zapthink zapnote

ZAPTHINK ZAPNOTE

XLIPSTREAM
INFORMATION INTEGRATION AT NETWORK SPEED

Analyst: Ronald Schmelzer

Abstract

In order for companies to realize the value of the information contained in critical business processes, they must integrate and connect the various silos of information in the enterprise, where much of the information is locked up in closed, proprietary, and yesterday's systems. Many of these companies find the evolving set of software-based integration solutions currently on the market to be inadequate for extracting such information. Such companies require a solution that allows them to integrate with proprietary systems without requiring software installation at all.

Xlipstream's XGA solution is a hardware appliance that meets these difficult needs for information integration by transforming output intended for printing into XML. Xlipstream's solution is compelling because of its plug-and-play, low maintenance, electronic, file, and print-event based approach that allows companies to solve integration challenges without making any changes to their current electronic and print event-based processes.

Solving the Integration Challenge for Event-Based Processes

Electronic and print-based processes enable and power many enterprises' core operations. For example, insurance firms depend on paper claims and electronic file transfers; health care facilities would cease to operate without paper forms and electronic documents; governments everywhere rely on files and documents for archival purposes. Indeed, for many industries, the promise of the paperless office has failed to materialize. However, there is still a tremendous desire to move beyond human-intensive, paper-based processes to automated, electronic transactions. Yet, existing integration technologies such as EAI, B2B, and data integration middleware fall short of reaching the closed and proprietary systems, and can only communicate with the network-enabled desktop or server devices that sit separate from critical, paper-based data sources. Such integration approaches require physical access to data in their digital form, which is simply not possible for these closed systems – many of which rely upon closed, proprietary systems with print-only output.

At the same time, companies are searching for a *loosely-coupled* approach to integration—one that does not require control of systems on both ends nor an intimate connection between the requester of information and the provider. However, for loose coupling to be a reality, there must be standard, established ways of handling integration so that any company that follows the standards can be confident that their systems will interoperate with the other systems the company wishes to communicate with. This standards-based approach to loosely coupled integration is what the promise of XML and Web Services are all about.

In order to realize any of the benefits of standards-based integration, organizations must first XML-encode their information. In most instances, it is simply not cost-effective or even possible to recode applications to output XML or create documents from scratch in XML. Additionally, companies are moving away from the adapter vendors because of the high cost of software and services associated with that solution. After all, most enterprise content exists in a format other than XML. As a result, a new class of offering is emerging to focus on solving information integration challenges by generating XML-formatted data from back-end systems. In this vein, the *XML Generation Appliance* (XGA) solution from Xlipstream provides a compelling solution for ongoing integration challenges.

Xlipstream XGA: "Turning Text into Context"

Xlipstream's approach is to utilize a hardware appliance called the *XML Generation Appliance* (XGA) to automatically create XML on-the-fly from the electronic or print-event output of the wide range of systems in the enterprise. Even the oldest closed systems still in use today have a printer port, and can connect to a printer. Some devices use a standard approach to printing called the Printer Control Language (PCL), while others have proprietary approaches, but in the final analysis, printing means sending out a stream of data via a port on the device. If it's possible to hook up a printer to the data source, then it's possible to hook up Xlipstream's XGA appliance to intercept print streams and translate the documents into XML that the device can then transmit via the network to any application that needs the data.

TAKE CREDIT FOR READING ZAPTHINK RESEARCH!

Thank you for reading ZapThink research! ZapThink is an IT market intelligence firm that provides trusted advice and critical insight into XML, Web Services, and Service Orientation. We provide our target audience of IT vendors, service providers and end-users a clear roadmap for standards-based, loosely coupled distributed computing – a vision of IT meeting the needs of the agile business.

Earn rewards for reading ZapThink research! Visit www.zapthink.com/credit and enter the code **XLIPNOTE.** We'll reward you with ZapCredits that you can use to obtain free research, ZapGear, and more! For more information about ZapThink products and services, please call us at +1-781-207-0203, or drop us an email at info@zapthink.com.

The core of the XGA solution is Xlipstream's patent-pending *XML Micro-Engine*, which automatically generates XML from print transactions at wire-speed. The device then transmits XML files to the destination utilizing SMTP, HTTP, and/or SOAP protocols and formats. The XGA solution is a "plug and play" appliance that requires no coding or integration to connect to most proprietary or closed platforms. Administration and monitoring of the appliance are available through the easy-to-use GUI-based management console, which allows real-time monitoring and reporting, error logging, and configurable message envelope metadata.

Xlipstream Products

Xlipstream XGA	Availability: Now

Overview:

The Xlipstream XML Generation Appliance (XGA) solutions focus on automating the manual, complex, and expensive tasks surrounding information integration through the direct capture of structured electronic or print-event output from systems and generation of XML documents from data that other systems can consume.

Details:

The Xlipstream solution is a hardware appliance that is implemented in a number of form factors. The currently available models are the following:

➢ XGA 1000 - The XGA 1000 is a standalone XML Generation Appliance that sits in-band between computing and data export devices and interprets print protocols, instantly capturing data from proprietary and closed systems and generating XML on-the-fly. The small form-factor XGA 1000 device connects via standard parallel and serial port interfaces and is most suitable for low volume XML generation needs. The XGA1000 also has a network port for capturing print streams.

