COVAST®

THE MICROSOFT® RECOMMENDED

EDI Solution For BizTalk Server 2006

The rapid globalization of manufacturing and the increasingly complex scope of data exchanged between trading partners present great challenges to the effective and efficient trading that drives your business. In addition, you must bridge the gap from legacy EDI systems and standards to new open standards such as XML and AS2. Yet, the solution to these challenges is clear.

As the leading provider of EDI translation software, Covast provides a comprehensive, scalable, integrated EDI solution that fully complements the transformation and integration capabilities of BizTalk Server 2006.

Whether you already have large investments in EDI or you want to leverage your investment in BizTalk Server 2006…Covast takes you to a whole new world of efficiency.

Microsoft®
BizTalk Server

The Covast EDI Accelerator for BizTalk Server 2006 is the industry's most reliable and scalable EDI solution for .NET environments. With more than a decade of EDI integration success behind us, Covast understands there is no "one size fits all" solution. That's why we offer the most flexible EDI integration solution on the market. The Covast EDI Accelerator for BizTalk Server 2006, specifically designed for .NET environments, meets all of your EDI challenges.

Covast EDI Accelerator for BizTalk Server 2006 Enables Seamless B2B/EDI with BizTalk Server.

Conducting B2B/EDI with BizTalk Server is as simple as installing the Covast EDI Accelerator for BizTalk Server 2006. Once this is done, you can access all available EDI features from within the BizTalk environment. Simply use the Trading Partner Management tool hosted by the BizTalk Administration Console to define your EDI trading relations, then use the BizTalk Mapper for transforming EDI documents and the BizTalk Orchestration Designer to orchestrate your B2B exchanges. The Covast Transport Adapters take care of the actual exchange of messages with your trading partners. At runtime, the BizTalk Health and Activity Tracking (HAT) facility will track and trace your EDI documents. One comprehensive toolset manages and monitors your EDI and other traffic.

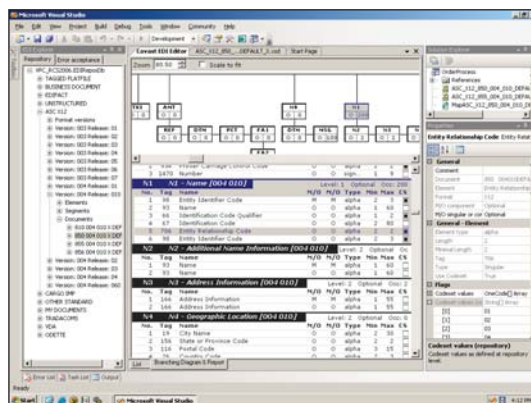### Full end-to-end support for complex EDI requirements.

Whether you just need to exchange invoices and purchase orders or you manage an EDI exchange that disperses a vast variety of documents, Covast addresses all of your requirements. Covast EDI Accelerator for BizTalk Server 2006 simplifies the technical challenges of integrating EDI infrastructures – with your internal applications as well as your trading partners – making it easy to process and generate both inbound and outbound EDI messages.

Control of EDI specifications and versions.

The Covast EDI Accelerator for BizTalk Server 2006 easily handles the storage, management and editing of EDI specifications. An SQL Server-based metadata repository stores all of your document types, versions, standards and partner-specific implementations. These include standards such as X12, EDIFACT, TRADACOMS, VDA, ODETTE and others, as well as proprietary file formats, which are used to process the wide variety of inbound and outbound documents. You can use pre-defined, standard document definitions – downloaded from the global EDI repository on the Covast website – or you can customize the definitions and settings using an efficient, easy-to-learn workbench hosted by Microsoft Visual Studio – The Covast EDI Explorer. Either way, Covast makes it simple.

EDI to XML parsing and XML to EDI serialization.

The Covast EDI Accelerator for BizTalk Server 2006 automatically renders an XML schema representation (XSD) of the EDI format for use in BizTalk Server. Even partner-specific XML schemas can be generated as you can easily accommodate specific EDI Implementation Guides used by different business partners.

