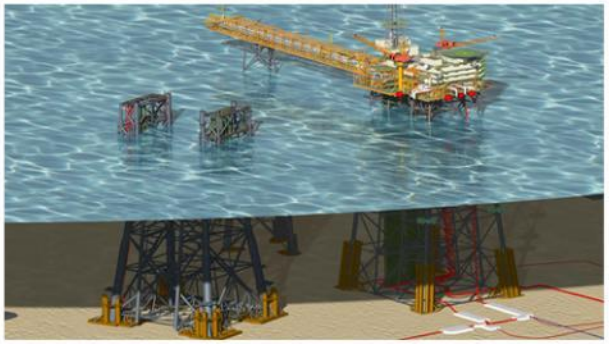




Introducing Bentley Map VBA Development

Jeff Bielefeld

Bentley
Sustaining Infrastructure

Session Overview

- **Introducing Bentley Map VBA Development** - In this session attendees will be provided an introductory look at what is required to begin developing custom MicroStation VBA applications for the Bentley Map platform. An overview of the “XFM Feature Toolkit” (XFT) will be provided to familiarize each attendee with the Bentley Map XFM object model. A number of sample Bentley Map VBA applications will be discussed and demonstrated, showing attendees common techniques used to create, locate and edit XFM feature instances.

Agenda

- Answer some of the most “Frequently Asked Questions” related to the Bentley Map product line.
- XML-Based Feature Modeling (XFM) Overview
- XFM Feature Toolkit (XFT) Overview
- Bentley Map VBA Examples

Bentley Map

Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Question** - Why is the Bentley Map data model different than that of MicroStation or the one used for years in the MicroStation GeoGraphics product?
- **Answer** - While MicroStation has always provided an industry leading CAD engine, users requiring geospatial functionalities often need additional data modeling and geo-processing capabilities. For some 15 years, MicroStation GeoGraphics filled that gap by extending MicroStation into a “feature-based” system. Several years ago, users began requesting more extensible data modeling capabilities, thus the “**X**ML-Based **F**eature **M**odeling (**XFM**)” framework was developed.

Frequently Asked Questions

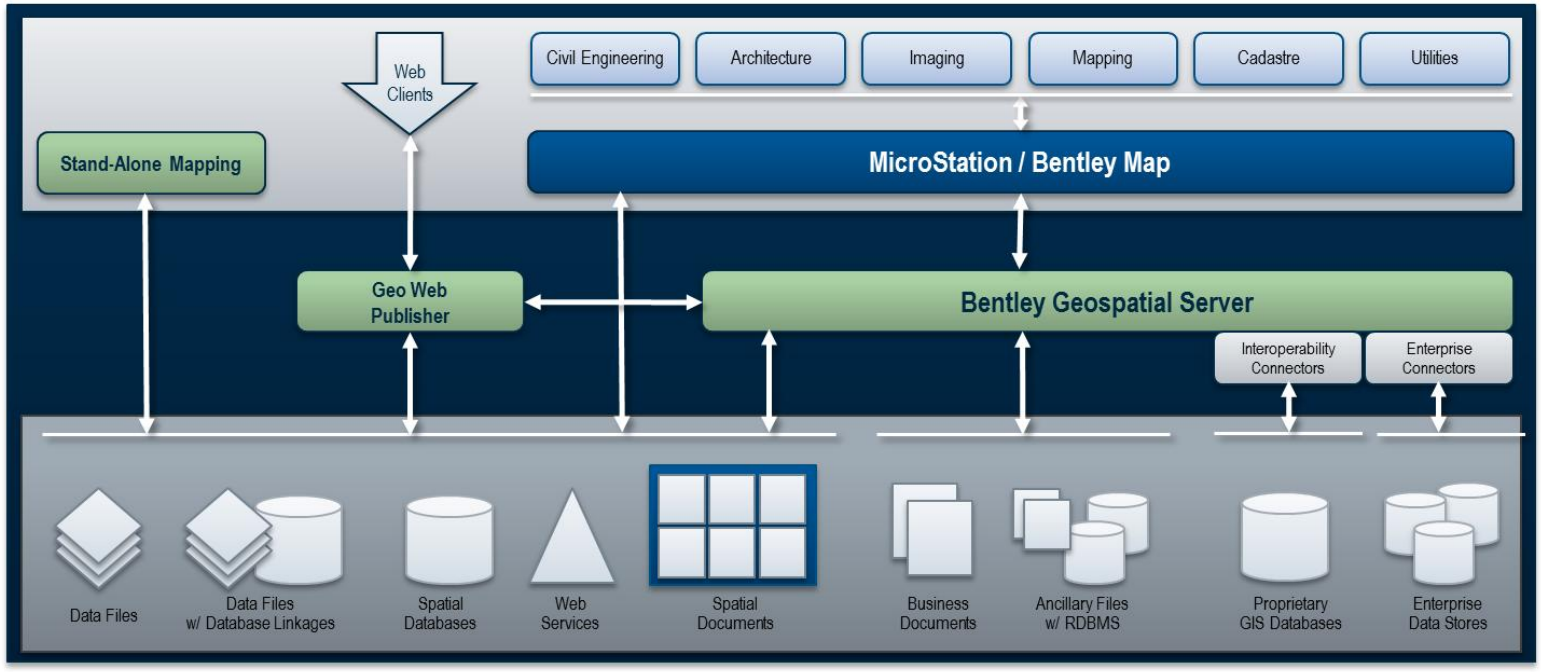
- **Question** – What is XFM?
- **Answer** – As previously mentioned, the term XFM stands for "**X**ML-Based **F**eature **M**odeling" which provides an extensible XML-based metadata driven framework upon which geospatial feature classes, their business properties and behaviors can be modeled. Let's take a brief look at some of the key benefits of the XFM data modeling platform.

