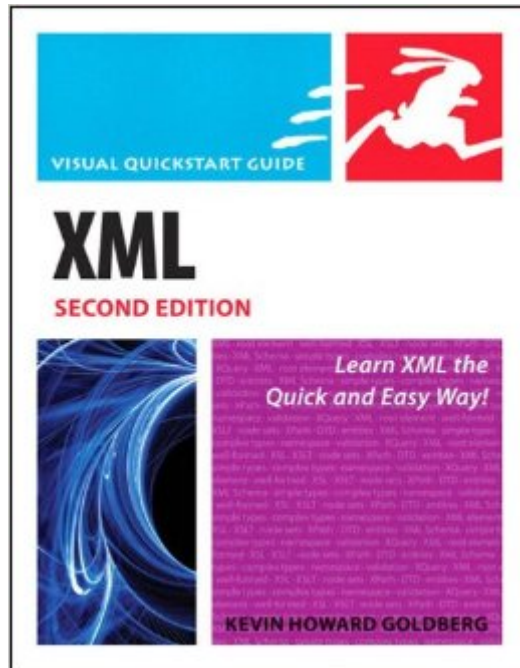


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# XML: Visual QuickStart Guide



## Synopsis

What is XML? XML, or eXtensible Markup Language, is a specification for storing information. It is also a specification for describing the structure of that information. And while XML is a markup language (just like HTML), XML has no tags of its own. It allows the person writing the XML to create whatever tags they need. The only condition is that these newly created tags adhere to the rules of the XML specification. In the seven years since the first edition of *XML: Visual QuickStart Guide* was published, XML has taken its place next to HTML as a foundational language on the Internet. XML has become a very popular method for storing data and the most popular method for transmitting data between all sorts of systems and applications. The reason being, where HTML was designed to display information, XML was designed to manage it. *XML: Visual QuickStart Guide, 2nd Edition* is divided into seven parts. Each part contains one or more chapters with step-by-step instructions that explain how to perform XML-related tasks. Wherever possible, examples of the concepts being discussed are displayed, and the parts of the examples on which to focus are highlighted. The order of the book is intentionally designed to be an introduction to the fundamentals of XML, followed by discussions of related XML technologies.

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XML (eXtensible Markup Language) has become the medium to move data in efficient and predictable ways. Derived from a similar markup language, SGML (Standard Generalized Markup Language), XML is structured, but not as highly as SGML. Structure is what it's all about. The very loosely structured HTML (HyperText Markup Language) is also derived from SGML. Even the XML markup looks amazingly like HTML, except, as the author explains, HTML defines how information will look, while XML defines how the information is formatted. Here is a portion of an XML file: Norm Male 65 Nancy Female 52 Guy Male 48 \If you analyze the code sample above, you should be able to see that there are three siblings defined. Each sibling's information is contained, or wrapped, between the `<person>` and `</person>` tags, and that the information on those three siblings is wrapped between the `<family>` and `</family>` tags. Taking this one step further, you can think of these sibling "chunks" as parts of a database: the content between the `<person>` and `</person>` tags would be defined as a record, while the `<family>`, `</family>`, and `<person>`, `</person>` tags define fields within a record. This content can then be transformed into content in a different format and reused in many different ways.

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