All EDI document specifications, including standard definitions and partner-specific documents, are stored in Covast's SQL Server EDI Repository and can be maintained using the Covast EDI Explorer hosted by the V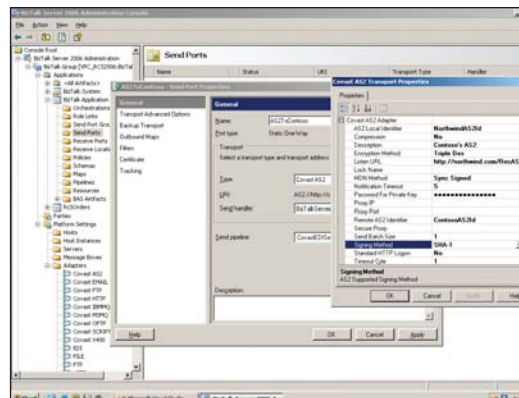isual Studio application development framework. The EDI Document definitions can be added as Generated Schemas using the Solution Explorer by selecting them from the EDI Repository. This "enables" them as XML Schemas (XSD) and they will be added to the current BizTalk solution automatically. They are then ready for immediate use in the BizTalk Schema Editor, Mapper and Orchestration Designer.

Comprehensive VAN Support.

Covast EDI Accelerator ensures full connectivity with predefined parameter settings to support the most commonly-used Value Added Networks (VANs), customized configurations with end-user and third-party VAN connectors and support for other transport mechanisms over secure Internet protocols.

AS2 Adapter for seamless and secure connectivity (optional).

The AS2 standard promises the best of two worlds: the reliable service levels of a VAN plus the cost-effectiveness of using the Internet HTTP protocol. This is why more and more companies are opting to exchange EDI and XML documents using the AS2 standard. Covast makes the transition to this technology simple and straightforward, with the AS2 Adapter. As a Drummond Group certified adapter, this solution is fully integrated into BizTalk Server 2006, not only from a configuration point of view, but also from an operational point of view.
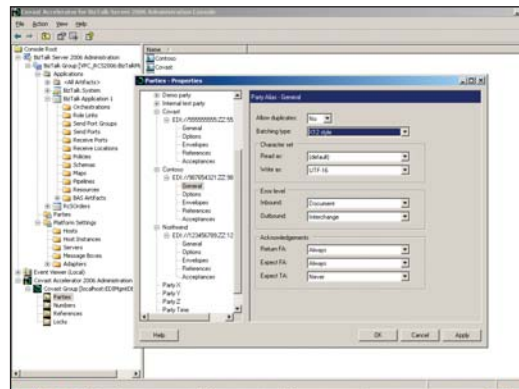

Businesses can connect to their trading partners in the manner that is most effective for each partner. The Covast AS2 Adapter enables reliable document exchanges via the Internet and the EDI Accelerator provides pre-configured Transport Adapters for commonly-used VANs worldwide. Configurations may also be customized for any end-user and third-party VAN connections.

Connectivity for a number of other transport mechanisms, including OFTP (on X.25, ISDN and TCP/IP) and X.400 P7, is also supported.

EDI envelope mapping and translation support.

All critical EDI document envelope information is retained. The Covast EDI Accelerator for BizTalk Server 2006 maps information to and from any envelope, regardless of its structure. You can easily define partner-specific envelopes. They will be automatically mapped as needed; no user intervention or programming required. Envelope contents of inbound documents are passed in their entirety to BizTalk Server Message Box, ready to be interrogated from within a Mapping or Orchestration for making decisions based on envelope contents.
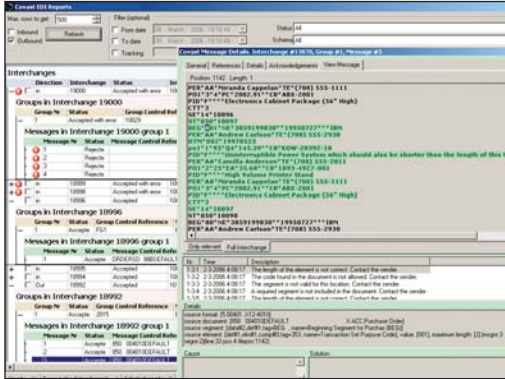

Covast EDI Accelerator can be easily configured to batch outbound documents. Simply select one of the available batching types per trading partner in the Trading Partner Manager hosted by the BizTalk Administration Console. You can even control document batching and sequencing from within your BizTalk maps. Furthermore, trading partner specific configurations can be set up here, for instance: deviating EDI separator usage, custom control numbering, specific character set handling and custom envelope handling can all be specified in one location: the TPM.

Complete auditing and tracking.

