XIA INFORMATION ARCHITECTS CORPORATION

XML and Democracy

A Recent Experiment

Project Concept: Introduce XML to encode, publish and use all the information needed and produced by the parliamentary process.

XML and Democracy

Facilitating the Democratic Process

“The quality of a democracy is directly and completely determined by the quality of the discourse it fosters.”

XML and Democracy

Information Channels

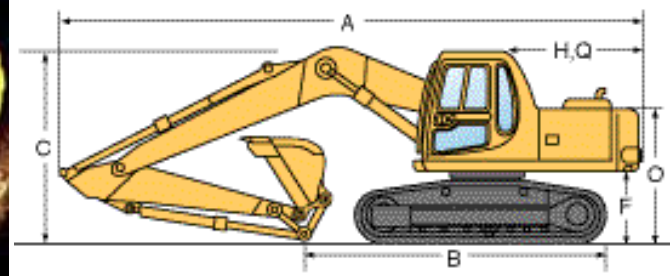
Access to quality information and the participation of multiple viewpoints were flagged as key factors.
XML - in an intentionally simple implementation - would allow universal participation - and active participation.

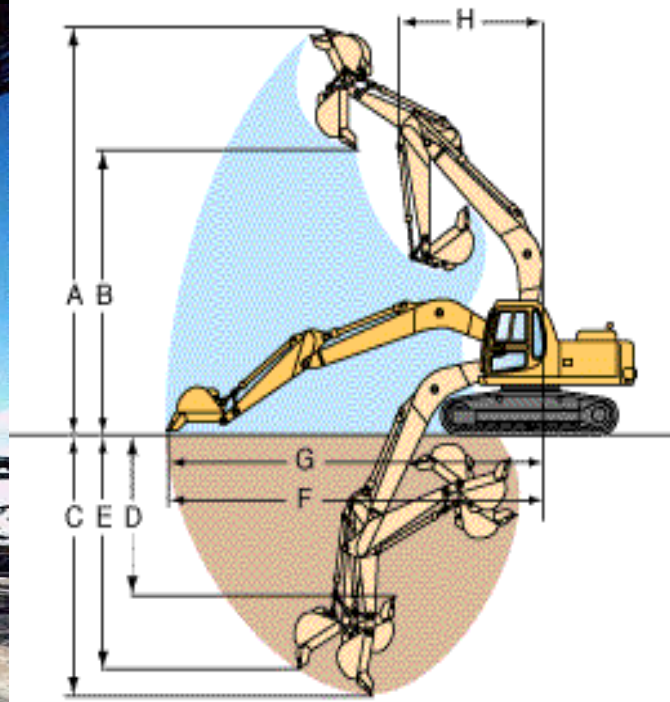
XML and Democracy

XML and Anarchy

Problem: the simplicity of XML caused serious concerns.
The possibility of information being shared with constituents was unsettling to the Political parties.
More automation, sophistication and control was demanded!

American Supplier Association





XML and the Real Economy

American Supplier Association

- Massive Opportunities exist for improved automation
  - Technical sophistication is a barrier
  - Operational disruption is a barrier
  - Low risk tolerance is a barrier
- Even EDI has achieved limited penetration
- .Com solutions have fallen flat
- XML viewed with a mixture of interest & suspicion

