



Marine Association For Technology Exchange Standards

Spring 2007 E-newsletter

MATES Adds Marine Data to Public Standards Database

The Marine Association for Technology Exchange Standards (MATES), an affiliate association of NMMA, develops specifications for the exchange of information in a structured non-proprietary data format called XML. The primary purpose of XML, extensible mark-up language, is to facilitate the sharing of data across different information systems, particularly via the Internet.

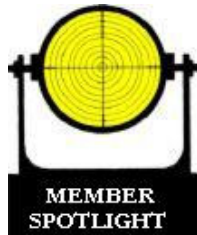
As a global open standard, use of XML is approved by formalized committees through organizations like the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). Within specific industries, other entities extend the work of these standards bodies within the vertical market they serve. One such entity is Standards for Technology in Automotive Retail (STAR). One of STAR's stated objectives is to define the standard XML message for dealer-to-OEM business transactions (i.e.: Parts Order, Sales Lead, Credit Application).

STAR has developed 128 standard messages covering 35 business areas. Each July, STAR issues a public release of these message formats, and provides guidelines for use. Each of these standards, covering a specific business need, provides a solution for communicating information from company to company and business system to business system.

MATES leverages STAR's experience through formal membership and co-development activity. Subcommittees within MATES study existing STAR standards for modification, if needed, or recommend new ones. After a formal review process, marine requirements become incorporated into STAR standards and published annually. MATES relationship with STAR was profiled in this [STAR press release](#).

Spotlight on: boats.com and Marine Web Services

Companies expand industry adoption of MATES Sales Lead specification



MATES charter member boats.com has completed an integration of the MATES Sales Lead specification to facilitate communication of leads with Marine Web Services' MWS Lead Manager. Marine Web Services (MWS) can now accept leads from any MATES compatible third party.

MWS Lead Manager is a customer relationship management (CRM) tool. CRM software helps enterprises organize and manage their customers efficiently. Marine dealers typically obtain MWS Lead Manager as part of a suite of integrated products and services MWS offers to them for enhancing their online presence.

The system captures the leads from as many as 25 different advertising portals and search engines. In addition, it allows dealers to manage the leads very efficiently. They can market to a particular subset of the leads and use "business intelligence". Business intelligence is the concept of managing leads individually or collectively, and cultivating as much information and opportunity from them as possible. The MWS Lead Manager system provides a way to categorize leads, create marketing and email campaigns, and manage the post-lead relationship. The goal is to turn leads obtained today into sales tomorrow.

For example, MWS pushes a dealer's inventory out to a number of portal sites including boats.com, Google and Yahoo. When people respond to the advertisements, a lead is created and pulled back into the lead management system. From there, a dealer has an opportunity to respond to the leads as they see fit, perhaps via a pre-determined policy.

The MATES Sales Lead standard helps facilitate efficient communication of lead details. Boat make, model, and any other parameters the lead could possibly contain can be consumed by the lead manager, and communicated on a field by field manner – something that's impossible for leads obtained via traditional e-mail.

"Our goal is to aggressively pursue communicating leads in the MATES format", says Danielle Kerner of Marine Web Services. "We recognize that the extra dimension of information that can be exchanged in a standardized XML format ultimately improves what we can do with the lead on the customers' behalf within MWS Lead Manager."

Welcome to MATES E-Newsletter

**Distribution Expanded
This Issue to Reach More
Marine Professionals!**

This bulletin provides updates on electronic data standards developed through MATES.

Readers of *NMMA Currents* are receiving this issue.

Please forward to appropriate colleagues. To add others, contact: MATESinfo@nmma.org.

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Curious About MATES?

Join a Conference Call!

MATES holds monthly conference calls to discuss our mission: creating common marine industry-wide data communication standards.

The next open conference call on June 5th at 1:00 p.m. EST is an opportunity for non-members to learn more about this NMMA affiliate, standards under development, and the benefits of membership and participation.

To join the conference call, dial 866-668-0105.

MATES Membership

MATES would like to thank the following organizations for their membership and support in 2007.

Even relatively simple portions of the lead can be acted upon immediately, based on preset action items. For example, a brochure could be sent, an appointment requested, or a request for a quote expedited.

A second piece in alpha testing is the communication of inventory between MWS and boats.com. This is facilitating a cohesive data structure between the companies. Typically, when two parties want to exchange data, there's a give and take. With the existence of a MATES standard, the decision centers more on what type of information will be used versus which company has to bend to accommodate the other's proprietary data format. This inventory activity will be using a new MATES standard currently under development, and will be profiled in a future MATES piece.

