

## Preface

As developers create new XML vocabularies, they often need to describe those vocabularies to share, define, and apply them. This book will guide you through W3C XML Schema, a set of Recommendations from the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). These specifications define a language that you can use to express formal descriptions of XML documents using a generally object-oriented approach. Schemas can be used for documentation, validation, or processing automation. W3C XML Schema is a key component of Web Services specifications such as SOAP and WSDL, and is widely used to describe XML vocabularies precisely.

With this power comes complexity. The Recommendations are long, complex, and generally difficult to read. The Primer helps, of course, but there are many details and style approaches to consider in building schemas. This book attempts to provide an objective, and sometimes critical, view of the tools W3C XML Schema provides, helping you to discover the possibilities of schemas while avoiding potential minefields.

### Who Should Read This Book?

Read this book if you want to:

- Create W3C XML Schema schemas using a text editor, XML editor, or a W3C XML Schema IDE or editor.
- Understand and modify existing W3C XML Schema schemas.

You should already have a basic understanding of XML document structures and how to work with them.

### Who Should Not Read This Book?

If you are just using an XML application using a W3C XML Schema schema, you probably do not need to deal with the subtleties of the Recommendation.

### About the Examples

All the examples in this book have been tested with the XSV and Xerces-J implementations of W3C XML Schema running Linux (the Debian "sid" distribution). I have chosen these tools for their high level of conformance to the Recommendation (the best ones according to the tests I have performed); the vast majority runs without error on these implementations—however, the Recommendation is sometimes fuzzy and difficult to understand, and there are some examples that give different results with different implementations. These conform to my own understanding of the Recommendation as discussed on the `xmlschema-dev` mailing list (the archives are available at <http://lists.w3.org/Archives/Public/xmlschema-dev>).