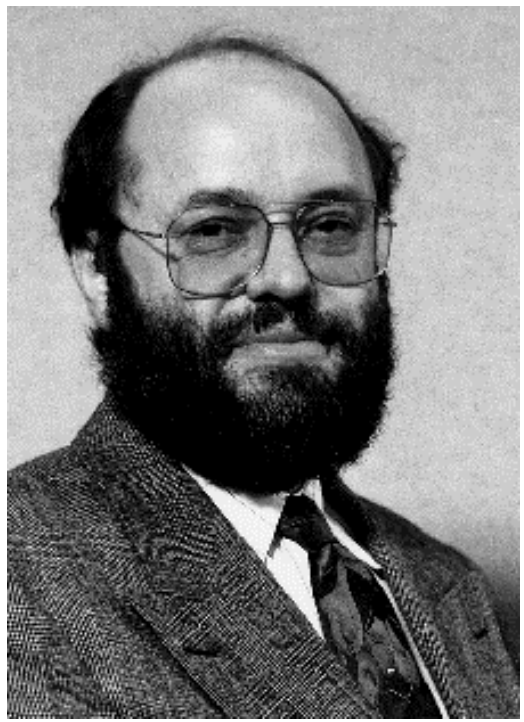
Politics and Business

Accessibility is Key

- Politics
  - The accessibility of XML was seen as a radical agent
  - Greatest threat:
    - anyone could build views onto the content using simple tools
- Business
  - The supplier industry is suspicious of technology that
    - they cannot control fully
    - demands a high level of technical sophistication to implement
    - assumes an approach to business different than what they do
  - An overwhelming need remains
    - looking to XML as “everyone’s technology”

Accessibility is Key

Yuri Rubinsky



Users' Manifesto
Presented to Seybold Boston 1994
(via telephone link)

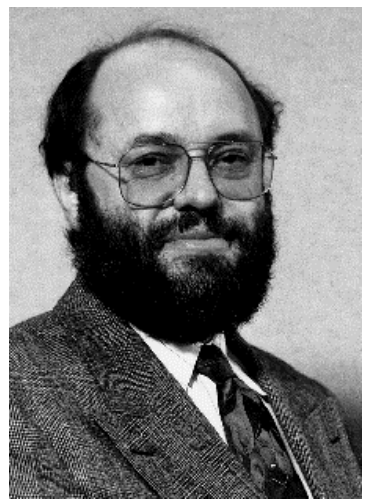
Users' Manifesto

Yuri Rubinsky

- We all have certain inalienable and interconnected rights which are entirely compatible with companies' rights to provide value and build businesses

  The rights of individuals and corporations should and can be compatible and both are necessary in a free and evolving society

- In this manifesto, there are seven rights which all users, *all people*, have.

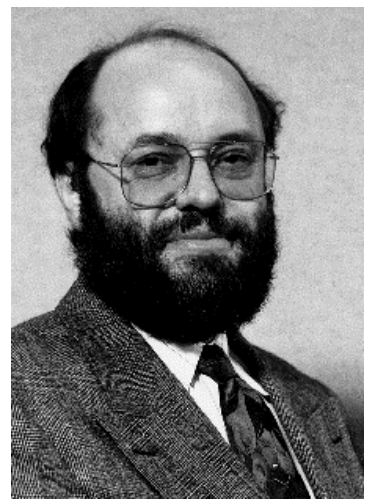


Users' Manifesto

Yuri Rubinsky

- We have the right to a standard machine independent encoding of all information and entertainment content

Our choice of computing platform or application suite should never be dictated by the format of the content.

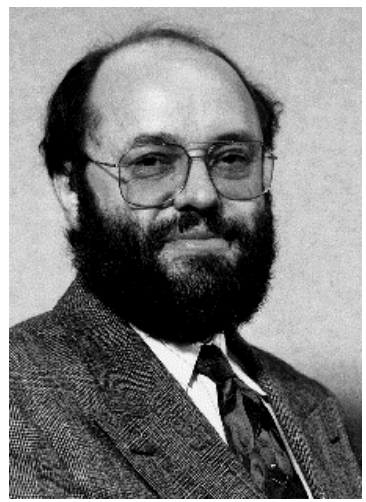


Users' Manifesto

Yuri Rubinsky

- We have the right to use the display software of our choice and to adjust it to our own special needs - to hear information if we can't see and see information if we can't hear.

Information must be
accessible to, and usable by, everyone.

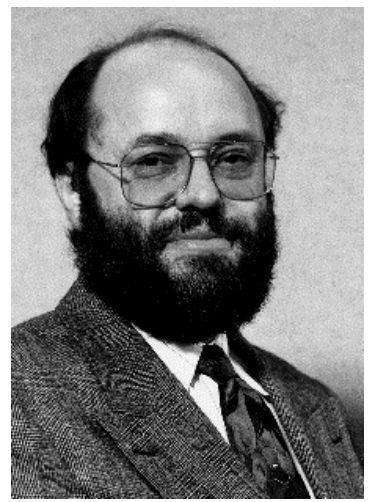


Users' Manifesto

Yuri Rubinsky

- We have the right to choose information providers and to know that our technology will understand their content.

