

# The ERF Connection

## The Electronic Regulatory Filing Newsletter



I am pleased to present our new quarterly newsletter format - *The ERF Connection*. We will strive to keep you abreast of the many exciting milestones that will be reached in the 2000-2001 fiscal year, including the one we have all been waiting for... the launch of ERF!

*The ERF Connection* is a reflection of our continued commitment to the Electronic Regulatory Filing (ERF) project and the National Energy Board's (NEB) partnership with the Ontario Energy Board (OEB). We appreciate the ongoing support and contributions of our industry partners.

Should you have any questions or suggestions for the next newsletter, feel free to contact the ERF team at [erf@neb.gc.ca](mailto:erf@neb.gc.ca).

*Gaétan Caron*

Chief Operating Officer, National Energy Board

## Message from the Project Managers

It has been a while since we issued an ERF newsletter and a lot has happened since the last edition of *The Standard*. Both the OEB and NEB teams have been working hard and ERF is close to becoming a reality. Let's summarize some of the achievements since we last communicated with you formally:

- The OEB/NEB agreement has been renewed for another year, and the NEB has committed to 'adopting and adapting' the initial OEB solution. This guarantees that our joint user community and the Canadian public in general will see a common "look and feel" for both systems. The commitment to cooperation extends to further releases of the DTD, enhancements to the core system and possible expansion to other jurisdictions in future.
- OEB core system development is almost complete with full system testing scheduled for mid-August in Toronto. This means that the OEB is on target for launching the system in late 2000. The NEB is working on their overall schedule for rollout to industry. The NEB version of ERF is expected to be "open for business" three to four months after the OEB's ERF release.
- Authoring tools are now real! We have a fully operational authoring environment for Word Perfect, with XMetaL not far behind. Author Assist is also fully tested and ready to go.
- Development of training materials is well under way and will be available to industry in the fall.
- We have had many staff changes on both project teams and our Joint External Advisory Committee - we will update you on current contact names and roles in the next newsletter.

We have many more small successes to celebrate. Generally, our message is - the ERF train is rolling. We hope to see you all on board with your bags packed and your tickets ready!

*Margaret Harper*  
National Energy Board

*Charles Mathis*  
Ontario Energy Board



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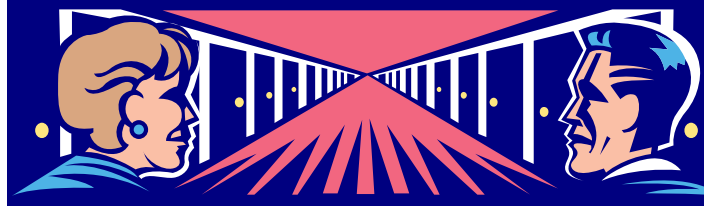
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If you would like to be put on our distribution list, please e-mail [erf@neb.gc.ca](mailto:erf@neb.gc.ca)



# E-Government: Mission Interactive



## Channel Refinement

By December 31, 2000 a federal on-line presence will be estab-

In February, the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat issued the *Framework for Government On-Line (GOL)*.

GOL is about positioning government for the 21st century. With the Internet attaining critical mass, government has the opportunity to reach more Canadians than ever before and provide convenient access to information and services. The GOL framework outlines three targets for government departments to evolve from simply supplying electronic information to supporting on-line interaction and finally integrating "e-government" to maximize synergies.

lished. Citizens can expect to have access to current and reliable information on government programs, basic search tools, as well as the ability to provide feedback. Common "look and feel" standards will be implemented for all federal web sites to develop federal brand recognition.

## Service Transformation

By December 31, 2004 federal services will be delivered electronically. Citizens can expect to access key government services securely on-line with the ability to apply, file, inquire, and perform advanced searches.

## Convergence

The third step will build on service transformation objectives in order to promote inter-jurisdictional electronic service delivery. This will extend initiatives to various levels of government, industry, organizations and international partners.

On the cutting edge, ERF is validating concepts and technology while promoting innovation and learning. The NEB is keeping a close eye on GOL guidelines while other government departments look to ERF for guidance. For example, the Federal Court of Canada is currently interested in implementing electronic filing. The Registry of the Federal Court is reviewing ERF and its associated authoring tools and DTDs to determine their potential use in this electronic filing initiative. This would be an additional step towards inter-jurisdictional regulation, building on the OEB-NEB alliance. The success of ERF will most likely become an important model for other GOL initiatives.