"Gains in efficiency and cost effectiveness, which ultimately can be passed on to customers, enhance our ability to provide richer data", says Ian Penney of boats.com. "Communication barriers that were there before have been removed. The data is no longer a proprietary data format. As soon as we say, "we using the MATES standard", we're finding our business associates receptive to the format. Many are already familiar with the specification from other industry uses."

Another advantage of communication in the MATES format is that there's a confirmation piece that enhances data integrity. A confirmation message is obtained by the sender. The destination can acknowledge that a lead has been successfully processed automatically. This is typically not part of the process within other forms of communication.

Real time availability, data integrity, and error checking are benefits of the system boats.com and Marine Web Services have developed. In addition, being able to split out data fields – such as automatically categorizing a lead by make, model, or type of boat - enables the ability to aggregate data at the source.

MATES Add Members, Diversity

Within the past six months, MATES has added several new members to our official roster.

Advanced Data Exchange (ADX) services include: full service EDI outsourcing; document specification and template design; data translation, mapping and validation; secure message delivery; back office systems integration and supplier connectivity. ADX has worked with Land 'N' Sea on the Marine Data Exchange (MDX).

Santa Monica Airlines is MATES first international member, based in the UK. SMA owns and operates the 'Apollo Duck' network of over 40 international, regional and specialty marine advertising websites.

Tracker Marine Group brings to MATES a manufacturer's perspective through their many boat brands, as well as valuable dealership and retail experience through their expansive dealer network.

Welcome New Members!

MATES 3rd Annual Meeting Recap

MATES annual meetings are held at the Miami International Boat Show. This year was MATES third. Several board members and staff provided a high level overview of MATES. Guest speaker, David Carver of STAR, discussed STAR's relationship with MATES. A highlight of the meeting was a review of the Discover Boating Remote Lead Export System (DBLS).

DBLS was profiled as a reference implementation of the MATES sales lead specification. Developed by MATES founding member Channel Blade Technologies, the lead export system is available to all dealers and manufacturers registered to use the lead system on growboating.org. Using a standardized message format (MATES XML) marine companies can poll the DBLS once every four hours. The retrieval process can be automated and lead information obtained in a structured, non-proprietary format conducive to database import at the receiving company.

A technical session for MATES members was also held this year. David Carver demonstrated the importance of user acceptance testing – a method for confirming whether your company's implementation of a standard can be validated against the official standard. Attendees previewed a software development program STAR plans to release to their membership in October. This workbench toolkit, based on the Eclipse open-source development environment, provides a framework for working with XML and performing the user acceptance tests described above.

MATES Dealer Locator Standard Gets STAR Go Ahead

Will become 4th XML standard developed or endorsed by MATES

Advanced Data Exchange

ADP

Assurant Solutions DealerLinX

boats.com / Marine Web Services

Channel Blade Technologies

DockMaster Software Systems

Genmar Holdings

iboats.com

Integrated Dealer Systems (IDS)

Ken Cook Company

Marine Retailers Association of America

NMMA

Santa Monica Airlines

Tracker Marine Group

Volvo Penta of the Americas

Watch Captain

To Learn More About MATES

visit

www.firstmates.org

The Dealer Locator subcommittee within MATES is proceeding resourcefully with development of the new standard. The Dealer Locator standard will make it easier for marine companies to host a dealer locating service. But the real benefit will be to companies that want to provide a dealer locator on their web sites without the added burden of hosting the required back end business logic, databases, postal code tables, etc. The standard makes it possible for a third party to fill this role, if needed.

"As a group, we feel there will be benefits to both dealers and manufacturers", says John Warnik of MATES. With fewer interfaces to support, and more efficient communication of dealership information, better leads will result and efficiency gained across the board.

A value statement, explaining the need for the standard was submitted to the STAR organization on behalf of the MATES committee and was approved by STAR membership in April, paving the way for STAR data architects to begin co-development work with MATES.

Within the MATES subcommittee, discussion is now focused on the field-level requirements necessary for "getting" or "showing" a wide range of dealership information, in a best-case scenario. Plans include supporting such dealership demographics as certifications held, services offered, products supported, location coordinates to support maps, directions, etc.

Suggestions for the Dealer Locator can be made via [this page](#) on the MATES web site.

MATES would like to thank and encourage you to support our founding and charter members.

boats.com



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