

Extensible Markup Language (XML) is a general purpose specification for creating custom markup languages. XML is classified as an extensible language, because it allows the user to define the mark-up elements. XML's purpose is to aid information systems in sharing structured data, especially via the Internet, to encode documents, and to serialize data; in the last context, it compares with text-based serialization languages such as [JSON](#) and YAML.

XML is recommended by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). It is a free open standard. XML is a markup language for documents containing structured information.

Structured information contains both content (words, pictures, etc.) and some indication of what role that content plays (for example, content in a section heading has a different meaning from content in a footnote, which means something different than content in a figure caption or content in a database table, etc.). Almost all documents have some structure.

A markup language is a mechanism to identify structures in a document. The XML specification defines a standard way to add markup to documents.