



Edict Systems: Taking Web-EDI to a New Level with XML

Customer Profile

As electronic business practices continue to revolutionize the corporate landscape in recent years, Edict Systems has established itself as a leading provider of business-to-business electronic commerce solutions for companies and their trading communities.

Managing thousands of commercial relationships, exchanging millions of transactions, and accounting for billions of dollars of commerce on an annual basis, the company sets itself apart from the competition with a world-class product suite, an ever-constant focus on innovation, and a commitment to superior client service.

Edict Systems excels at implementing and managing trading partner communities. The company's flagship product, Web-EDI, accomplishes this by delivering small and medium-sized businesses a low-cost, subscription-based online service that enables them to effectively participate in electronic commerce with partners, vendors, and customers. Web-EDI provides customers with the most cost-effective and simple-to-use system for processing EDI documents. Since the application is an online portal, there are no software or download requirements for clients.

Edict Systems tailors the application to fit industry-specific requirements. In fact, the company has built an array of vertical portals or 'Vortals'. GroceryEC.com, RetailEC.com, CPGSupplier.com, MfgEC.com, and LogisticsEC.com all specifically cater to distinct industry requirements. They also offer EasyEC.com for clients who do not fall within one of the defined industry verticals. Furthermore, the company even offers customization options to answer the unique needs of customer organizations. This client-centric approach has served Edict Systems well by helping establish Web-EDI as one of the preeminent solutions in the EDI processing landscape. However, with a growing customer base, a company culture built around innovation and a dedication to client service always at the forefront, Edict executives recognized an opportunity to make a very successful product even better.

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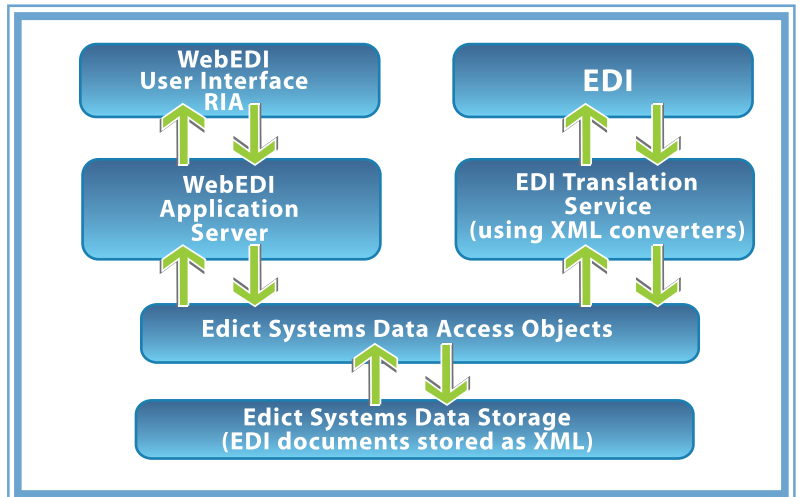
Greg Gohlke
Director of Product Development
Edict Systems

Maintaining Market Advantage

"We know we have an industry success with Web-EDI, and we know our business will keep growing," states Greg Gohlke. "But, we're always looking for ways to utilize new technologies to innovate and improve our product and increase client satisfaction even more."

As part of this product evolution, Gohlke and his team wanted to enhance the application's user interface. They also wanted to re-architect Web-EDI with a more .NET-centric development approach. Finally they wanted to modernize their core EDI processing functionality by leveraging the power of XML.

To construct Web-EDI's new user interface, the team selected Adobe Flex, a cross-platform development framework for creating rich internet applications. Flex offered Edict Systems a multimedia-rich development environment that delivers a sophisticated user presentation without the burden of complex Java programming. Moreover, Flex offered seamless interoperability with both .NET and XML, important considerations for Gohlke and his team.



To modernize their EDI processing infrastructure, Edict Systems wanted to move away from redundant EDI mapping and the maintenance burden that came with building new custom mapping applications. Instead, they decided to construct a more componentized .NET web service approach that automated a significant portion of everyday programming requirements and eliminated much of the need for duplicative, labor-intensive mapping.

Gohlke and his team quickly recognized that XML conversion was an innovative way to bridge the chasm between new EDI documents and Edict Systems' relational database. To accomplish this, Edict Systems selected DataDirect XML Converters to serve as the cornerstone of their mapping process transformation.

Realizing the Benefits of DataDirect XML Converters

"After redesigning our EDI import and export processes, we found that by using DataDirect XML Converters we significantly reduced the resources necessary for mapping data," comments Gohlke. "This has dramatically reduced our time to market for our EDI mapping functions which allows us to be even more competitive in our industry."

In the newly-architected Web-EDI, DataDirect XML converters provide the bidirectional streaming conversion from XML to X12 EDI. Using DataDirect XML Converters, Edict Systems was able to:

- Generate schemas through a wizard in only minutes, whereas custom coding often took several days or longer.
- Support current EDI specifications as well as older versions of the specifications. This comprehensive support of EDI specifications appealed greatly to Gohlke's team as large manufacturers or retailers do not upgrade to new specification releases rapidly.
- Expose the DataDirect XML Converter functionality as easily reusable .NET web services within the Web-EDI development architecture. As a result, they have moved away from Java and reduced the need for redundant, code-intensive custom mapping.
- Utilize a strong working partnership with DataDirect product support representatives and software developers. "On its own, DataDirect XML Converters proved to be an easy-to-implement, out-of-the-box solution. However, our accessibility to DataDirect team members enables us to truly maximize our investment in automated XML conversion," adds Gohlke.

Furthermore, with the new component-based, easy-to-maintain application architecture, upgrades and fixes take only a fraction of the time they once did. The team makes a change once within the particular .NET web service, and the change is immediately recognized across all customer-specific applications.

Pulling Away from the Competition

Web-EDI's architectural enhancements have yielded dramatic operational results for the Edict Systems team. By increasing development team productivity via automated XML conversion and by reducing the time dedicated to Web-EDI upgrades and maintenance, Gohlke is diverting resources to other innovative projects that will further strengthen Web-EDI's competitive advantage in the marketplace.

For example, the team is using DataDirect's XQuery engine to perform data conversion from their existing legacy database to a more modern data architecture. Like DataDirect XML Converters, Edict Systems is employing XQuery and the power of XML to reduce custom development requirements as they convert data to the new format.

Combining these back-end successes with an enhanced user-interface, Edict Systems is making an even stronger commitment to its existing and future clientele. "At the end of the day, realizing operational efficiencies and improving the end user experience means satisfied, more engaged customers; more time to focus on industry-specific and client-specific customization, and more resources to focus on product innovation moving forward," sums up Gohlke. "With Web-EDI, we know we have a winner, and we plan to continue building on that success in the market and deliver the best product possible to our customers."

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Director of Product Development
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About DataDirect Technologies

DataDirect Technologies is the software industry's only comprehensive provider of software for connecting the world's most critical business applications to data and services, running on any platform, using proven and emerging standards. Developers worldwide depend on DataDirect® products to connect their applications to an unparalleled range of data sources using standards-based interfaces such as ODBC, JDBC and ADO.NET, XQuery and SOAP. More than 300 leading independent software vendors and thousands of enterprises rely on DataDirect Technologies to simplify and streamline data connectivity for distributed systems and to reduce the complexity of mainframe integration. DataDirect Technologies is an operating company of Progress Software Corporation (Nasdaq: PRGS). For more information, visit www.datadirect.com.

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