

UNECE
UN / CEFAC

Executive Guide

UN/EDIFACT

Introduction

United Nations Electronic Data Interchange for Administration, Commerce and Transport (UN/EDIFACT) is the global Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) standard developed and maintained by the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and

Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT). EDI is defined as “computer to computer interchange of data according to a message standard with a minimum of human intervention”. Differently said, it allows for business documents such as purchase orders, invoices and customs declarations to be exchanged and processed electronically.

UN/EDIFACT development started at the end of the 1980s and the standard currently contains 209 business messages. Updated versions are published twice a year.

32 UN/EDIFACT messages/second in the maritime industry (or 1 billion UN/EDIFACT messages per year in the maritime industry)



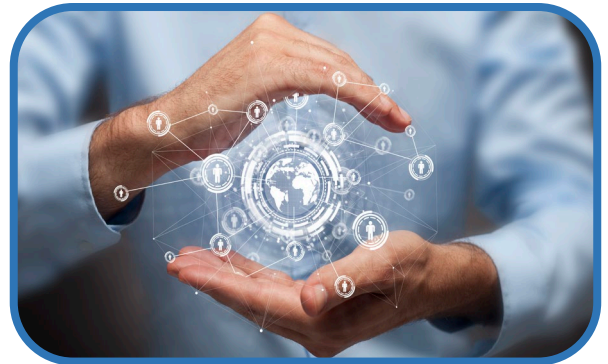
Applications

UN/EDIFACT is used by most international sectors, both in public and private domains, such as retail, transport and logistics, customs, healthcare, agriculture and insurance. No comprehensive information on global implementation is available but statistics from one sector alone showed that UN/EDIFACT was used by more than 100,000 companies and organizations in 2014 with a predicted growth of 10% for 2015.

95% of Terminal Operators and 90% of Carriers (Agents) are using UN/EDIFACT messages

Benefits

Generally, EDI provides multiple advantages such as streamlined and cost efficient business processes, increased consumer and patient safety through reliable traceability systems, and significant environmental improvement by reducing paper and optimizing the use of transport vehicles and infrastructure.



The UN/EDIFACT standard is well suited to achieve these benefits since:

- More than 25 years of development has provided a solid and rich content applicable to thousands of business processes;
- The standard is continually maintained in order to ensure that it is adapted to changes in processes, regulations and new areas;
- Throughout the years, the principle of “backwards compatibility” has been enforced, meaning the users of different versions can exchange messages without problems; and
- The high and increasing number of users ensures a wide pool of expert knowledge globally and affordable software tools.

**2 million UN/EDIFACT
messages daily in the
express industry**

More information

The UN/EDIFACT standard for EDI is available free of charge on the UN/CEFACT website: <http://www.unece.org/tradewelcome/un-centre-for-trade-facilitation-and-e-businessuncefact/outputs/standards/unedifact/directories/download.html>

What is UN/CEFACT?

UN/CEFACT, the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business, supports activities dedicated to improving the ability of business, trade and administrative organizations, from developed, developing and transition economies, to **exchange products and relevant services effectively**. Its principal focus is on facilitating national and international transactions, through **the simplification and harmonization of processes, procedures and information flows**, and so contributing to the growth of global commerce.

UN/CEFACT has a global mandate. Participation in the UN/CEFACT Forum is open to all. There are some 300 experts representing every region in the world.

Within the framework of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) serves as the focal point for **trade facilitation recommendations and electronic business standards**, covering both commercial and government business processes that can foster growth in international trade and related services. In this context UN/CEFACT was established, as a subsidiary, intergovernmental body of the UNECE.

Participation in the development of UN/CEFACT standards and recommendations is free of charge.

If you are interested in joining us, you should register at <https://uncefact.unece.org/display/uncefactpublic/UNCEFACT+Expert+Registration>

All resulting deliverables are available online free of charge at <http://www.unece.org/cefact>

For more information:
<http://www.unece.org/cefact>
See also: <http://tfig.unece.org/>

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