DISCUSSION CONCLUDING AAS 11-679

Wolfgang Dick noted that, in his experience, there seemed to be little demand for data provided via XML. Rob Seaman suggested that this perception may be due to a still-limited market within the user community, and David Terrett noted that demand should increase as people upgrade their control systems over time. Steve Allen quipped that many systems might be upgraded only when it is clear that they will no longer function (a possible example being overflow of format fields for files used by Mark-III VLBI correlators).

Arnold Rots agreed that XML digital signatures will be expected into the future so it would be best to introduce them from the outset, and he also suggested additional data such as numbers of leap seconds. Terrett replied that his presentation focused on the needs of his application, and that he welcomed consideration from others regarding what data should be maintained for operational purposes. However, he also signaled that it is very easy to add content to XML; such ease can create files with much unutilized information. Rots followed that consideration might be given to putting all time-relevant information into a single file. Terrett agreed, but cautioned that if files are laden with too much information, the average programmer might become discouraged. As an example, he quoted *IERS Bulletin A* which says time "*T* is the date in Besselian years."[*]

George Kaplan was curious if XLM parsers were standardized; Steve Allen and Terrett affirmed that parsers are easily available for almost all modern programming and scripting languages. Kaplan also queried about the meaning of a "standalone" file; Terrett said that by "standalone" there should be no need to look outside the data file to be able to parse the data file. David Simpson asked about the risk of transmission error and possible checksums; Terrett clarified that the digital signature serves this purpose. Seaman and Terrett also noted that there were advantages to having some peer review of the schema for "sanity checking" but there is not much reason for committee deliberations of schema designs for such a relatively straightforward application.

Seaman asked about proposed methods of distribution. Terrett said that distribution should be as simple as possible, suggesting file access via http. Seaman noted that may not suffice for all applications; Terrett clarified that such should be minimally available via http, and Seaman agreed http was a good starting point.

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[*] http://maia.usno.navy.mil/ser7/ser7.dat