For more information on GOL:  
[http://www.cio-dpi.gc.ca/cio/speeches/cips/llm\\_e/sld001.htm](http://www.cio-dpi.gc.ca/cio/speeches/cips/llm_e/sld001.htm)



### Legal Corner **Amending the National Energy Board Rules - Making ERF Legal**

The Board of the NEB approved draft changes to the NEB Rules of Practice and Procedure, 1995 (the Rules) on June 15, 2000. This is a key milestone for the ERF project because these minor amendments to the Rules will allow for official electronic documents while accounting for ERF technology and procedural changes. Guidance Notes to the Rules (GNRs) will accompany the new amendments to assist legal and industry parties with the interpretation and implementation of the Rules.

The draft was a result of consultations that took place in November 1999 and April 2000 with the ERF Regulatory Advisory Team and ERF Lawyer Group. Next steps include a second round of consultations with the same groups. The feedback will be incorporated and a final draft presented to the Board for approval. The Rules will then be sent to the Department of Justice who will make the necessary updates to the law.

For more info or feedback, please contact Margery Fowke by email at [mfowke@neb.gc.ca](mailto:mfowke@neb.gc.ca).

Note: For information regarding other government regulations on e-commerce visit the Department of Justice <http://canada.justice.gc.ca/en/ps/ec> for updates on the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (Bill C-6) and the Uniform Electric Commerce Act (UECA).

# SGML and XML – What’s the Difference?

Most people have heard of HTML, the language behind the World Wide Web as well as XML, the newest language and buzzword to hit the Internet. However, few seem to know what SGML is or why someone would use it.

SGML, or Standard Generalized Markup Language, is the mother of HTML and XML. Defined by the ISO 8879 standard since 1986, SGML is a set of rules and structures used to define information content, create documents, and

store information. The primary advantage of SGML, in a regulatory context, is that it is a universal, vendor-independent standard. This ensures longevity, accessibility, and reliability of documents and archives. SGML also facilitates management and manipulation of information, enables powerful searching, and allows large information repositories to be broken down and rearranged intelligently into individual documents. Other advantages of SGML include publishing documents in different media formats (e.g. print, CD-ROM, the Web).

XML, or Extensible Markup Language, was championed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C <http://www.w3.org>) in 1998. XML is a subset or "restricted form" of SGML intended for use on the World Wide Web, whereas HTML is an application of a limited set of SGML tags. The key difference between XML and SGML is that XML rules allow the document to be read without a predefined structure and requires only one pass to understand the tags and context. Companies such as IBM, Netscape, Oracle and Microsoft are hopping onto the XML bandwagon, developing tools and applications. However, XML is still evolving and ways of presenting data are inconsistently implemented by browsers so it is difficult to know what standard to follow.

## What does all this mean to ERF?

ERF selected SGML because it has been in use longer and provides additional data management capability. In the context of ERF, the SGML document structure is XML compatible and ERF documents are easily converted to XML. Therefore, ERF will be able to take advantage of emerging XML technology. In the meantime, tools have been developed by ERF to automatically convert SGML files to HTML and PDF to provide convenient formats to the public.

## Still confused?

Visit the following web sites for more information:  
<http://www.oasis-open.org/cover>  
<http://www.uic.edu/orgs/tei/sgml/>  
<http://www.sgml.u-net.com>  
<http://www.jorvic.demon.co.uk/>  
[http://www.gca.org/whats\\_sgml](http://www.gca.org/whats_sgml)



## New System, New Place

### Improvements to OEB Public Areas on the Way

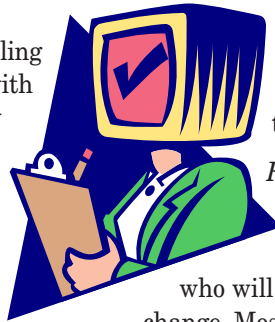
The OEB is presently redeveloping its major public areas such as the Hearing Rooms, Information Resource Centre (IRC), and File Room. Plans include relocating the current IRC to the SW corner to combine it with the Board Public File Room and the construction of two new rooms - a large Hearing Room on the North wall and a smaller multi-purpose room on the West wall.