The Covast EDI Accelerator for BizTalk Server 2006 provides thorough auditing and tracking of all documents processed. Before they are published to the BizTalk Message Box or external trading partners, inbound and outbound documents are validated for syntactic and semantic correctness against the EDI standard or trading partner specific implementation guidelines. Sent and received documents can be tracked through the BizTalk HAT (Health and Activity Tracking) tool. This also reflects the latest status of these messages allowing you to actually see that a message has been read and processed successfully by your trading partner.
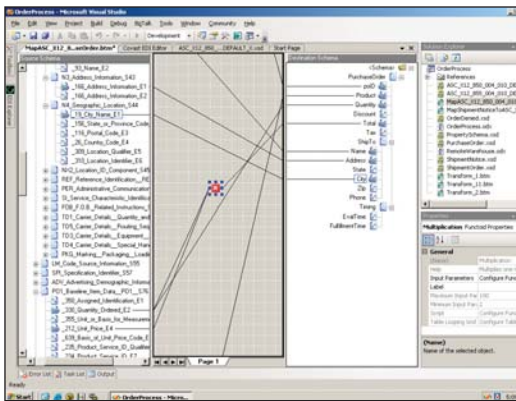

Covast EDI Accelerator keeps a thorough Audit log of all transactions it processes. This Tracking Database can be interrogated using the user-friendly EDI Reports, where all kinds of filters can be applied. Any processing error messages are also sent to the BizTalk Server event log.

Messages that failed validation can be debugged directly from within Health and Activity Tracking (HAT). Messages can also be resent in a user-configurable way.

End-to-end functional acknowledgments.

Covast EDI Accelerator for BizTalk Server 2006 delivers full support for functional acknowledgments, like the X12 997 and EDIFACT CONTRL messages. This includes appropriate distribution, tracking and error management. Users can also easily track the acknowledgments from within HAT. Delivery of EDI and other types of messages is guaranteed as soon as their status is updated to 'Sent' in HAT.

Covast EDI Accelerator tightly integrates with BizTalk Server 2006. The EDI Translation functionality (translating EDI to XML and vice versa) has been implemented as a set of pipeline components complying with the standard BizTalk Server architecture. Mapping of the XML/EDI messages is done using the standard BizTalk Mapper. The EDI Accelerator's VAN and Peer-to-Peer connectivity has been implemented as a set of BizTalk Transport Adapters, complying with the Adapter Framework. No programming work is required for the configuration of BizTalk Server. All you have to do is define your EDI Trading Partner profiles using the TPM console, and the connections to those partners through the standard administration tools provided by BizTalk Server.

Scalable to business requirements.

Covast EDI Accelerator 2006's scalable design helps businesses integrate their continually increasing number of trading partners and growing trading volumes easily. The solution has been designed to scale out very well, which means that adding more servers to the group will almost linearly increase the processing power of the solution, thus helping enterprises to accommodate the grow of their businesses without any limits.

Studies show that 80% of the Fortune 500 companies are using EDI – but only with 20% of their trading partners. Most trading partners are not equipped to leverage the benefits of EDI. With Covast solutions, you can easily bridge the gap from complex EDI requirements to the emerging XML world. This gives companies and their suppliers a highly productive avenue for gaining greater efficiency – and ongoing competitive advantage.

Covast EDI Accelerator provides:

➡ EDI and non-EDI Standards Support
- X12 (U.S.)
- VICS (U.S. general merchandise retail)
- WINS (U.S. warehousing retail)
- UCS (U.S. grocery retail)
- EDIFACT (Worldwide)
- EANCOM (European retail)
- Tradacoms (U.K.)
- VDA (German automotive)
- Odette (Automotive)
- XML
- Cargo-IMP (Airfreight)
- Gencod (France)
- Name/Value Pairs
- Proprietary flat files
- Other (user configurable)

➡ VAN Support
- 400Net Messaging Service (NL)
- Atlas 400 (F)
- BusinessMail (D)
- GXS EDI*Express
- GXS Tradanet (GB)
- IBM (GXS) Information Exchange
- ICC.net
- Inovis
- Kleinschmidt
- SITA
- Sterling Commerce
- Transettlements (Descartes)

➡ Peer-to-Peer Communications Support
- AS2
- OFTP (Odette File Transfer Protocol)
- FTP
- POP3/SMTP (including attachments)
- MSMQ
- IBM MQSeries
- HTTP and HTTP/s

➡ Common EDI Features – Run Time
- Customizable outbound batching
- Inbound de-batching
- Syntax validation
- Semantic validation
- Complete functional acknowledgement generation and reconciliation
- TA1 (Interchange Acknowledgment) generation and reconciliation
- Custom control number generation
- Full end-to-end tracking
- Audit trail of documents handled
- Archiving of documents
- Access to EDI envelope information
- Detailed error logging on element level

