

# **SMPTE STANDARD**

## **Broadcast Exchange Format (BXF) – Protocol**



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## **Foreword**

SMPTE (the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers) is an internationally recognized standards developing organization. Headquartered and incorporated in the United States of America, SMPTE has members in over 80 countries on six continents. SMPTE's Engineering Documents, including Standards, Recommended Practices and Engineering Guidelines, are prepared by SMPTE's Technology Committees. Participation in these Committees is open to all with a bona fide interest in their work. SMPTE cooperates closely with other standards-developing organizations, including ISO, IEC and ITU.

SMPTE Engineering Documents are drafted in accordance with the rules given in Part XIII of its Administrative practices. SMPTE ST 2021-2 was prepared by Technology Committee 34CS.

## **Intellectual Property**

At the time of publication, no notice had been received by SMPTE claiming patent rights essential to the implementation of this Standard. However, attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. SMPTE shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

## **Introduction**

This section is entirely informative and does not form an integral part of this Engineering Document.

Broadcast Exchange Format (BXF) is a protocol for exchange of data among broadcast systems such as Traffic, Program Management, Automation, and Content Distribution. It is intended to facilitate the movement of content and its associated metadata for better management, coordination and reporting between these broadcast systems. The BXF Protocol serves as a replacement for the many proprietary interfaces in place today between vendors in these areas.

SMPTE ST 2021 (BXF) is broken into several parts. A brief outline of the parts can be found in SMPTE 2021-0, the Document Roadmap to this suite of documents.

## 1. Scope

This document is focused on Protocol-related topics as they relate to BXF. The main BXF document (ST 2021-1) should be read first, and this part (ST 2021-2) should be considered as a companion to ST 2021-1 for those interested in all things Protocol.

## 2. Conformance Notation

Documents consist of normative text and, optionally, informative text. Normative text is that describes elements of the design that are indispensable or contains the conformance language keywords: "shall", "should", or "may". Informative text is text that is potentially helpful to the user, but not indispensable, and can be removed, changed, or added editorially without affecting interoperability. Informative text does not contain any conformance keywords.

All text in a Standard, Recommended Practice, Amendment, Addendum, or Corrigendum, is, by default, normative, except: the Introduction, any section explicitly labeled as "Informative" or individual paragraphs that start with "Note:"

Normative references are external documents referenced in normative text that are indispensable to the user. Bibliographic references are references made in informative text or are those otherwise not indispensable to the user. Normative references shall conform to the types and procedures specified in the Engineering Administrative Practices.

The keywords "shall" and "shall not" indicate requirements strictly to be followed in order to conform to the document and from which no deviation is permitted. The keywords, "should" and "should not" indicate that, among several possibilities, one is recommended as particularly suitable, without mentioning or excluding others; or that a certain course of action is preferred but not necessarily required; or that (in the negative form) a certain possibility or course of action is deprecated but not prohibited.

The keywords "may" and "need not" indicate courses of action permissible within the limits of the document.

The keyword "reserved" indicates a provision that is not defined at this time, shall not be used, and may be defined in the future. The keyword "forbidden" indicates "reserved" and in addition indicates that the provision will never be defined in the future.

A conformant implementation according to an Engineering Document is one that includes all mandatory provisions ("shall") and, if implemented, all recommended provisions ("should") as described. A conformant implementation need not implement optional provisions ("may") and need not implement them as described.

Unless otherwise specified the order of precedence of the types of normative information in this document shall be as follows. Normative prose shall be the authoritative definition. Tables shall be next, followed by formal languages, then figures, and then any other language forms. In the event of a conflict between the schema and other information in this document, the schema is authoritative.

## 3. Normative References

The following standards contain provisions, which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this standard. At the time of publication, the editions indicated were valid. All standards are subject to revision, and parties to agreements based on this standard are encouraged to investigate the possibility of applying the most recent edition of the standards indicated below.

SMPTE ST 2021-1, Broadcast Exchange Format (BXF) — General Information and Informative Notes, 2019

## 4. Protocol

The BXF protocol may be implemented using a variety of transport mechanisms. The protocol supports both connection-oriented and connectionless approaches, two of which are described below: A connection-based transport for asynchronous communication and a connectionless file transport, for off-line and/or large sets of data that need to be communicated. Vendors are free to choose the appropriate transport mechanism for their applications

As a minimum, a BXF compliant system shall support a connectionless file transport.

### 4.1 Connectionless Transport

Connectionless transport of BXF involves the exchange of files between systems. This is most commonly used by systems unable to support connection-oriented transport, or those needing to exchange very large datasets (e.g. exchange of a large collection of content metadata). This method involves one system placing the BXF file to be exchanged in a location from which that file is then retrieved by the receiving system(s).

### 4.2 Connection-Oriented Transport

Connection-oriented transport of BXF requires a connection between the sending and receiving devices. BXF supports asynchronous messaging approaches, as described below.