Designers and technical specialists were brought in to ensure that the new rooms will be designed to support ERF Automated Hearing Room functionality (e.g. electrical outlets to plug in computers, public display screens, and public access terminals) and any future requirements that may be needed (e.g. simultaneous translation and video-conferencing). The project is currently targeted for

completion in late 2000, in-line with the goals set for overall ERF availability at the OEB.

# Preparing for ERF - Part 1 Planning

The implementation of ERF will change standards and regulations related to the filing of regulatory documents with the OEB and NEB. Although a date for mandatory filing has not been set, organizations filing with the Boards will be mandated to comply with the amended regulatory rules. People will need to adapt to the use of electronic copies and reduce or eliminate their reliance on paper copies to access, distribute, and submit documents. Whereas using the ERF repository on-line will be relatively simple, learning to produce SGML documents to be submitted to the ERF repository is complex. Document authors will require training and assistance to become proficient in SGML and new processes.



Planning is essential to facilitate change and to ensure a smooth transition for staff with limited disruptions. Project managers know that even a small change can transform into cataclysmic upheavals over time if ignored or improperly managed. The following are a few suggested steps to help your organization adopt ERF.

## 1. Appoint an ERF coordinator for your company.

E-mail this individual's contact information to [erf@neb.gc.ca](mailto:erf@neb.gc.ca). The coordinator should obtain senior level buy-in, manage change with all affected parties (corporate regulatory staff, lawyers, etc.), and communicate that ERF will become mandatory. Activities include coordinating implementation with IT and business, scheduling training, and communicating progress.

## 2. Establish an authoring strategy.

*Downstream approach* - a set number of staff convert final documents to SGML.

*Upstream approach* - SGML documents are created at the source of the information.

*Funnel approach* - a progressive adoption starting downstream and gradually moving up.

The selected approach will determine how many and who will be trained as well as to what degree processes will change. Most companies are opting for a funnel approach, starting in the regulatory department and slowly reaching information providers as document templates and skills develop.

## 3. Select an SGML authoring tool.

The adjacent table outlines the key characteristics of each tool currently supporting the ERF DTD.

Note: WPAE should be regarded as markup tool, like an HTML editor, not as a word processor. Some Microsoft Word users have reported instability with WPAE, but the NEB has not experienced this problem. XMAE is poor at importing tables. However, discussions are underway with Softquad to solve this problem.

## 4. Prepare for implementation.

Analyse how your business processes will change and how templates should be customized to your organization. Start scheduling pre-requisite training for authors as required, for example, existing vendor WordPerfect or XMetaL and SGML training. ERF related training materials will be available on-line in the fall.

Essentially the key message is that organizations should START NOW to provide as much time as possible for staff to become proficient in authoring SGML documents before ERF is mandatory. Here is the current status of a few companies in the process of adopting ERF:

Organization	Tool	Authoring Approach	Comments
Enbridge Consumers Gas Contact: Lisa Thalassinou	TBD	Will use 4 authors from core regulatory group and 6-8 support staff from upstream. Planning training for fall.	Waiting for XMAE table import functionality. Will be testing repository and tools.
TransCanada Contact: Linda Angus	WPAE	Approx. 4 users from legal and business + 1 technical support staff. Create documents as usual and convert to SGML when final.	Have participated in a pilot. Are beginning to address workflow and process changes.
WestCoast Energy Contact: Alan Haskey	TBD	Will start with 3-4 people in regulatory office, expanding to 20-30 authors over time using the funnel approach.	Waiting for XMAE table import functionality. Is pleased with XMAE "look and feel" and customizations.
Independent Electricity Market Operator Contact: Keith Bryan	TBD	4-5 strategically placed authors. Process training required due to limited regulatory experience. Would like to partner with others on tool training.	Will most likely choose XMAE due to WPAE instability with MS Word. Planning template customization.

