

Since the last GE.1 session, AC.1 has met twice, during 11-18 November 1996 in Concord, CA, USA and last week in London England.

As requested during the last JRT and WP.4 session, AC.1 used these two meetings in developing a "Reference Guide" about the work of AC.1.

The document summarizes the status of the research conducted by AC.1 to this point. It is seen as a reference guide for AC.1's current thinking and is a "living document" which will be updated periodically as progress is made in the program of work.

AC.1 has investigated a series of business process, information and technology issues, which are explained in the document, and now seeks to share their initial findings in a dialogue with the decision making and user communities.

The document contains sections on the use of new and evolving technologies as alternatives for progressing message development to the next generation of EDI. We believe Object-oriented technology (OOT) to be one of the most promising concepts in recent years to support this evolution. Appendix 2 of CRP.123 (ESG Chairman Report) is aligned with the current thinking of the AC.1 membership.

In order to include all the aspects and relationships of the various IDEF Modelling techniques used, the first task of AC.1 was to select a business scenario example which was not too complex or too difficult. The example chosen was that of ordering goods from a catalog.

Because of the workload associated with such a project, AC.1 was not able to complete the guide in order to present it to this session. AC.1 plans to open the discussion by presenting this guide during the Singapore JRT as well as to the September session of GE.1.

AC.1 reviewed CRP.135 and supports Annex B. In regard to the TMF group (page 14), AC.1 recommends that group's organization should include a third group which would help in the transfer and migration (after approval by CEFACT) of any new techniques and methodologies by providing training and educational material.

During the work on the Reference Guide, AC.1 identified the following issue that relates to message development.

There is a view that if there is a business model showing both the conceptual view of the data and the relationships between the data, then whatever a message is produced it will be the definitive answer. This would lead to the conclusion that every specific model would produce many specific segments.

A more appropriate way may be to adopt a layered approach by changing all of the current message design groups into business modelling groups, establish a model review panel and a single message production group. (The premise is that each of the groups have the required skills and tools to perform the tasks.) A similar recommendation was made a few years ago in R.909.

At this time AC.1 has no specific recommendation on this issue, other than draw this to the attention of GE.1 and its UN/EDIFACT Rapporteurs and urges that both address this issue either via the JRT (current and empowered) or pass it to the Steering Group. AC.1 only raises the issue now in order to provide an input prior to the re-organization of the new empowered JRT structure, rather than after.

As reported by the AC.1 chair during the last WP.4 session, AC.1 will hold open information sessions during future JRTs. In order to allow JRT members to understand and help AC.1 in its work, an issue list has been prepared (see annex A, page 4 of R.1266). This list will be distributed to all JRT participants who than can attend the open session during the week to either obtain clarification or make a contribution.

The next meeting of AC.1 will be held 28 July - 1 August in Ann Arbour, MI, USA and 10 - 14 November in either Brussels or Paris.