XFM Key Benefits

- Provides an extensible framework upon which next generation infrastructure applications can be developed.
- Provides hierarchical data modeling capabilities.
- Provides support for disconnected workflows.
- Provides ability to model data from emerging data standards.
- Improves data interoperability capabilities.
- Integrated MicroStation undo/redo support.

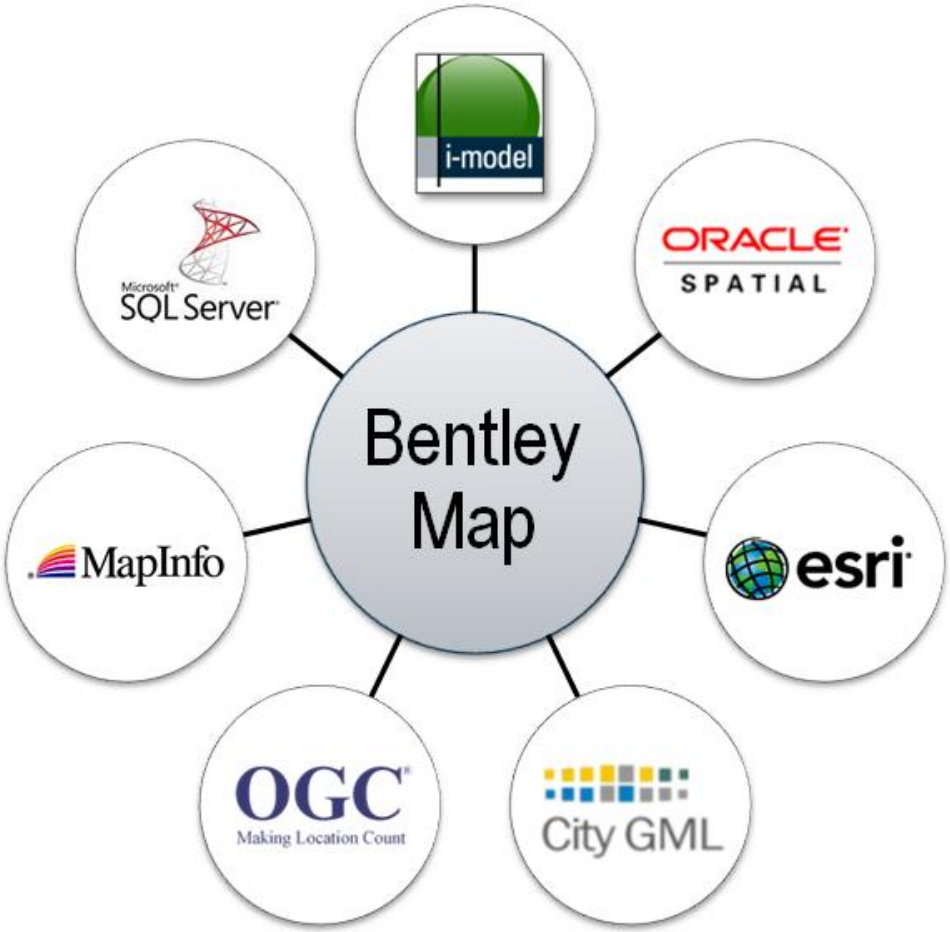
XFM Key Benefits

- Adds value to applications by increasing interoperability with other Bentley geospatial products as well as additional data formats.



Frequently Asked Questions

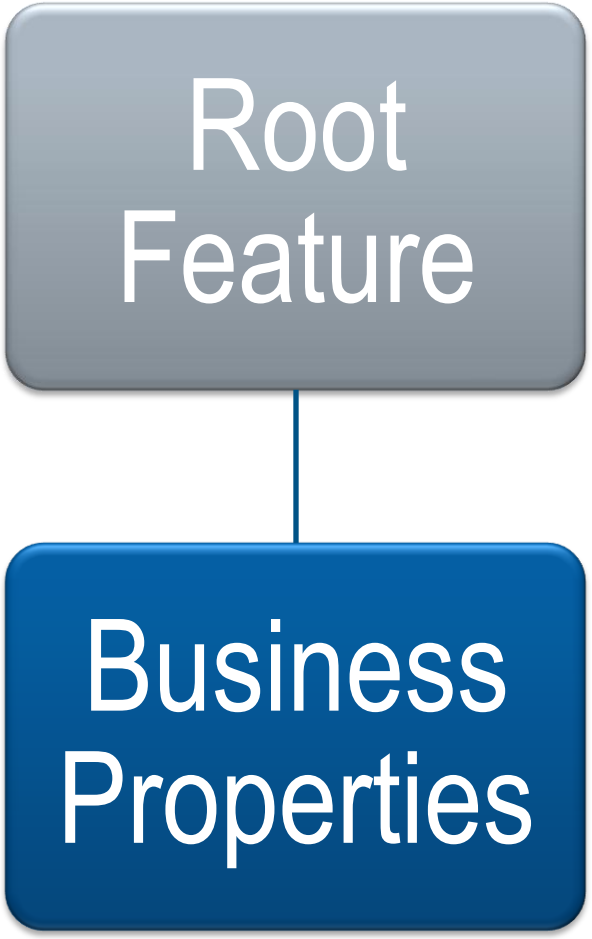
- **Question** - I understand that Bentley Map provides improved interoperability with a number of industry standard data formats beyond those currently supported by MicroStation. Is this correct?
- **Answer** - Yes. From a user and developer perspective, Bentley Map provides native read/write support for many popular industry standard data formats.