<b>Authoring tool selection criteria</b>	<b>Corel WordPerfect+SGML (WPAE)</b>	<b>SoftQuad XMetaL (XMAE)</b>
Tool Type	Editor-publisher	Editor
Current ERF Development Status	Ready for Distribution	Summer 2000
Initial Purchase Cost	Low - \$187 CND	Medium - \$495 US
Licence Maintenance Cost	Low - \$154	Low - \$125
Long-term Vendor Support	Good	Very Good
Microsoft Friendly	Fair-Good	Very Good IE5 required
Application Stability	Fair - Good	Good - Very Good
Imbed Applications	Medium	High
Learning Curve/Training Costs	Low	Medium
WYSIWYG	Yes	No
User Interface	Very Good	Very Good
Rendition Quality	Medium	Low
Import/Export of SGML Documents	Very Good	Good
Table Import (Excel)	Good	In progress - Sept 2000
Automatic Table Markup	Yes	Yes
Graphics Handling	Poor-Fair	Good
Column & Page Break control	Yes	No
Tools to Assist in Adding Markup	Very Good	Good
Customizable (macros, templates...)	Medium	High
Interchange of Layouts	Very Good	Fair - Good
Manual Formatting for "Tweaking"	Yes	No

**Note: column shading indicates the highest rating for certain criteria.**

For questions regarding ERF change management and training contact Elke Meyer at [emeyer@neb.gc.ca](mailto:emeyer@neb.gc.ca).



## SGML Authoring Update

### DTD Summit

When authoring in SGML, a DTD (Document Type Definition) is used to define the structure of documents. ERF has developed a DTD to accommodate the variety of regulatory documents used by the NEB and OEB.

The ERF DTD Summit met in Toronto on June 13 and 14 to discuss minor changes in the DTD to support hearing transcript production and legacy document conversion. The ERF DTD Committee will meet in September to approve the changes to be incorporated in version 1.5.

### Regulatory Hearing Transcripts in SGML

Stenotran, the contracted court reporter for both the NEB and OEB, will start producing hearing transcripts in SGML. In June, two NEB hearings will serve as trial runs to ensure processes run smoothly. Service levels should be up to standard by September for key OEB hearings.

### Authoring tools – Ready, test... GO!

ERF has developed two authoring tools so far to assist users with the creation of SGML documents via templates and macros based on the ERF DTD.

- WordPerfect Authoring Environment (WPAE) is ready and has been tested. WPAE has been adopted as the authoring tool standard for the OEB and NEB staff.
- XMetaL Authoring Environment (XMAE) is ready and testing is currently underway. XMAE will be upgraded for XMetaL version 2.0 by the end of July. Discussions are underway with Softquad to improve XMetaL's standard Excel table import functionality.

Several other tools have been developed for conversion and validation of SGML documents.

- Adobe FrameMaker+SGML is scheduled for a July release. The primary focus of this tool will be to create PDF versions of SGML documents automatically (not for SGML authoring).
- Author Assist Version 1.4 Beta is ready and testing is currently underway. It is a tool to validate SGML tagging as per the ERF DTD.

Tools and authoring information will be available on <http://www.neb.gc.ca> or on <http://www.erf.ca> when the site is launched in the upcoming weeks. You may also contact Cheryl Van Bastelaar at [cvanbastelaar@neb.gc.ca](mailto:cvanbastelaar@neb.gc.ca)



## Public Key Infrastructure to the Rescue

Are you one of the many people out there who are a little skeptical about the safety of the information you are sending or receiving on the Internet? Worry no more! ERF will use Public-Key Infrastructure (PKI) technology to confirm the identity of users and to prevent the altering or tampering of electronic documents.

PKI uses a combination of encryption (codes used to scramble messages), digital certificates (also known as digital signatures), and business processes to ensure business transactions remain secure. When data is sent, the sender is guaranteed that only the named recipient can read it, the recipient is guaranteed that no one but the named sender could have sent it, and everyone is guaranteed that the document hasn't been "hacked".

Although this technology has existed for well over a decade, current products are making this solution viable for business for the first time. PKI software is now as easy to use as saving a document to file and is relatively transparent. The National Energy Board is part of the Government of Canada Public Key Infrastructure (GoC PKI) program.

