Breaking News: XBRL Add-in for Microsoft Office 11 Is Forthcoming

Microsoft Corp. sent the following information to select accounting/finance trade pubs yesterday announcing a forthcoming XBRL add-in for Microsoft Office 11:

As you may be aware, Microsoft Corp. is releasing the next version of Office, "Office 11," this summer. [See the XBRL column in the March issue of *Strategic Finance*.] I'm sure you're also aware of the burgeoning XML standard eXtensible Business Reporting Language (XBRL) data format, which allows financial and accounting professionals to more easily publish, exchange, and analyze complex financial information in corporate business reports and filings. Furthering its leadership in the adoption of XBRL, Microsoft will provide a valuable new XBRL add-in for professionals using Office 11. The add-in is built on the new XML Schema and smart documents framework in Office 11 and allows business users to create XBRL documents more easily than ever in Word and Excel. Using simple drag-and-drop functionality, knowledge workers will be able to map financial information to the appropriate XBRL terms, as well as review information already created in XBRL format."

"The XBRL add-in for Office 11 is a groundbreaking development in the XBRL world. This add-in makes it even easier for financial professionals to make their

critical data accessible to stakeholders," said Rob Blake, XBRL group program manager with Microsoft. "We anticipate even quicker adoption of the XBRL standard as professionals have the ability to apply it in Office, an environment which most are familiar with and using every day."

Background

Quick access to data is vital in helping financial and accounting professionals make educated decisions and enables them to be effective in their jobs. That data is often locked into documents and proprietary systems, making it cumbersome to access through other systems and applications. With the creation of XBRL, the financial industry now has a valuable tool for standardizing the structure of financial data so that it can be shared seamlessly across disparate systems. Business report information tagged in XBRL helps streamline the analysis process and ultimately helps everyone in the financial information supply chain by eliminating the need for manual data entry while improving the usability of the financial information.

"Making digital business reporting an ordinary task by providing features in everyday tools like Excel and Word is a tremendous step forward for the XBRL standard," said John Turner, vice chair of the XBRL International Domain Working Group and senior manager at KPMG LLP. "There is no doubt that XBRL is the future for communicating business performance and that it will support improvements in corporate transparency."

According to J. Louis Matherne, president of XBRL International and director of Business Assurance and Advisory Services for the AICPA, the XBRL add-in for Office 11 marks "an important milestone for XBRL, and as more software companies like Microsoft release XBRL-enabled applications, we will see greater market adoption across industries."

About XML Schema

Freeing data from proprietary documents and systems is the core value of XML, the standard markup language to which XBRL conforms. It does this by applying markup tags to data in a document, adding a vital layer of definition that allows disparate systems to understand the context of the data. Using XML, customers can define sets of custom tags (or schemas) that meet their businesses' needs. Office 11's support for customer- and industry-defined XML standards, such as XBRL, allows people to structure their data in the manner that best suits their specific needs and to work more efficiently with others, both inside and outside their organization.

About Smart Documents

Smart documents are a solution development and deployment platform based on XML that is available in Word and Excel. Smart documents bring relevant information directly to the task at hand through a new Programmable Task Pane. With smart documents, XML solutions, such as the new XBRL add-in, can be

created to enable business processes, help users complete forms and other

documents, and link that information to back-end systems that support XML.

 Neal Hannon

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