

Implementation Guidance – How Do I Embed XBRL GL In My Products?

Introducing XBRL GL and application integration

XBRL GL, the Journal Taxonomy, is the use of XBRL to represent the information that flows into systems from transactions, moves from operations to accounting through consolidation, and bridges to XBRL (and other XML) reporting. It can represent master files, transaction files, history files, even setup files.

The market – especially the tax and auditing community – has recognized the potential efficiencies of standardized detailed data. End users are looking for the benefit of reduced manual reentry of data, with the associated effort and possibilities of errors.

Vendors are looking to the market for advice on where to introduce XBRL GL. With that in mind, we have prepared this document to help describe ways in which vendors can implement XBRL GL in their products

GL and FR: Both XBRL taxonomies, but different areas of reporting

FR: Tying standard concepts to accounts or financial statement lines

Most XBRL taxonomies are geared toward financial reporting. That is both good news, and bad news. The good news is that a typical financial reporting taxonomy is a simple mapping between a chart of accounts or financial reporting summary lines and the individual concepts in the taxonomy. The challenge is that, in most cases, that configuration is left to the implementer; there are limited cases where the chart of accounts and the reporting taxonomy can be pre-configured.

GL: Tying business detail data models to one generic data model

In contrast, XBRL GL doesn't require mappings to proprietary charts of accounts or financial statement templates. XBRL GL is a mapping to the data fields of the underlying accounting system. Once again, we have good news and a challenge. The good news is that application developers can pre-configure their systems and are indeed the most qualified people to map from their data structures to the generic data structure, XBRL GL. The challenge is that there are so many files and tables in some systems that doing this mapping will take a long time. The additional good news is that there is value to the developer in developing this holistic view of their own data tables if they don't already have this understanding.

With a tool that is so broad in scope, how does a developer consider how to prioritize development around this important XBRL taxonomy, XBRL GL? There are so many ways XBRL GL can be integrated into business, operational and accounting products!

Let's look at some of the ways a company can add XBRL GL to its features set. The following charts are not necessary comprehensive, but provide a tool for discussion with customers and prioritization.

Implementation Table

Capability	Description	Useful for/Comments
<i>Basic functionality</i>		<i>Does not require dynamic abilities to read XBRL GL taxonomies; they can be “hard-coded”</i>
GL transaction load	Accept XBRL GL journal entries for accounting integration.	Any GL, consolidation tool
GL transaction file creation	Prepare XBRL GL journal entries for accounting integration	
Single file/purpose import/export	Based on the key function of an application, provide import (and perhaps export) for the most important file(s)	CRM Time & billing And other focused applications
Capability	Description	Useful for/Comments
<i>Intermediate functionality</i>		<i>May also not require dynamic abilities to read XBRL GL taxonomies.</i>
Import – basic	Basic data load. Provide a feature to create a new file or append to an existing file Applicable to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master files • Transaction files • History files. • Setup files 	Any system Special value for those systems that rely strongly on other systems, like consolidation systems, analytical systems, budgeting, graphing.
Compare and update/synchronize - basic	Compare data within system with data in XBRL GL file; optional choice to update data either way.	
Export – basic	Data/file dump; export contents of file based on a limited number of basic criteria (dates or other keys).	Any system, to facilitate reuse of internal data.

<i>Advanced functionality</i>		
Capability	Description	Useful for/Comments
Import – advanced	Data load with pre-validation; a wizard to help in the data migration process. As above, but as a pre-load function, validate data and prompt user for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing data that would be helpful or mandatory in the new system. • Enumerated/fixed choice data for mapping from existing to application 	Accounting products that are typically upgraded from other systems.
Export – advanced	As above, while providing many criteria for export and choices of exported fields; tools for mapping from internal representations of XBRL GL enumerated fields to the enumerations.	Any system, to facilitate reuse of internal data. Especially useful for products that expect to regularly exchange data with other systems, such as stand-alone point-of-sale, time and billing, payroll or job costing modules that hope to integrate with various vendor’s GL systems.
Report writer – simple	Allow choice of traditional file names and presentation or XBRL GL element or labels when selecting fields.	
Report writer – advanced	As with “Export – advanced”, crossing over/joining files; create summary XBRL GL based on more detailed XBRL GL	

<i>XBRL/XBRL GL Specific</i>		
Capability	Description	Useful for/Comments
Taxonomy management and development, with customization	Allow appropriate customization of XBRL GL taxonomies; manage taxonomies. Manage mapping of custom elements to company database	
XBRL GL Web Service	Provide any of the capabilities described here as a Web Service.	
XBRL GL data hub functionality	As seen in Xabra; convert from various formats TO XBRL GL, and optionally from XBRL GL to various formats.	
Business rules engine	As seen in Hitachi in the Wacoal implementation, processing incoming XBRL GL, applying rules against the content, and producing post-rules XBRL GL.	
XBRL GL instance repository/audit trail	The seamless audit trail of the future will be dependent on access to associated/interlinked electronic files, with XBRL GL as the glue. An application that includes electronic links to independent third part repositories or write-once, secure media that allows access to the information will be necessary.	
XBRL GL security implementations/XML Encryption	The use of XML Encryption to enable the selective unfolding of XBRL GL data to appropriate audiences will further enable more sophisticated use of XBRL GL.	

XBRL GL to CSV CSV to XBRL GL	As described in the separate document “XBRL GL to Standardized CSV”, enable the movement of data between XBRL GL and an agreed upon CSV file format.	