Frequently Asked Questions

- **Question** – What is a Bentley Map XFM feature?
- **Answer** – In the simplest terms, a Bentley Map XFM feature is nothing more than one or more MicroStation elements with optionally one or more sets of non-graphic business properties.

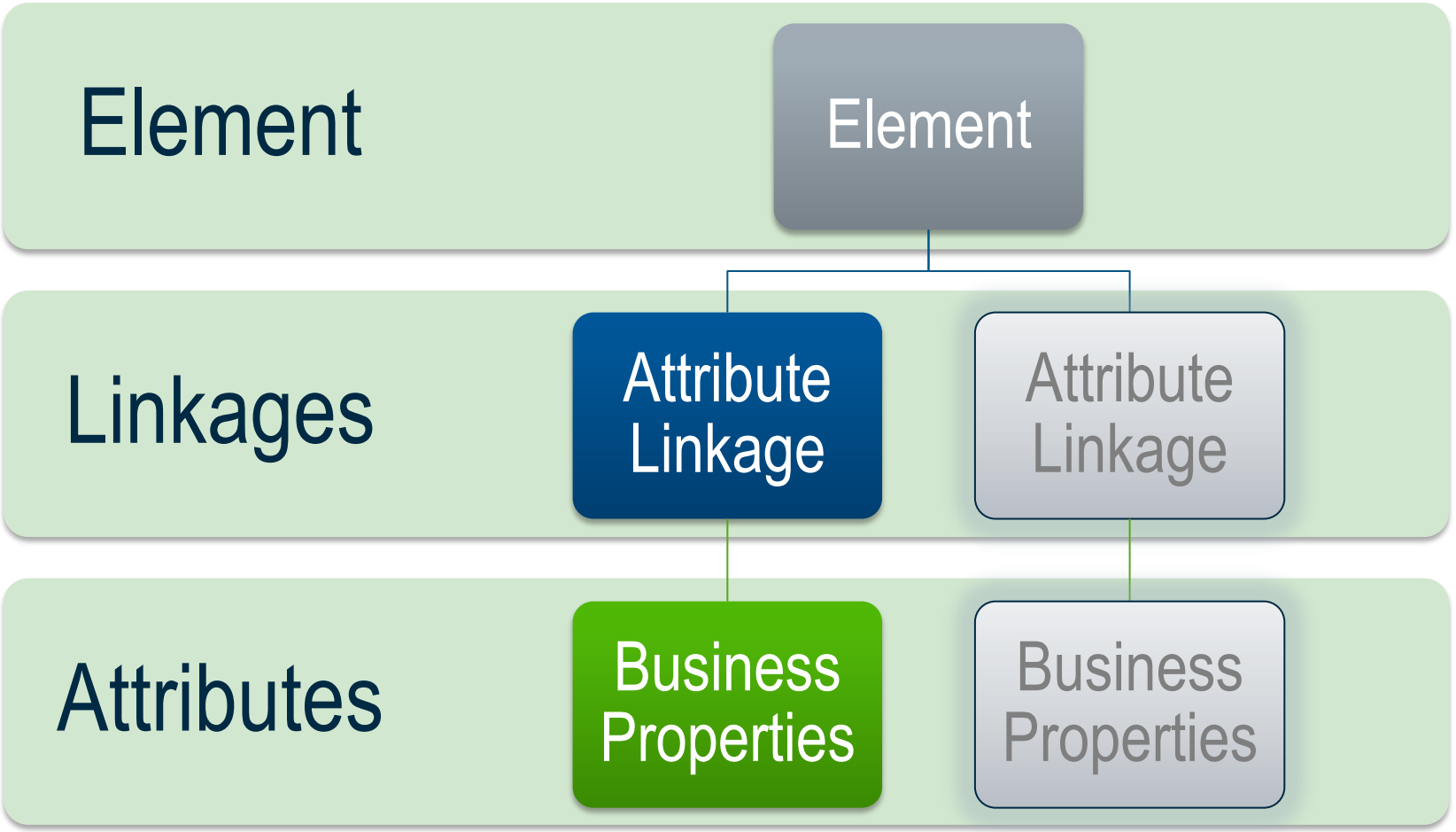
Bentley Map XFM Feature Instance



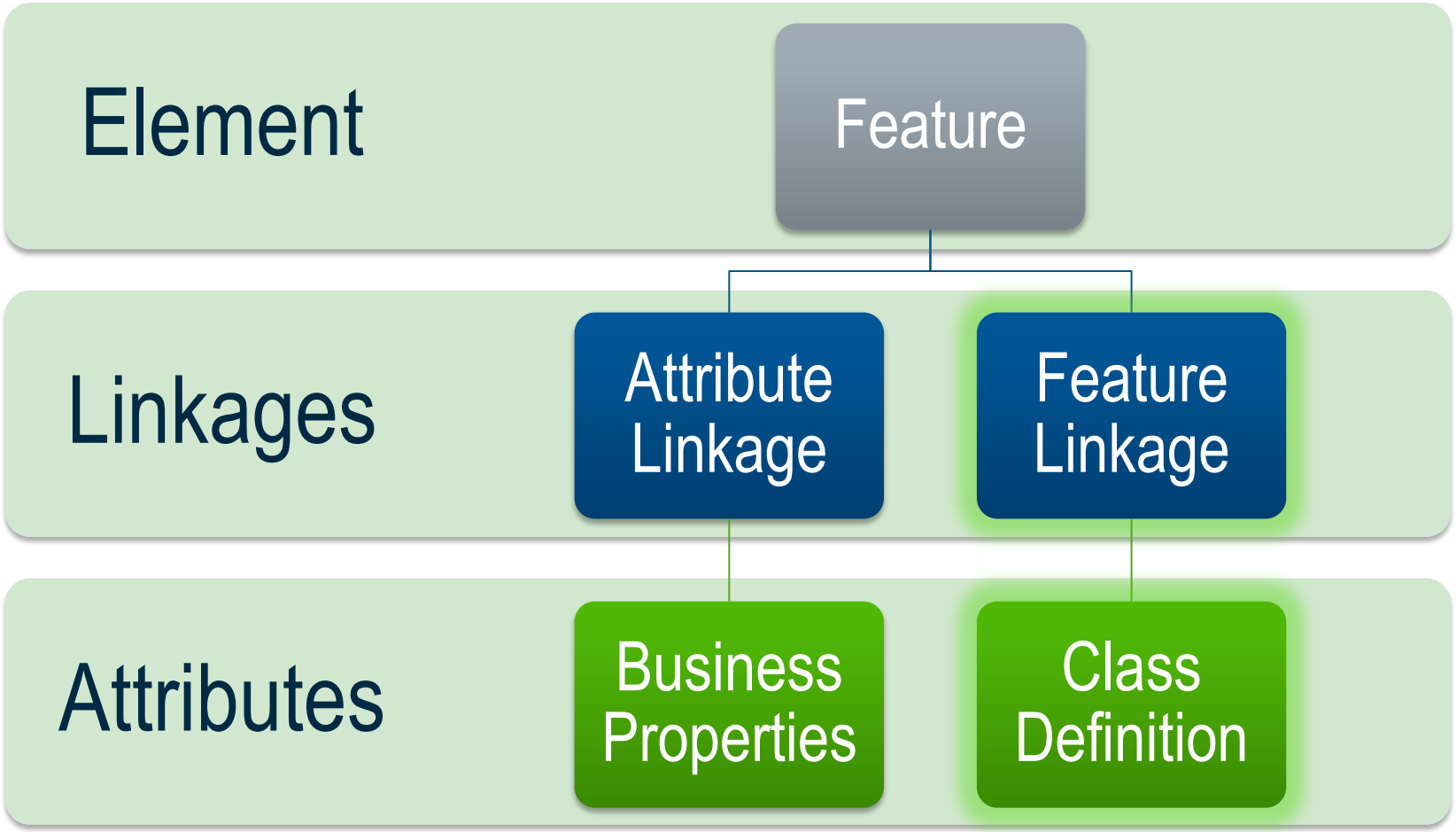
Frequently Asked Questions

- **Question** – How is a Bentley Map XFM feature different than a MicroStation element with a database linkage or a MicroStation GeoGraphics feature?
- **Answer** – While many aspects of an XFM feature instance is similar to a database linked MicroStation element or MicroStation GeoGraphics feature instance there are some unique differences. Let's have a look at the key differences.

