eIntegration

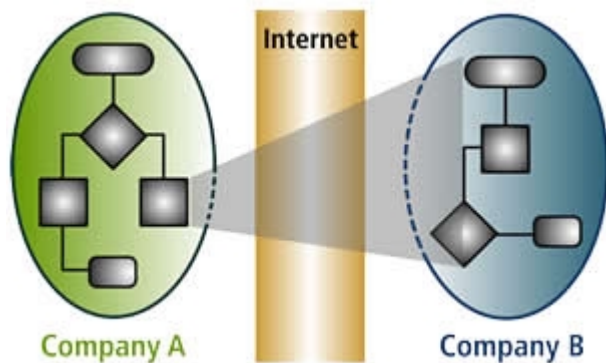*Integrating with your Business
Partners in a smooth and easy way*

The Issue

Currently, EAI is a complex and resource-intensive task, it is estimated that IT departments can spend up to 35 per cent of their time in integration work.
XML has the potential to substantially simplify the integration puzzle by providing a common format for passing data between applications.

The focus of application integration is also moving beyond the boundaries of the organization, with the need of integration of shared processes between organizations.

Integration Beyond the Boundaries

Many business processes now involve a third party, be it a sub-contractor, a delivery company, or an agent, and if integration is truly to reflect the actual process, then the tangible links must also reach outwards.

Genuine believes that this integration must be business-process led. Existing solutions have tended towards a technology-first approach that has focused on the integration of individual applications, but this ignores the fact that business processes cut across application, departmental, and now company boundaries.

Business Analysis

Very often, companies don't have a clear view on the existing business processes or data models, and how they interact with internal organization or with external trading partners.
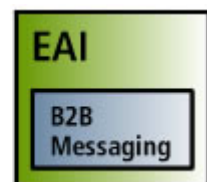
Genuine can help you analyze your current business processes and suggest improvements where needed. The tools we use allow the rapid development of integration strategies using visual modeling of the process flow, in conjunction with a rule-based system that can respond to events.

Business Process Integration

Once the Business Processes are clearly defined and documented, Genuine will identify any areas where manual intervention can be eliminated by using messaging and process automation to tie different applications together.

As the integration moves beyond the company boundary, the emphasis is no longer on sharing technology, but on sharing meaning. By combining its B2B messaging and EAI offer, Genuine designs the structure and meaning of messages that will pass between business partners.
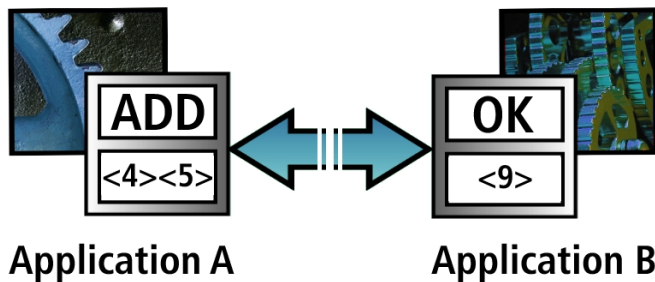

We aim to remain flexible as standards evolve, and this is the fundamental reason why XML should be incorporated into the integration infrastructure. The XML proposition of a loosely coupled connection and a widely supported protocol for data representation makes it a strong basis for B2B Integration.

Loose Coupling

For integration between heterogeneous systems and applications between organizations, the need for a communication system that is independent of the platform used becomes apparent.

XML based technologies are ideally suited to offer a solution. By transmitting messages over the network instead of a stream of bytes, a high degree of interoperability is achieved as all parties can read the XML message and understand the context of the data.

Application A **Application B**

A request message sent over the network will be answered by a reply after an undetermined lapse of time, thus the name loose-coupled solution. As business processes are long running by nature, they heavily rely on this asynchronous messaging system.

Legacy Integration

One of the key aspects of any integration strategy is the need to connect to legacy applications. Legacy data is a critical asset, often containing much of a company's knowledge capital, and unlocking this information leverages the substantial investment that has been made in these systems.

In many cases, legacy systems use data repositories that already contain metadata, and this can be directly expressed as an XML document. Thus for data-level integration, XML is a natural choice, since it is relatively easy to present the legacy data as an XML stream.

Legacy applications can also benefit from third-party connectors that very often are available free of charge. Genuine has extensive knowledge of industry-standard connectors such as the SAP business connector, and ensures a correct configuration.
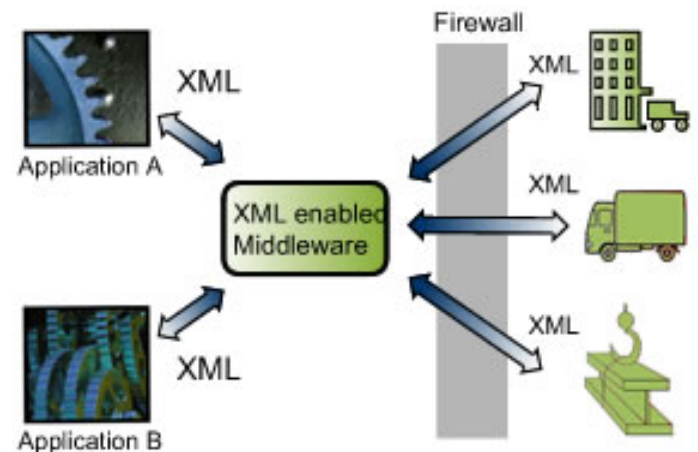
Connectors

A connector or adaptor is often nothing more than a translator that wraps legacy data into an XML message, thus enabling integration with XML-enabled systems.

Most connectors have effective plug-and play capabilities, ensuring fast and smooth integration. If a specific connector is not available for a certain system or application, Genuine will ensure the development of an adaptor by using Integration tools such as webMethods or BizTalk.

eNabling Technology

The following illustration summarizes the use of XML as an enabling technology for application integration.

The key points to note are the flexibility that XML provides for application-to-application links, the loose-coupled approach that is required for B2B integration with third parties, and the fact that XML offers a single method for achieving both types of connection.

Genuine uses XML to offer a common way of representing data, which eases the burden of application integration. The other big win for XML is in B2B integration outside the company boundaries, where it can truly be classed as an enabling technology.