Softshare Delta 4.0 Enhancements

The 4.0 release of Softshare Delta and Softshare ECS is almost upon us. Softshare is anticipating releasing both 4.0 products in May. We'll keep you posted on availability dates. In the meantime, we've highlighted many of the great new features coming out in Delta 4.0. If you're a current Delta user, we're confident that you'll find at least one (but probably several) new features to love.

We've broken down Delta's new feature set into several categories. Any categories or features marked with an asterisk are available only to users of Delta Enterprise.

Map Interface Enhancements

Keyword coloring	Available as a new Delta preference, this feature highlights common rule components and reserved words in varying colors to help you visually identify rules.
Rule comments	Rule comments can be inserted at any point in your map to showcase an important note, tip, or comment.
Shorthand notation	When activated, the View|Show Rules in Shorthand Notation command shortens object names in the rule pane for easier reading. Depending on how you have set this general preference, this command will either display only the right-most object name (e.g. the BEG object would display as "BEG," not "850.BEG") or the object name will be limited to a set number of characters.
Go To command	Helpful for very long and detailed maps, the Go To command can quickly jump to any rule number, bookmark, disabled rule, or comment in your map.

General Modeling Enhancements

Cut/Copy/Paste	You can cut, copy, or paste objects and their child elements across models.
Find Feature	Use the find feature to quickly find keywords or phrases in your models.
Ranges and Widths	As a validation tool, Delta's models now support character width and range requirements for elements.
Object Aliases	The objects in your business object models can be given aliases. In a model interface, these aliases are appended to the object name. In a map interface (assuming that the View|Show Object Aliases command is activated), these aliases replace the "official" name of the object.
Object Instancing	This feature lets you bind an object to specific occurences of source data in EDI or XML models. This is especially helpful when mapping repeating or hierarchical loop segments in EDI because it eliminates the need for complex rule conditions. For example, instead of writing rule conditions specifying that a particular instance of the looping HL segment should only run when HL03="P", you can establish an object "instance" from the properties of the object. You can insert additional HL segments into your model and assign each of them a qualifying instance.
Dictionary Support	In Delta's EDI Dictionary Viewer utility, you can create and save custom EDI dictionaries. Once a custom dictionary is saved, it is available from the EDI Model Merlin so that you can base EDI models upon it. One of the benefits of this feature is that it gives Delta permission to accept or generate EDI that might otherwise halt mapping or violate validation.

Data File Modeling Enhancements

Data file modeler recognizes multiple record types within a data file	Previously, when basing a model on an existing data file that contained more than one record type, Delta could only recognize and model the first record type. Additional record types needed to be modeled after the initial data file model creation process. In 4.0, Delta can recognize and model an unlimited number of record types during the initial record creation process (i.e. in the Data File Model Merlin).
SAP IDocs Modeler	Using this brand new utility, you can instantly create data files based on the IDoc parser files generated by SAP, a popular ERP application.*

Mapping Enhancements

Turn off inbound data validation	From a map's properties, you can turn off source data validation for EDI and XML data. In previous versions of Delta, only target data validation was optional.
Maps can source from a URL	Delta can pull in source data from referenced URLs.
Better map failure control	Delta 4.0 is much more fault tolerant. Instead of halting a map at the first error encountered, it will log the error and, if possible, continue mapping.
Custom functions can call built-in Delta functions	In previous versions, this wasn't possible.
Control maps	Control maps are maps with no target model. They exist solely to trigger sub-maps and pass variables to those sub-maps. Control maps are especially helpful when mapping XML frameworks that reference attachments.
Pipeline maps	Pipeline maps deliver their output (along with any variables) to a second map, triggering the second map to execute and letting you chain maps together.
Mime serializer	Let's Delta produce data with attachments. This is accomplished by using Delta's new "Attach" functions.
Part number management	You can capture, insert, and cross-reference your trading partners' part numbers and part number related data such as UPCs or SKUs using Delta's new part number functions.
Multiple maps can run simultaneously	Delta 4.0's engine is multi-threaded.
Improved load time and memory usage for large EDI files	Load time and memory usage for large EDI files are drastically reduced in 4.0.

XML Handling Enhancements

Multi-schema-based modeling	A single XML model can be based on multiple XML schemas. Schemas are managed in Delta letting you dynamically model them easily validate against them.
Support for all XML-based business frameworks (SOAP, ebXML, BizTalk, etc.)	Extensible to handle any XML-based business framework such as ebXML, ACORD, BizTalk, etc., including support for SOAP.
IntelliMap support for XML	IntelliMap is a feature that accurately places data in your map output, regardless of the order in which the output was originally created. Previously, IntelliMap was only available for EDI output, but in 4.0, IntelliMap is also available for XML output.
Identity models	In an XML model, you can identify particular XML data elements with pre-configured or custom "identity tokens." XML models with elements that have been "identified" are called Identity models and can be installed just as you would install a map, or a source data file or database model for multiplexing. Once installed, Identity models serve two purposes: (1) Identity models can be used to recognize incoming XML data and trigger appropriate maps and (2) incoming XML data that matches an Identity model with pre-configured identity tokens that carry sender, receiver, control, or envelope information will be logged in ECS' Data Tracking System.

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