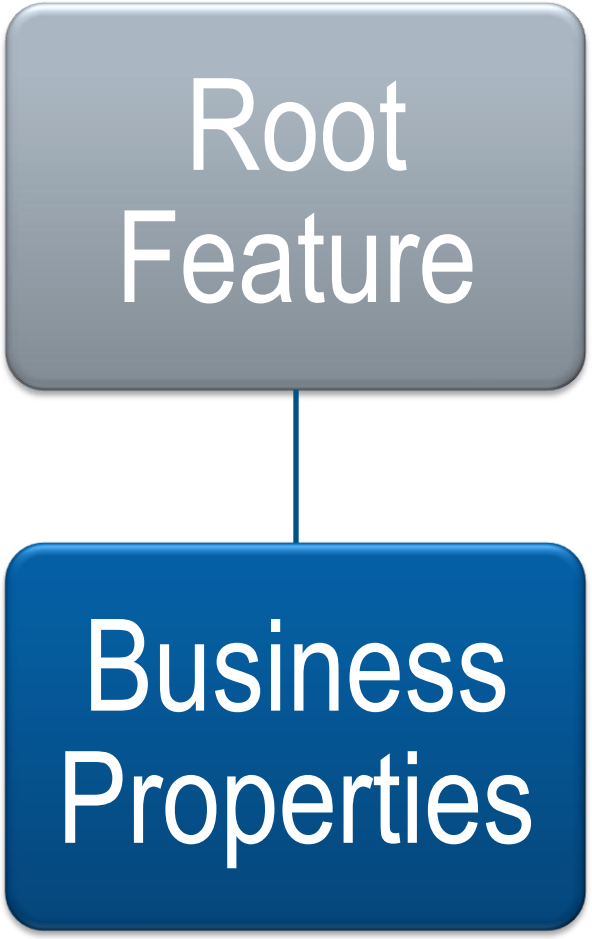
MicroStation Element



MicroStation GeoGraphics Feature Instance



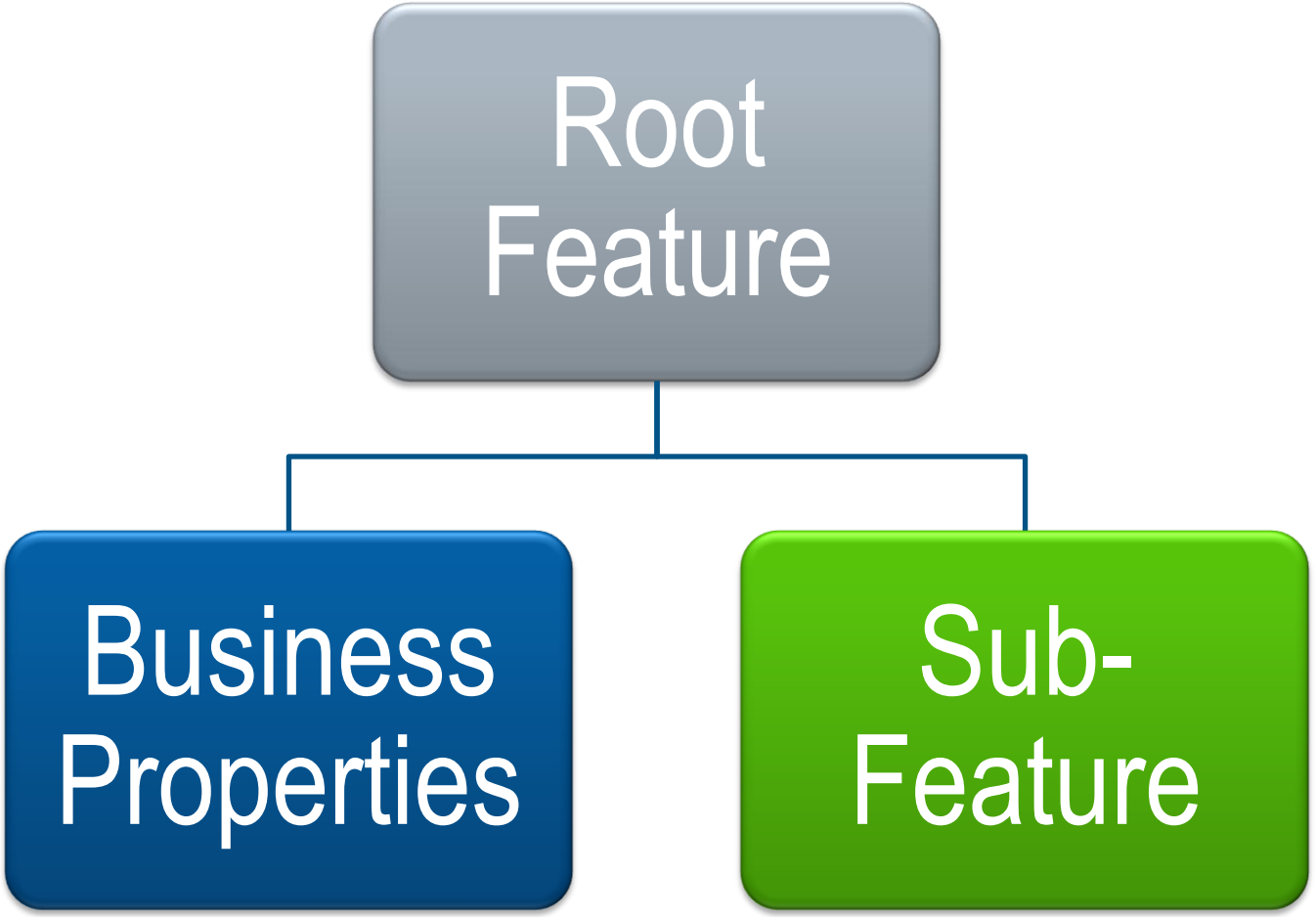
Bentley Map XFM Feature Instance



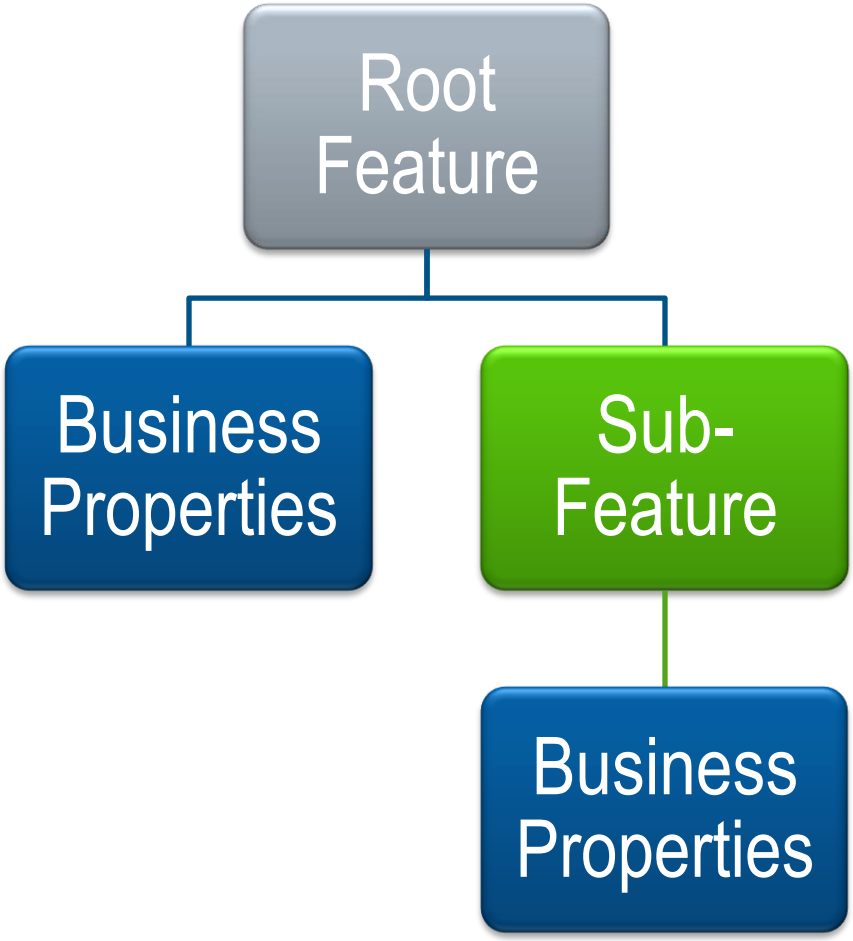
Frequently Asked Questions

- **Question** – What advantages do XFM features give me over regular MicroStation elements?
- **Answer** – As previously stated, a Bentley Map XFM feature is nothing more than one or more MicroStation elements with optionally one or more sets of non-graphic business properties.