➡ Common EDI Features – Design Time
- SQL repository driven
- Document versioning
- Standards import facilities
- Full compliance checking
- Customize standard documents
- Implicit XML to EDI (and vice versa) conversion support
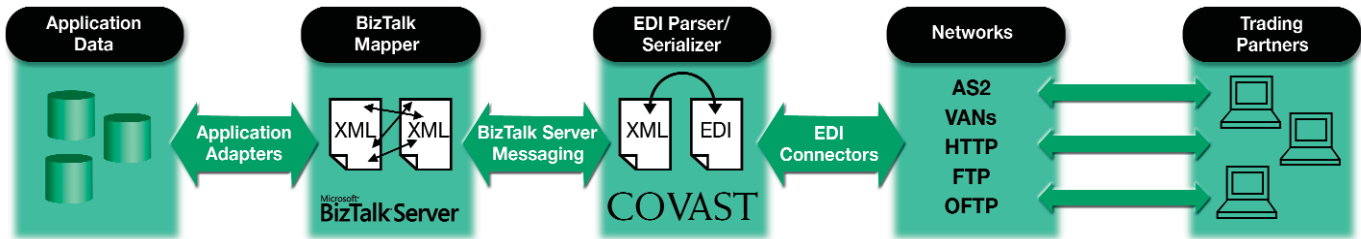
➡ Trading Partner Management
- All B2B related trading partner properties managed from one central place
- Interchange agreement compliance checking
- Trading partner-specific handling

➡ Advanced EDI Features
- Context switching in transformation
- Use of EDI documents in a Business Process Management (BPM) environment
- Enables Business Activity Monitoring (BAM) views for complete integration flows

The Easy Bridge From EDI to XML

Covast EDI Accelerator Architecture

Architecturally, the Covast EDI Accelerator consists of run time components and design time components. The run time components parse inbound EDI documents into XML and serialize outbound XML instances into their appropriate EDI format. Additionally, various BizTalk Transport Adapters arrange the communications with your trading partners and the Covast batcher orchestrations take care of batching outbound EDI messages into interchanges. The design time components are used for the management of EDI Document Definitions (using the "EDI Explorer"), the management and monitoring of the EDI partners (using the "TPM" and "HAT") and the configuration of the actual exchange of documents using the standard BizTalk tools Visual Studio and the BizTalk Administration Console that have been extended with EDI specific functionality.

Deploying your EDI solution is quick and easy. Because of the EDI Accelerator's tight integration with BizTalk Server 2006, everything the EDI Accelerator requires to translate EDI to XML and XML to EDI messages is included in the BizTalk assembly. When you deploy your BizTalk solution in your production environment, all the necessary EDI Accelerator components are automatically included and the solution is ready for going live.

Imagine Commerce Unbound

The Covast EDI Accelerator not only simplifies technical challenges, it also dramatically reduces your implementation timeframe. BizTalk Server customers can establish connectivity almost immediately and begin exchanging documents in weeks or even days. As the Microsoft recommended EDI solution for the BizTalk Server 2006 environment, we understand your connectivity issues. We are fully prepared to assist Microsoft BizTalk customers today. To learn more, visit **www.covast.com** or call **1.866.COVAST1** or **+ 31 10.235.10.22** in Europe.

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GOLD CERTIFIED
Partner

Technical Specifications

To install Microsoft BizTalk Server 2006 and the Covast EDI Accelerator 2006, the following hardware and software is required at a minimum:

- Microsoft Windows Server 2003 (SP1) or Windows 2000 Server (SP4)
- Microsoft SQL Server 2005 or SQL Server 2000 (SP4)
- 1 Gigahertz (GHz) Intel Pentium-compatible CPU for single processors (900 MHz for double, 700 MHz for quad)
- 1 Gigabyte (GB) of RAM
- 6 Gigabyte (GB) free hard disk space
- CD-ROM or DVD-ROM drive
- Super VGA monitor (1024 x 768) or higher resolution monitor with 256 colors
- For 64-Bit systems, either an AMD Opteron (AMD64) or Intel XEON (EM64T) or compatible 1.7 GHz or higher processor is recommended.

To run Microsoft BizTalk Server 2006 including the Covast EDI Accelerator in a production environment, Microsoft and Covast advise a configuration with multiple processing servers and a SQL Server cluster environment to ensure high availability and handle fail over scenarios. The solution is able to scale up (add more CPU power, CPU's and/or memory to individual servers) and scale out (add more processing servers to spread the work load).

Covast representatives can assist in determining the best-suited architecture for each specific customer situation.