

Letters from the Trenches

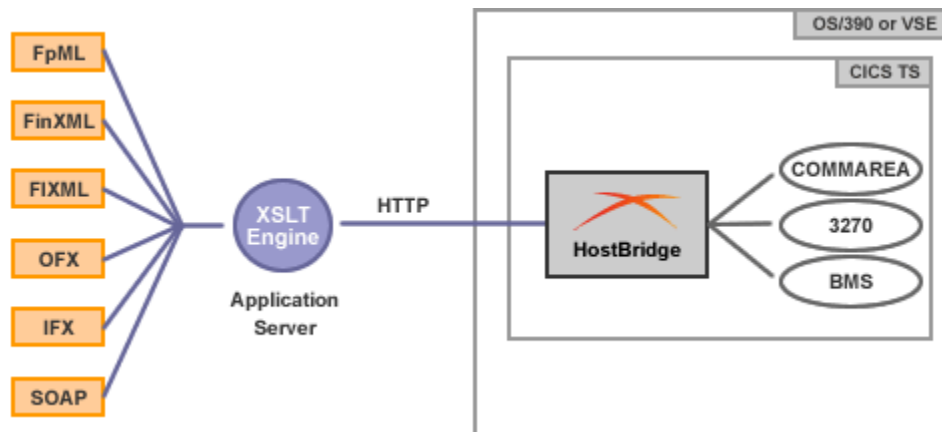


Financial Services, XML, and HostBridge

From the HostBridge Archive

Faced with an industry-wide push towards straight through processing (STP) and industry requirements for reduced settlement cycles (T+1), financial services were among the first companies to adopt XML as an enterprise-wide standard for exchanging data and integrating systems. While there is broad support for XML from database and software vendors, the last remaining hurdle is the ability to XML-enable legacy systems, such as CICS.

In the diagram below, an application server invokes HostBridge using HTTP and receives an XML document that contains the CICS transaction data. An XSLT engine on the application server transforms the XML document to any other XML document format.



What makes XML so effective in financial services is the presence of industry standards for exchanging data. Initiatives such as FpML, FinXML, FIXML, OFX, IFX, and SOAP provide a common vocabulary for companies to share and integrate data and systems. Another standard, eXtensible Stylesheet Language Transformations (XSLT), allows companies to transform XML documents into other XML documents that use a different vocabulary.

XML supports integration strategies with straight through processing and the establishment of common business rules as goals. HostBridge allows you to integrate CICS transactions as XML documents without changes to the host applications and without screen-scraping. See our web site for more information on HostBridge and more information on ROI. Or, call us at 1-866-XML-CICS (965-2427).

Tech Notes

The following are some common technical questions and their answers.

Q. How do I use SIGNON/SIGNOFF exits with HostBridge?

A. CICS does not invoke the SIGNON/SIGNOFF exits for bridge facilities. If your programs use the SIGNON/SIGNOFF exits, you can build the equivalent functionality in the HBR\$FAIN/HBR\$FATU user exits. One technique that HostBridge customers use is to make a LINKable version of their SIGNON and SIGNOFF exits. You can write HBR\$FAIN and HBR\$FATU as small “wrapper” programs that LINK to the SIGNON/SIGNOFF routines. However, you must insure that your SIGNON/SIGNOFF exits do not perform functions that are illegal when a principal facility does not exist. For example, if HBR\$FAIN calls your SIGNON routine, and your SIGNON routine issues an EXEC CICS SIGNON command, an abend will occur because EXEC CICS SIGNON requires that a principal facility exist. To deal with this, you can modify your SIGNON/SIGNOFF routines to determine whether the context is a principal facility or a bridge facility before issuing any such commands.

Q. How does CICS authentication work with HostBridge?

A. If you set AUTHENTICATE parameter of the TCPIP SERVICE definition to use basic authentication, the credentials of the requester are used and passed on to the CICS program. If you do not select basic authentication, the default CICS credentials are used. If your application relies on an exit to use TCTUA, you need to provide an HBR\$FAIN exit to provide that functionality.

If you access HostBridge across the LINK interface, HostBridge uses the same credentials as the calling program.