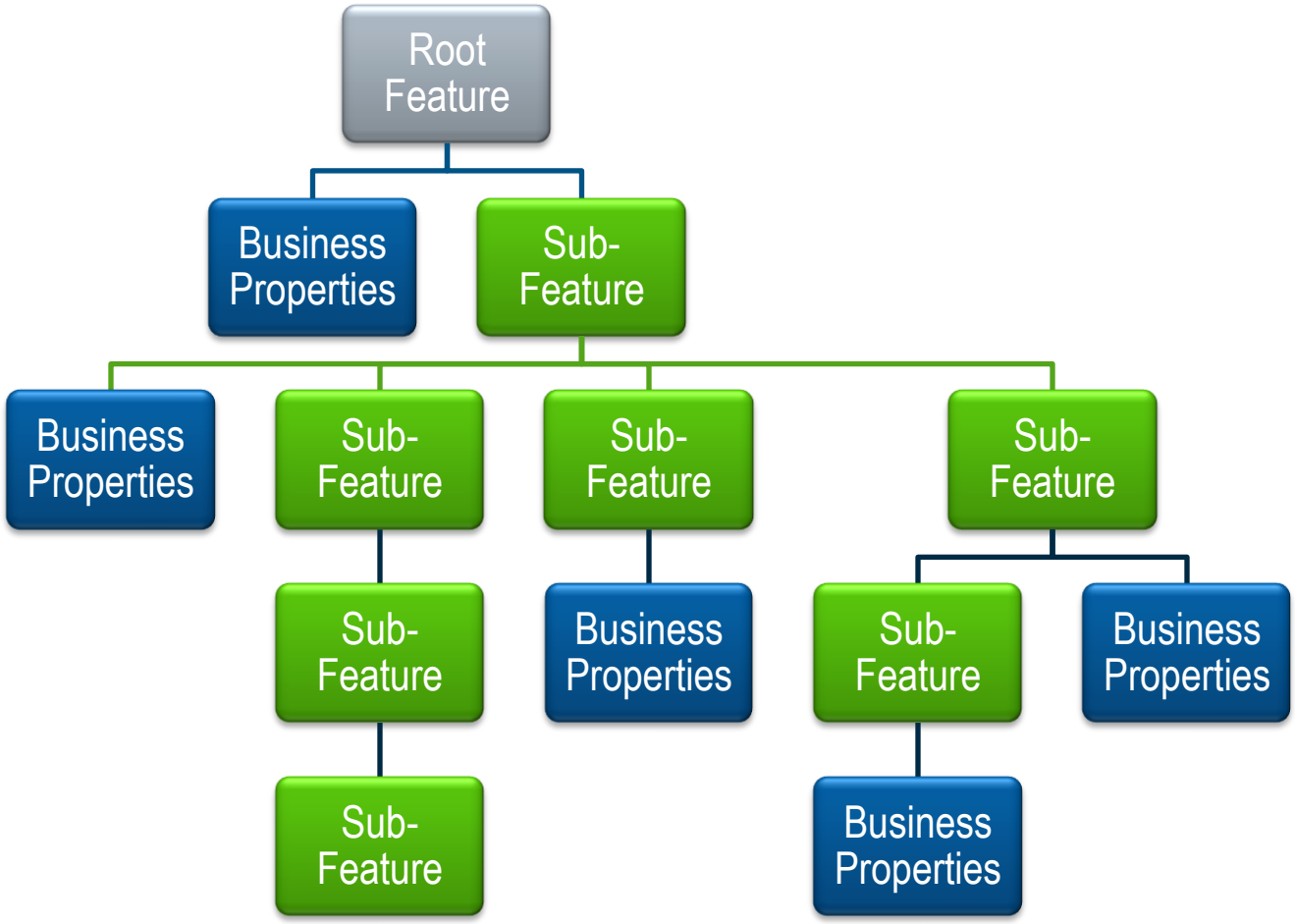
Bentley Map XFM Feature Instance



Bentley Map XFM Feature Instance



Bentley Map XFM Feature Instance



Frequently Asked Questions

- **Question** – Can I use Bentley Map without converting my MicroStation elements to XFM feature instances?
- **Answer** – Yes, using Dynamic Feature Scoring (DFS) technology, Bentley Map has the ability to automatically infer feature classes based upon various aspects of a MicroStation element such as level name and element type.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Question** – Can I still use MicroStation commands to manipulate XFM feature instances?
- **Answer** – Yes. Bentley Map has been designed in such a way that allows users to take full advantage of the powerful MicroStation editing commands, while at the same time ensuring maintaining referential integrity between the graphic and non-graphic business properties.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Question** – Are there any existing tools which can help me get started converting my existing MicroStation data to the Bentley Map XFM format?
- **Answer** – Yes, available upon request there exists an example VBA tool called “XFMize” which can be used to convert MicroStation data to the Bentley Map XFM format.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Question** – What is the Bentley Geospatial Administrator?
- **Answer** – In the simplest terms, the Bentley Geospatial Administrator application is the “class editor” for the Bentley Map platform.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Question** – Is use of a Bentley Geospatial Administrator generated schema required?
- **Answer** – No. Use of a Bentley Geospatial Administrator generated schema is not required. However there are some additional Bentley Map capabilities which are available whenever the Bentley Geospatial Administrator is used to pre-define a schema, feature classes and their behaviors.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Question** – What is required to get started with Bentley Map VBA development?
- **Answer** – Bentley Map

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Question** – Which editions of Bentley Map support VBA development?
- **Answer** – All editions including:
  - Bentley Map Enterprise (standalone)
  - Bentley Map (standalone or MicroStation layered)
  - Bentley Map PowerView (standalone)

