

# Electronic Data Interchange

The EDI module has been designed as a set of tools that provide the user with a maximum amount of flexibility when dealing with their trading partners. These tools can be used to map any Navision data element to an ANSI X12 standard. Once the mapping is in place, the Transaction Management tools allow the user to easily manage the day-to-day process of conducting electronic commerce.

## **If EDI is based on a set of ANSI standards why is it so difficult to integrate into most business systems?**

Business systems are as diverse and varied as their names and origins indicate. The EDI ANSI X12 standard is an attempt to provide a common intermediate format in which to conduct electronic commerce between trading partners. The interpretation and use of the data elements within these standards is left up to the EDI standards committee in each industry and further modified by the individual trading partners. For example the electronics industry has a different set of requirements than does the retail distribution industry. This is further complicated by the requirements of each trading partner's business system.

Historically software providers have provided a hard coded custom solution to EDI which in turn is rigid and expensive to maintain and modify. A more modern approach is to provide this same rigid interface and use an EDI software vendor's logical mapping tool to complete the link. The problem with this solution is that the EDI mapping tool can only map and pass along data that is provided to it through the traditional rigid interface.

Our approach to EDI is to provide a single mapping tool that maps any Navision data element to any EDI data element without the requirement of programming. This tool is further augmented by the addition of specific trading partner packages that include already mapped transactions for major trading partners. These maps are templates that can easily be modified and maintained as the trading partners requirements change.

## **If it is that simple why doesn't every software provider take this approach?**

Navision's unique development and operational environment makes this logical mapping approach possible. For example, when a new field is required by one of your trading partners you have two options:

1. Add the field to Navision and change the logical EDI map to recognize it.
2. Change the EDI map to recognize an EDI virtual field which is held in the EDI transaction database. This field can be viewed and updated from within Navision and mapped to an outgoing transaction where needed. Obviously this approach keeps your database modification to a minimum.

## **All this sounds great but all I want is to get EDI up and going as quickly as possible?**

The Navision EDI solution is designed to provide a maximum amount of flexibility as well as a turn key approach. We provide a range of services that include the following:

Consulting with you and your trading partners to understand which EDI standards are appropriate

- Recommending the best way to set up Navision to accommodate your trading partners processing. (Sometimes a trading partner's requirements dictates how an Item or Customer is set up within Navision.)
- Mapping and testing the EDI transaction with your trading partner. (In some cases a fully tested Trading Partner Package is already available.)

## **Consider the following Navision advantages:**

- **Logical Mapping** allows you to map any Navision field to any EDI transaction without complicated and time consuming programming.

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- Using the **Virtual Field** concept you can receive any EDI element, view, edit, hold it in the EDI transaction database, and map it to an output transaction without adding it to your Navision database.
- With **Transaction Management** the user can easily view, process, and track both incoming and outgoing EDI transactions.

The EDI solution is flexible, quick to implement, and easy to maintain which translates into better relations with your trading partners and a lower cost per transaction to you.

## EDI Integrates with:

- Navision Financials
- Navision Advanced Distribution
- Navision Manufacturing
- Navision Attain

## Other Requirements:

The EDI granule is a translation tool used to import and export X12 EDI transactions. It does not include a communications product at this point to manage the EDI mailbox on the Value Added Network. Value Added Networks typically have their own products but these tend to be reasonably expensive. We currently recommend a secure FTP product Cleo Lexicom. You can find them on the web at [www.cleo.com](http://www.cleo.com).