#### 4.2.1 TCP/IP

TCP/IP protocol may be used for communication. The BXF application shall use a port number that is configurable by installation. BXF standard shall use 14544 and 14545 as default ports.

##### 4.2.1.1 Connections

Each device using the BXF protocol that receives and responds to messages shall act as a server (or service provider). Each device using the protocol to initiate the sending of messages shall act as a client (or service consumer). Devices that plan to both send and receive messages shall act as both a server and a client.

A client shall initiate the connection to a server. A device that includes both a server and a client shall be responsible for managing its client connection separately from the clients that connect to it. A client shall be allowed to open connections to as many BXF servers as are available.

##### 4.2.1.2 Sending of Messages

Once a connection is made from a client to a server, only the client may initiate communication. This communication can either be a “push” of information where the client sends data to the server, or a “pull” where the client requests certain information from the server. If there is a need for the server to initiate messages to the client, then a separate connection shall be opened where the client/server roles are reversed.

The initiating message will be consumed by the device’s server, and its client will use a separate connection to acknowledge and reply (if applicable) to the original message.

##### 4.2.1.3 Inactive Connections

It is required that inactive and abnormal connections shall be detected and managed by transport protocols. In addition, clients may monitor the status of its connections to servers by sending **heartbeat** requests as defined later in this standard. Similarly, servers may monitor the status of connected clients and the transport connection by looking for heartbeat requests.

The standard leaves managing failing connections and what to do in each case up to implementation.

#### 4.2.1.4 List of Devices to Connect To or Accept Connections From

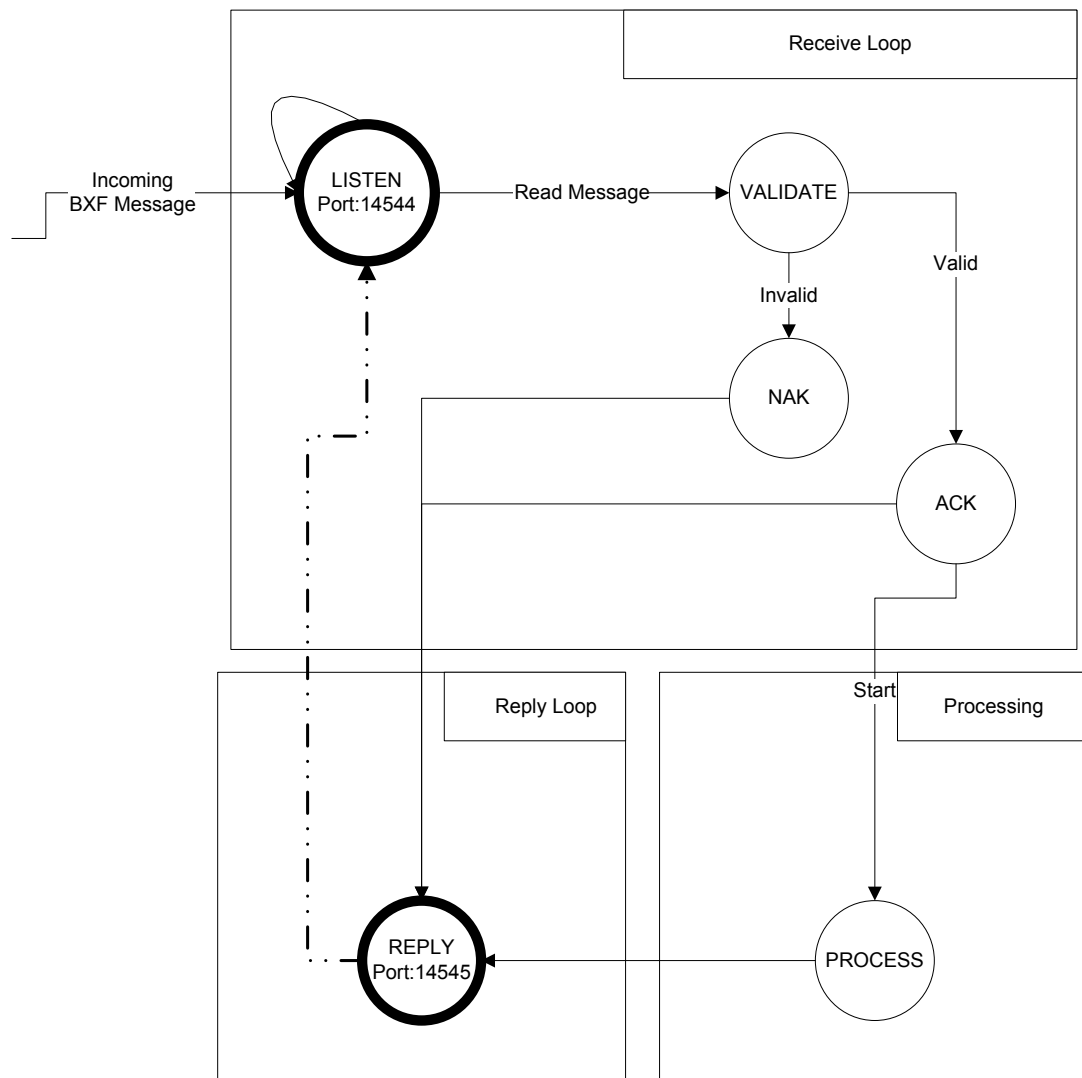
Each device that is configured as a client/server shall store a list of available devices (configured as servers) that it needs to communicate with. This list shall uniquely identify the device and its services. Arrangements for setting up and maintaining this list are left up to implementation by each manufacturer.