Users must be able to locate and use information providers - the creators, publishers, and owners of entertainment and information assets - and to use what they find.



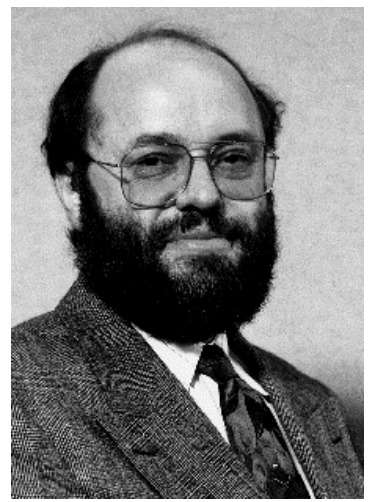
Users' Manifesto

Yuri Rubinsky

- We have the right to choose providers of delivery services and know that we can recognize any content that comes at us.

Delivery Services cover the providers of fundamental access services:

- Cable Companies
- Telephone Companies
- ISPs
- AOL, MSN,…

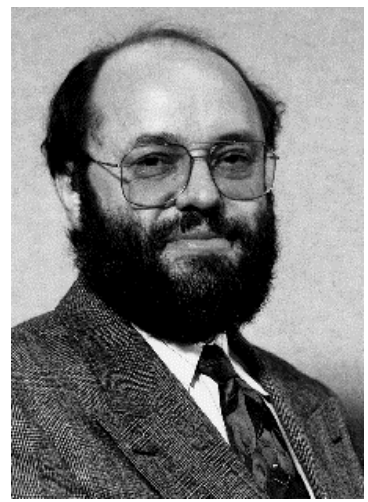


Users' Manifesto

Yuri Rubinsky

- We have the right to the intelligent encoding of all content in order to allow the broadest possible exploitation of our information assets.

Our use of information goes beyond simple consumption - we quote, annotate, cross-reference, acquire, license, modify, challenge and re-purpose information. And we are producers as well as consumers.



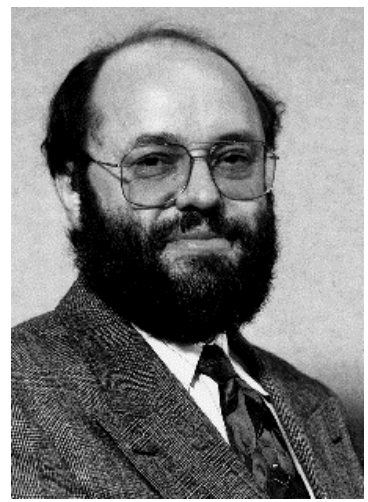
Users' Manifesto

Yuri Rubinsky

- We have the right to pay for quality information and services.

The right of consumers to choose the information and services they use creates the role and value of competitive businesses.

Businesses provide choice.



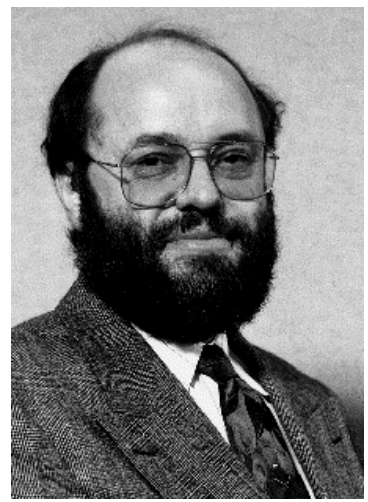
Users' Manifesto

Yuri Rubinsky

- We have the right to continue to choose paths of entertainment and information experiences.

Evolution cannot be impeded -
new technologies are needed,
as well as
new types of services, and
new types of content.

A competitive economy makes this possible



XML and the Roots of the Web

Accessibility is Key

- Where there is a Will there is a Way (WWW)
  - the triumph of the web is rooted in accessibility
    - the smallest could look as good as the largest (or as bad)
- XML and Accessibility
  - XML can provide both simple stepping stones and advanced capabilities
    - the simple stepping stones are the more important of the two
  - The Users' Manifesto can be a useful touchstone
  - Progress on XML is proceeding extremely well
  - All we need to do is remember the basics that got us here and the fact that, for many, those basics are all that is accessible to them.

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