, open membership, not-for-profit computer industry standards consortium. OMG Task Forces develop enterprise integration standards for a wide range of technologies and an even wider range of industries. OMG modeling standards enable powerful visual design, execution and maintenance of software and other processes. Visit https://www.omg.org/ for more information.