#### 4.2.1.5 Initiation of Servers

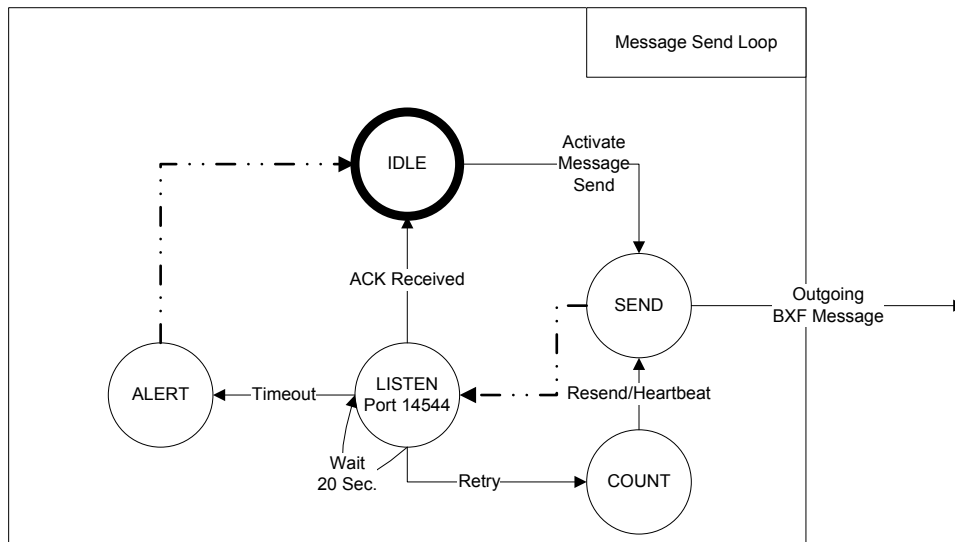
When a device that is configured as a server is turned on, it shall begin accepting connections. When a client attempts to connect to the server, the server should reference its list of Devices to Accept Connections From (if present) before deciding to accept the connection. The system implementing the protocol must not begin communications until it is able to fully support the messaging which it implements.

#### 4.2.1.6 Timeout of Services

BXF manages a state machine for processing of messages. In order to assure reliable communications, a timeout is specified. The default timeout of the BXF protocol shall be 20 seconds. This timeout shall be defined as the maximum period of elapsed time from the completion of the message transmission, and the acknowledgment response from the receiving system, as measured at the client portion of the session. When this timeout is exceeded, the BXF protocol shall enter a retry loop or generate an error message, as determined by the implementer.



**Figure 1 – BXF State Machine, Receive**



**Figure 2 – BXF State Machine, Transmit**

## 4.2.2 Encryption

System implementers may use methods of encryption, not specified herein, for secure communication within a system. The BXF protocol neither prohibits nor requires any specific security mechanism. It has been designed to be agnostic, and is therefore up to the end user to determine what, if any, security to use.

## 4.2.3 Message format

**All messages in BXF shall be sent as XML documents conforming to the BXF schema as defined at <http://smpte-ra.org/schemas/2021/2018/BXF>.**

### 4.2.3.1 ACK Message Response

An ACK message shall be sent indicating successful receipt of the message. Success is defined as the message having the following characteristics:

- The message is well-formed (it is an XML message and BXF compliant) in the context of the receiving system and from a valid and recognized source
- The receiving system has implemented support for the message
- The message was received within the configuration timeout period

### 4.2.3.2 ACK Message Response with Errors or Invalid (NAK)

Any message that fails the above tests shall return a new message with the appropriate error value as defined in the schema.

### 4.3 File-Based Transport

File-Based transfer may be used where large amounts of data need to be communicated from one system to another without the need for acknowledgement, and where timing is not critical. The user simply downloads a file containing the XML document from the originating device and imports it into the receiving device. Alternatively, the files may be pushed or pulled to the receiving device in an automatic process.

#### 4.3.1 File Name

The originating system shall utilize a common naming scheme for the files so that the receiving device can be set up to identify the files. The file name shall be in the format of:

“BXF[Date][Device1][Device2][GUID].xml”

Where: [Date] shall be the year, month, and day that the file was sent (using UTC clock), in the format “yyyymmdd”; [Device1], [Device2] shall be strings up to 14 letters and digits each that identifies the creator and destination of the file; and [GUID] shall be a globally unique identifier. Date, [Device1], [Device2] and [GUID] must match those same fields defined in the header of BXF message carried inside the file.