### Any questions?

More info can be obtained from the GoC PKI web site [http://www.cio-dpi.gc.ca/pki/home\\_e.html](http://www.cio-dpi.gc.ca/pki/home_e.html) or by contacting ERF's security specialist, Kevin Campbell, at [kcampbell@neb.gc.ca](mailto:kcampbell@neb.gc.ca)

# What's Up?

## NEB ERF Prototype on Web

The NEB's ERF Prototype Repository is now on the Web at <http://www.neb.gc.ca/erf/prototype>. It is fully populated with NEB Reasons for Decision (from 1985) and Hearing Transcripts (from 1991). This initiative facilitates the transition from the now retired NEB Board Document System (BDS) to the final ERF Repository. For more information contact James Obrigewitch at [jobrigewitch@neb.gc.ca](mailto:jobrigewitch@neb.gc.ca).

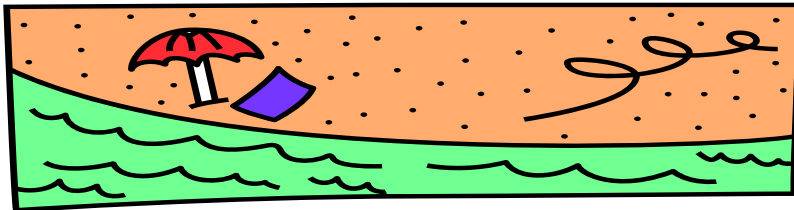


## OEB Web Site Upgrade

As a result of hectic summer vacation schedules and French translation timing, the unveiling of the new OEB web site (<http://www.oeb.gov.on.ca>), including RealAudio, is now targeted for August 1. If you would like to arrange for a special preview of the new site to test the RealAudio functionality, please contact Charles Mathis at [mathisch@oeb.gov.on.ca](mailto:mathisch@oeb.gov.on.ca).



## Need a Vacation?



## XML Summer School in Oxford, England

July 14-19, 2000

"Sample life at the University of Oxford, whilst keeping up-to-date with XML from some of the world's leading experts in this field." <http://www.csw.co.uk/html/summer-school.htm>

## XML Excursion 2001 sailing the Caribbean

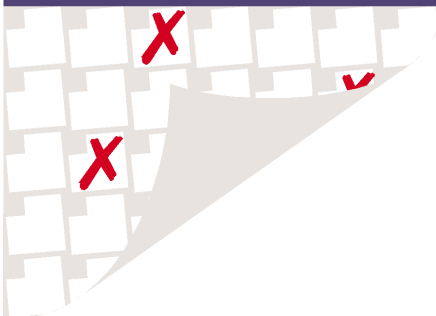
January 26-February 5, 2001

"a unique conference ... aboard Holland America's luxurious Volendam sailing the Southern Caribbean. The 10-day conference combines a cruise vacation with 24.5 hours of intensive XML and XML-related seminars presented by leaders in the field."

<http://www.GeekCruises.com>



## Calendar of events



### July

#### Events

- Western XMetaL Demo Workshop – Calgary, July 17th
- Comments on NEB Rules of Practice and Procedure due July 10th

#### Milestones

- Real Audio Hearing Room Ready

### August

#### Events

- "ERF for Smarties" Brown Bag Lunch – Calgary, Wed Aug 16th, 12-1pm, in the NEB Hearing Room
- ERF "SGML for Smarties" Brown Bag Lunch – Calgary, Wed Aug 23rd, 12-1pm, in the NEB Hearing Room
- Extreme Markup Languages 2000 – Montreal, Aug 13-18 ([http://www.gca.org/attend/2000\\_conferences/Extreme\\_2000/default.htm](http://www.gca.org/attend/2000_conferences/Extreme_2000/default.htm))

#### Milestones

- Acceptance testing of ERF Core Document Repository (CDR)
- OEB web site upgrade
- Training Survey

### September

#### Events

- ERF Joint Advisory Committee Meeting – Toronto, Sept 21-22 hosted by Hydro One
- ERF Technical Q&A Session – TBA
- ERF DTD Committee Meeting – TBA
- XML World – Boston, Sept 5-8 (<http://www.xmlworld.org/>)

#### Milestones

- NEB web site upgrade
- Documents available at [www.erf.ca](http://www.erf.ca)
- Training schedule and materials
- Next issue of The ERF Connection

## Canada

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