Case Study – XML Composer

A Netherlands based consultancy's experiences with XML Composer on client projects

By Eric ten Harkel, Managing Director, COOLprofs

One of the latest additions to the suite of outstanding Canam Software tools is a new product called **XML Composer**. COOLProfs, a Dutch consultancy specializing in Advantage Gen technology, have extensively used this exciting new product in the Benelux countries. To date, two pilots have been completed and both organization are actively using **XML Composer** on their projects.

Installation and training

Installation has proven to be simple and easy – Run the install, get the activation codes, and off you go!

The use of the tool has also proven to be extremely easy and intuitive. However, a general understanding of this reasonably new XML technology, and defining what one wants to do with it, has typically been the challenge that developers continue to face. As such, we do suggest that users undertaking such XML integration within their Advantage Gen applications do pursue some formal XML training whenever possible. We have certainly have observed that most of the discussion during the "training on the job" we participated in pertained to XML in general and, of course, answering the question "how do I implement what I want in XML Composer". We have also been able to help answer questions surrounding how best to structure the corresponding Advantage Gen procedure steps, to get the desired result.

Using the product

Once off and running with the product, we have received very few customer requests for support. Apart from a few minor bug reports, the usage of the product speaks for itself. The nature of the few questions that we have encountered typically pertains to the integration of the generated **XML Composer** code and the Advantage Gen generated code.

Savings /ROI

How much time does **XML Composer** save? It can be significant!

Transforming an XML message into the respective Advantage Gen views, can be a difficult task to be sure! The parsing of the message, determining how it is mapped to your Advantage Gen views/attributes, the translation of the text based message components into their respective Advantage Gen domains, and

associated error handling, requires a lot of programming AND potentially a lot of analysis. This is where we have found that XML Composer really delivers. The developer merely defines which XML tag corresponds to what view, and the code to achieve this is automatically generated **by XML Composer**. This can save many days of development!

Additionally, even though the converse task of transforming Advantage Gen views into an XML message may be considered "a rather straightforward" job, many Advantage Gen developers may not have sufficient native C , COBOL, or XML expertise to write the logic.

Finally, as with all good CASE tools, the maintenance period is where the benefits can really add up. Merely visually changing the specifications and regenerating the code results in fast error-free code every time!

An often heard complaint pertaining to generated code is "The performance is not good enough". In concert with our customer, we have completed some performance testing. The result? The performance of the generated **XML Composer** code is very good!

In our opinion, **XML Composer** is an outstanding, high quality, high ROI tool that should be part of every Advantage Gen customer's suite of tools.

About COOLProfs

COOL*Profs* is a Dutch consultancy specializing in Advantage Gen technology COOL*Profs* have demonstrated their capability to deliver high value added, efficient and outstanding quality consultancy services to European clients. The company has a proven track record, customer commitment, and technical excellence that ensure that customers can maximize the benefits of their investment and will have access to high quality, expert, local consultancy support.

Footnote

Since this case study was originally written, later versions of XML Composer now take advantage of the AllFusion® Gen plug-in capability to provide seamless, bi-directional integration between the two tools.

XML Composer is now capable of being registered as an AllFusion® Gen plug-in which allows the XML Composer toolset to be launched from within AllFusion® Gen. Once XML Composer has been launched in this fashion, a new XML Handler can be easily created based upon the AllFusion® Gen action diagram views.

The XML Composer Plug-in capability also allows the current AllFusion® Gen model to be interrogated in order to identify and select candidate external action blocks to be used as the starting point for a new XML Handler.