➢ XGA 3000 - The XGA 3000 is a purpose-built, 1U Rack Mountable XML Generation Appliance with hardware, software, and OS optimized for high performance. The XGA 3000 acts with both print and non-print events, instantly capturing data from systems and generating XML on-the-fly. The XGA 3000 is meant to serve an individual XML generation source.

Value Proposition:

Key Xlipstream XGA benefits include:

➢ Low total cost of ownership through a hardware solution that doesn't require any additional software or server purchases, and doesn't require users to change their normal processing environment, eliminating additional labor needs

➢ Reduces operational expenditures through the elimination of paper-based forms and reports

➢ Extends the use and realization of value from closed, proprietary and yesterday's systems

➢ Provides a simple approach to regulatory compliance and business-to-business integration scenarios.

Pricing:

Please inquire with Xlipstream.

The ZapThink Take

While many traditional integration approaches are extremely valuable for server-based environments, they are wholly inadequate for solving the integration problems faced by users of systems where the only interface is via closed electronic files, paper-based, parallel or serial port-based, or screen-based interfaces. Simply put, server-based solutions that depend on adapters as a means for accessing enterprise systems are often not credible solutions for companies looking to leverage information from closed, proprietary systems. For many of these companies, re-keying of data (i.e. "swivel-chair integration") is the only practical approach to extracting and exchanging the vital information contained in these systems.

Xlipstream's XGA solution provides a unique and compelling solution to meet the needs for information integration that aren't appropriately and effectively addressed by other integration solutions. Rather than competing with established and emerging integration solutions, especially the new class of Service-Oriented Information Integration (SOII) solution, Xlipstream solves the needs of departmental, mid-market and other focused markets for integration with systems where print is the only mechanism to get data. Additionally, Xlipstream is a cost effective replacement for adapters, which are often expensive and brittle. In particular, the Xlipstream XGA solution is focused on one-way extraction of information from systems, where the current semantic integration challenge primarily remains for most enterprises.

Xlipstream's solution is ideal where users don't have control of source IT environments, have no solution to paper integration, or integration is otherwise too costly. The Xlipstream hardware solution provides a compelling solution because of its plug-and-play, low maintenance, print-stream based solution that allows companies to solve integration challenges without making any changes to their current print-based processes.

Profile: Xlipstream	January 2004

Date Founded: November 2001
Funding:
> Privately-held

Employees: <10
Product:
> XML Generation Appliance (XGA) in a variety of form factors.

Address:
> 7130 Minstrel Way, Suite 100
> Columbia, MD 21045
> United States

URL: http://www.xlipstream.com
Main Phone: 410-312-9830
Contact:
> Peter Santis
> peter.santis@xlipstream.com
> 410-312-9830

Related Research

- *Service Orientation Market Trends* Foundation Report (ZTR-WS110)

- *XML Proxies* ZapBundle (ZTB-0106)

- *SOA Tools and Best Practices* Foundation Report (ZTR-WS107)

- *Service-Oriented Integration* Foundation Report (ZTR-WS103)

About ZapThink, LLC

ZapThink is an IT market intelligence firm that provides trusted advice and critical insight into XML, Web Services, and Service Orientation. We provide our target audience of IT vendors, service providers and end-users a clear roadmap for standards-based, loosely coupled distributed computing – a vision of IT meeting the needs of the agile business.

ZapThink's role is to help companies understand these IT products and services in the context of SOAs and the vision of Service Orientation. ZapThink provides *market intelligence* to IT vendors who offer XML and Web Services-based products to help them understand their competitive landscape and how to communicate their value proposition to their customers within the context of Service Orientation, and lay out their product roadmaps for the coming wave of Service Orientation. ZapThink also provides *implementation intelligence* to IT users who are seeking guidance and clarity into how to assemble the available products and services into a coherent roadmap to Service Orientation. Finally, ZapThink provides *demand intelligence* to IT vendors and service providers who must understand the needs of IT users as they follow the roadmap to Service Orientation.

ZapThink's senior analysts are widely regarded as the "go to analysts" for XML, Web Services, and SOAs by vendors, end-users, and the press. They are in great demand as speakers, and have presented at conferences and industry events around the world. They are among the most quoted industry analysts in the IT industry.

ZapThink was founded in October 2000 and is headquartered in Waltham, Massachusetts. Its customers include Global 1000 firms, public sector organizations around the world, and many emerging businesses. ZapThink Analysts have years of experience in IT as well as research and analysis. Its analysts have previously been with such firms as IDC and ChannelWave, and have sat on the working group committees for standards bodies such as RosettaNet, UDDI, CPExchange, ebXML, EIDX, and CompTIA.

Call, email, or visit the ZapThink Web site to learn more about how ZapThink can help you to better understand how XML and Web Services impact your business or organization.

ZAPTHINK CONTACT:
ZapThink, LLC
11 Willow Street, Suite 200
Waltham, MA 02453
Phone: +1 (781) 207 0203
Fax: +1 (786) 524 3186
info@zapthink.com
www.zapthink.com