Comments

Yes, XML has comments, and it is always a good idea to use them. Why comment? If you are a programmer, you already know why. If not, understand that at some point, someone is going to have to look at some XML document you did and figure out why you did it that way (beware, it may just be you!). Getting in a good habit of commenting what you do will save you lot's of time and frustration in the long run.

The syntax for comments is:

```
<!-- This text is a comment -->
```

The start of a comment is represented by the <!-- characters, while the end of the comment is represented by the -->.

Warning: Do not use spaces in the start and end tags of a comment. It will result in a misinterpretation of your document and may even result in unexpected behavior

You can put comments anywhere inside of your XML document, as long as it is outside other markup and not within an element. The would result in an error:

```
<name <!-- employee name -->>
```

Comments can not be placed with elements. The following is not a comment, but in fact part of an element value. Do not be surprised to find that this line causes different behaviors in different XML processors.

```
<another>This is <!-- oops --> another
  error</another>
```

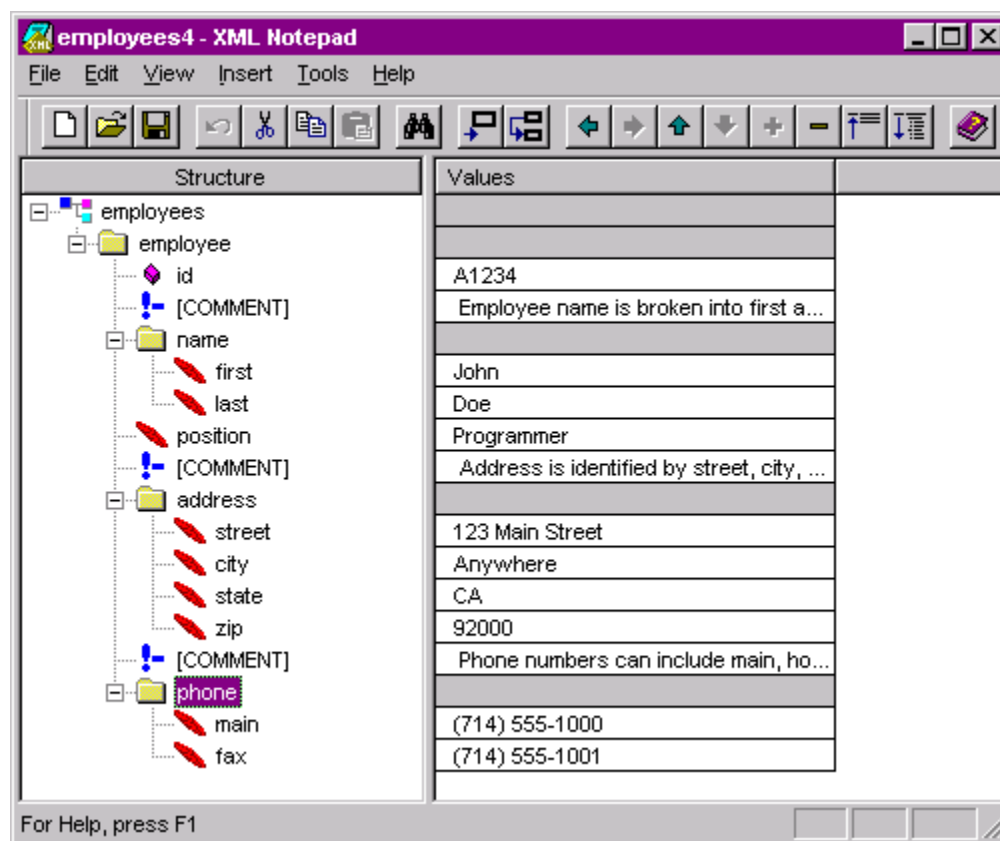Anything within a valid comment block will be ignored by an XML processor. In the following example, the <name>, <first> and <last> tags are all ignored.

```
<!-- We have commented out the name elements.
<name>
  <first>John</first>
  <last>Doe</last>
</name>
-->
```

Do not use comments for anything other than documenting your code. It may seem advantages to stick something in a comment that a specific application could use later, but that is not what comments are for. In fact, it might not give you the results you expect.

Warning: The XML specification does not require that comments be passed to an application. Some XML processors may strip the comments out before the application sees them.

It is important to comment your XML documents. Even though XML is designed to be readable, everything is relative. Even XML can look pretty complicated when you take advantage of all of its capabilities.

File: Chapter 2\Employees4.xml in XML Notepad

```
C:\XML\chapter 2\employees4.xml - Microsoft Internet Explorer

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  <?xml version="1.0" ?>
- <employees>
  - <employee id="A1234">
      <!--  Employee name is broken into first
      and last    -->
    - <name>
        <first>John</first>
        <last>Doe</last>
      </name>
      <position>Programmer</position>
      <!--  Address is identified by street,
      city, state, zip    -->
    - <address>
        <street>123 Main Street</street>
        <city>Anywhere</city>
        <state>CA</state>
        <zip>92000</zip>
      </address>
      <!--  Phone numbers can include main,
      home, fax, mobile    -->
    - <phone>
        <main>(714) 555-1000</main>
        <fax>(714) 555-1001</fax>
      </phone>
    </employee>
  </employees>

Done                                    My Computer
```

File: Chapter 2\Employees4.xml in IE5