What is JATS 2.0, and Should You be Worried?

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Version 1.0 (November 2019)
# What is JATS 2.0, and Should You be Worried?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is JATS 2.0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Does Backward Compatible Mean?</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backward Incompatible Means</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why are We Considering JATS 2.0?</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First, Guidelines were Written</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principle: Not Redesigning from Scratch</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Example, We will NOT</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Then We Collected Change Requests</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Kinds of Changes have been Requested</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Favorite Proposed Change</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the JATS Standing Committee Serious?</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is JATS 2.0

• Nothing yet, still a vision
• An exploration
• Nothing for years to come (promise!)
• Something the JATS Standing Committee is working on now

Short Answer: A “backwards-incompatible” version of JATS

What Does Backward Compatible Mean?

Since JATS 1.0 (and even before), JATS has promised all versions (1.1, 1.1d1, 1.2, 1.3d1, etc.) will be backward compatible

• Any document valid to any JATS tag set (1.1) will be valid to all more recent tag sets (1.2) if you change:
  • the @dtd-version attribute on <article>
  • the DOCTYPE Declaration
• No changes to the content of the article or the tagging necessary
Backward Incompatible Means

Your current JATS-tagged document might not be valid to the new tag set without retagging if:

- There is a new required element
- Something that used to be optional is now required
- There used to be two ways to tag something (A and B)
  - you used technique A
  - technique A is gone, you must tag using technique B

Why are We Considering JATS 2.0?

(rationale)

- The world has changed:
  Best in 1998 may not be best now
- JATS users have requested changes, and:
  - been turned down for reasons of backward compatibility
  - the change was made, but awkwardly because of backward compatibility
- We have bent over backwards to be backward compatible for years!
- We have been accruing “Technical Debt” for years
First, Guidelines were Written
(How are we thinking about this?)

• Changes must do one of the following:
  • improve the expressive power of the JATS vocabulary
  • reduce redundancy/duplication in the vocabulary
  • improve processability of JATS documents
• Changes must conform to the principles of the JATS Compatibility Model*
• Changes should be considered as individual changes as well as in the context of all other changes


Principle: Not Redesigning from Scratch

• Not a totally new vocabulary
• Not necessarily the one we would write if starting now
• Just a maintenance release of JATS
• A cleanup not a demolition
For Example, We will NOT

• Rename the tag sets
• Get rid of Blue or Green
• Move from DTD to RNG or Schematron
• Remove MathML 2.0 (leaving only MathML 3.0)
• Make all JATS versions provide OASIS CALS tables
• Get rid of specific face markup (<bold>)
  and use only generic <emphasis type="bold">
• Put JATS in a namespace

Then We Collected Change Requests

• Requests previously rejected for backward incompatibility
• Compromises we made to be backward compatible
• New requests generated by the announcement of JATS 2.0
• Musings from minutes of the JATS Standing Committee
What Kinds of Changes have been Requested?

- Redesign volume and issue metadata (more containers)
- Improve support for multilingual/multiscript documents
- Make a distinction between inline-code and block-code
- Put more elements into `<sec-meta>` and allow it more places
- The whole `<date>`, `<history>`, `<event>`, `<pub-history>` is a mess, fix it.
- Eliminate all attribute values lists, make everything CDATA (free text)

My Favorite Proposed Change

- Make a new simplified JATS subset
  - Specifically designed for schema-driven editing and tool use
  - Intended audience: journal production workers and editors
  - For example, it will include journal metadata
Is the JATS Standing Committee Serious?
(Is there a time-frame for all this?)

- We promised to provide lots of notice
- *Notice was given at JATS-Con 2019 in May 2019*
- JATS 2.0 will not become a standard before 2021 (and maybe not even then)
- Committee drafts (V2.0d1, 2.0d2, etc.) will be distributed for testing before release of JATS 2.0 for voting.

Yes, we mean it, JATS 2.0 is probably/certainly/maybe coming
We will finish 2.0, and then see if the improvements are worth the pain.