September 29, 2008

Rant: Ill for 1.5 Days because of WSDL, XML, and Schema

Saturday I worked for a while with WSDL, XML, and Schema - trying to make some extremely simple stuff work over SOAP in PHP. I finally got some stuff working but the stress of figuring it out took its toll. I hate being so non-productive - I like getting stuff done - I dislike figuring out crap rats nest data models in XML/WSDL/Schema.

It was so bad that I tried to get the poison out of my system by taking a long motorcycle ride to pick up a new batch of baby Sakaigers - no help. Sunday - I could not work - I spent most of the day laying in bed - mentally exhausted.

Then this morning - I woke up with a splitting headache and knot in my stomach - I could hardly stand up. I took a Motrin and laid back down - after about three hours the gurgling in my stomach ceased and I was able to stand up enough to drive into work for my 3PM meeting.

It is just really sad that WSDL/XML/Schema is so bad that it makes one sick to one's stomach for a day and a half just by looking at it.

I figured that maybe I should try XMLSpy instead of looking at it all in vi - perhaps looking at xsd files in vi was what gave me vertigo. But of course - XMLSpy is not free - it is $149. Great market - the world has adopted these crappy standards and you have the only piece of technology to make them tolerable - and you only give a trial edition - not a free edition. GRRRRRR.

This made me more sick to my stomach - it has gotten to the point where you pay $149 for the right to view Schema without vomiting. We as an industry have built standards on top of XML and Schema that are so nasty that you need to pay some stupid company $149 to interpret them - where is the free alternative??

So I kept googling "free mac os xml viewer" and came across - Exchanger XML Lite - which was free. Their web site is:

http://www.exchangerxml.com/

Now I can load up the schema files and Exchanger will load the million external references and tell me where I need a string named "Fred" and it is up to 256 characters.

If we want object oriented stuff like extends and want to avoid repetitive code - then lets just make our specs be honestly OO and use open braces and close braces - then at

least we can run JavaDoc and see what methods our ultimate object will have. Why add a zillion less thans, colons, and greater thans to completely obscure things.

I need to get back to making SOAP work - but I am nervous because I lost 1.5 days of productivity just by looking at XML schema - so even armed with Exchanger - I am fearful of diving back into the swirling darkness that is XML Schema.

Ah well - maybe writing this blog post will make me feel better. Or maybe someone will tell me a cool way to run a script that auto-generates PHP objects given some crap WSDL as input.

Comments

I've been building stuff in XML, XSD, XSL for a couple years using OSP. A good toolkit for free would have been great, but it isn't out there.

However, OxygenXML has an academic license for $50 and works as an Eclipse plugin. I really like it.

Sean

Posted by csev at September 29, 2008 01:41 PM