

FAQs – NCTS XML

Question	Response
<p>Q1 - Why is the NCTS XML channel not using a CDATA tag?</p>	<p>Special characters like “<”, “>” and “&” cannot be inserted as-is into an XML field, and should be escaped. There are two ways of doing this in XML:</p> <p>The most common way (i.e. at least in libraries like Apache XML Beans and JDOM) is by using “&lt;”, “&gt;” and “&amp;”, so when submitting an EDIFACT message like "UNB+UNOC+...<Item1>...", the XML would look something like:</p> <pre><env:Envelope> ... <n1:message n1="...">UNB+UNOC+...&lt;Item 1&gt;...</n1:message> ...</pre> <p>The characters would be escaped/un-scaped transparently by the XML parsers/proxies used by the server/client.</p> <p>Alternatively, it is possible to use a CDATA section when submitting the EDIFACT:</p> <pre><env:Envelope> ... <n1:message n1="..."><![CDATA[UNB+UNOC+...<Item 1>...]]></n1:message> ...</pre> <p>The server will not use the "CDATA mechanism" when polling for responses, so the client should be capable of un-scaping “&lt;” and “&gt;”. Any XML parser should do this transparently, as it's a core feature of the XML spec, so this only applies if the client is trying to parse the responses by hand (i.e. with some sort of string manipulation).</p> <p>These issues should be handled transparently by any XML library/parser used by the client (JDOM, Xerces, XML Beans...).</p>
<p>Q2 - Will the transaction status response, show delivery to CCN status, as well as delivery to EDCS status?</p>	<p>The NCTS XML channel has been developed primarily to give assurance to the declarant that IE messages had been delivered to the NCTS. Given that the data transmission between the XML server and EDCS will be (is expected to be) measured in seconds, the overall processing time within the NCTS can be measured by the trader - e.g. time/date stamp of delivery of the IE15 to EDCS set against time/date stamp of the IE29 being made available for retrieval.</p> <p>There are a number of actions and interfaces that could impact upon the overall processing time - e.g. manual intervention or validation by GMS at a national and/or international level. On that basis the transmission time to the CCN will not reflect where/why any 'apparent' delays have occurred, and delivery to that gateway does not guarantee delivery to the final recipient in other NA's.</p> <p>However, the HMRC infrastructure will be monitored by the usage of performance reports and any issues (including those identified by UKCS subsequent to trade enquiries), will be referred to the appropriate service delivery area to consider enhancement.</p>

<p>Q3 - What will happen if I mistakenly send the same message, on more than one occasion?</p>	<p>The message identifier in the UNB/UNZ segments needs to be unique; therefore you will only receive a 'successful' response for the original sent message, with any further identical messages rejected as a duplicate. This replicates the behaviour of the existing email channel.</p>
<p>Q4 - I use a third party soap client called pocketSOAP. Are there any available examples of sample code specific to complex data types?</p>	<p>Most of the documentation on the pocketSOAP site has examples with built in (or simple) data type parameters. There is an example of how to invoke an operation with a complex date type at http://www.pocketsoap.com/pocketsoap/docs/default.htm under the "complex types" section. The WSDL file for the NCTS web service contains details of the complex types.</p> <p>PocketSOAP does not have any direct support for WS-Security, however it does support SOAP Headers. This means that a client would have to create a WS-Security SOAP header. Guidance on this can be found on the pocketSOAP website (http://www.pocketsoap.com/pocketsoap/docs/default.htm) under the "using header" section.</p>
<p>Q5 - Will a response message always correlate a transaction ID against the original request message?</p>	<p>The ECN/MCC backend doesn't correlate the outgoing responses with the incoming requests: it is up to the application to understand which request originated a given response, and act accordingly. This is the behaviour of the existing email channel, where response emails contain no reference to their originating requests.</p> <p>The new NCTS XML channel matches requests/responses together. There are some scenarios, in which the correlation cannot be achieved: for example,</p> <p>An IE07 Arrival Notification is submitted and produces an IE08 Rejection; which correlates successfully. However, if an IE07 with the same MRN reference code is subsequently submitted; On arrival of the second IE08 response the application locates two IE07 requests which could have generated that message, and marks the response as 'uncorrelated'. This will result in a null TransactionId field in the response message.</p>
<p>Q6 - I am using a sequence number of 0 and ask for 60 messages, but only getting 50 returned – Why?</p>	<p>50 messages is the current system limit.</p>

<p>Q7 – What tests are facilitated under the NCTS XML channel trader test service?</p>	<p>The XML channel is using the same NCTS Trader Test backend as the old "UK email channel". So whatever test you did with the two email channels should be reproducible with the XML.</p>
<p>Q8 – How do I obtain the highest sequence number?</p>	<p>If an error message ("no matching sequence number") is received; then the sequence number provided is greater than the highest available. In this error message a valid range of values [0 to highest available sequence number] is provided.</p>
<p>Q9 - Where can I find more details on 'error' message scenarios?</p>	<p>In the API specification.</p>
<p>Q10 - Are messages returned in sequence i.e. oldest first?</p>	<p>This is clarified in the API Specification. Responses are stored in order of receipt without any re-sequencing.</p>
<p>Q11 - Can a digital Certificate be used for NCTS XML Channel?</p>	<p>The XML channel for NCTS will not support digital certificates; authentication is only available via an authenticated user id and password. If you currently use a digital certificate for HMRC services, then you should create an associate user for the NCTS Online service with user id and password credentials and use this within the NCTS XML service.</p>