



XML is fast becoming the lingua franca of the Internet as it is used to specify, encode and convey an ever growing amount of information. Tagged information architectures, of course, are not entirely new. In fact, in the late 1970s, IBM recognized their enormous potential, and the IBM research and development communities helped develop XML's predecessors, GML and SGML. Today, with XML and related technologies, IBM continues to provide strong leadership in innovation and standards activities, and it is helping catalyze XML's success through strong participation in open-source communities. IBM sees the growing value of XML as a fulcrum for major initiatives, such as service-oriented architectures (SOAs) and Information On Demand.

As XML celebrates its tenth anniversary, IBM is releasing native XML support in Version 9.1 of DB2 Universal Database for Linux, UNIX, and Windows, its flagship distributed database product. With this release, IBM is delivering a hybrid data server for XML-based SOA solutions. Such a system dramatically reduces development time and cost while increasing the performance of applications using XML data. Because business solutions must increasingly support industry-specific standards for XML document and data interchange and must work together by means of XML-based Web service standards, a new generation data server is required to cost-effectively unlock the business value of this information and drive insightful decisions. This hybrid data server is a result of the joint vision and effort by IBM research and development teams, as shown by the numerous joint papers in this issue describing the language, architecture, and query optimization techniques.

Consequently, it is appropriate that IBM Research and IBM Software Group jointly produced this issue of the *IBM Systems Journal* devoted to XML. The papers demonstrate the technologies that we are releasing in today's products and the innovations that will direct the future of XML, helping it realize its full potential for increasing the value of information technology.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Horn".

Paul Horn
Senior Vice President
IBM Research

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven Mills".

Steven Mills
Senior Vice President and Group Executive
IBM Software Group