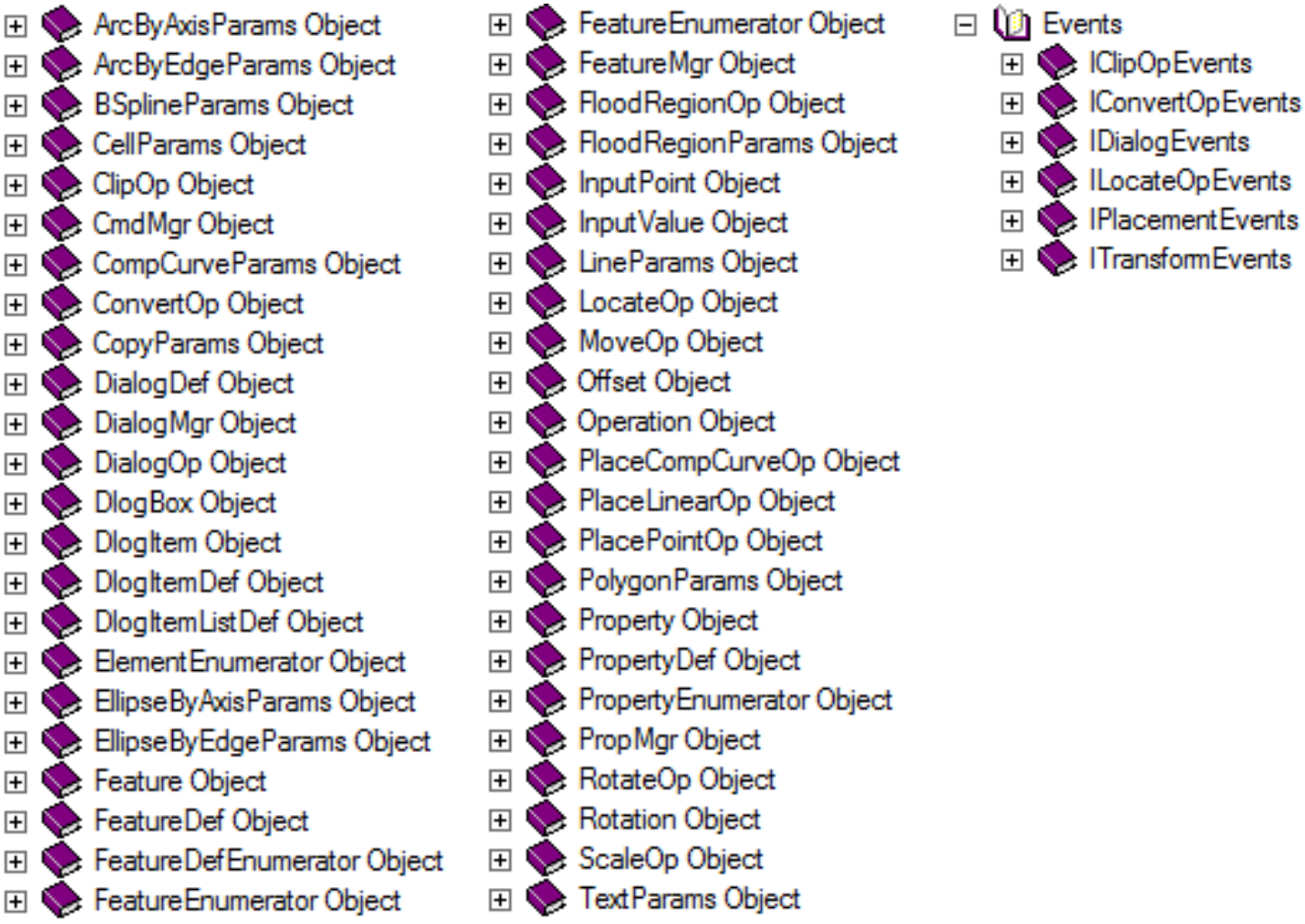
Frequently Asked Questions

- **Question** – What is XFT?
- **Answer** – The term “XFT” stands for “**X**FM **F**eature **T**oolkit” and represents the Component Object Model (COM) for Bentley Map core functionalities.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Question** – What does the XFT object model provide?
- **Answer** – The XFT object model presents a set of objects and events allowing programmatic access to XFM data modeling and core XFM capabilities. Let's have a closer look at what the XFT object model provides.

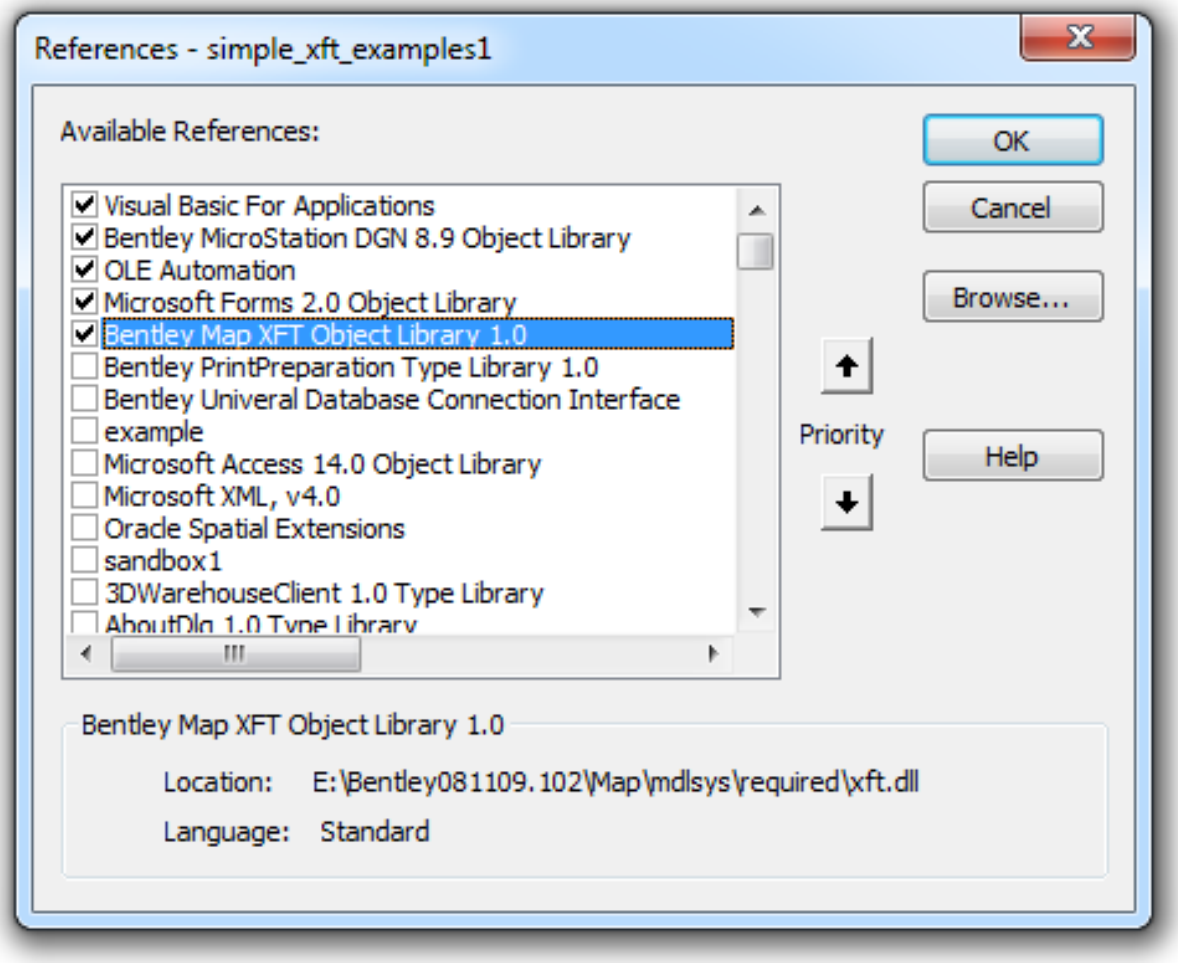
XFT Object Model



Frequently Asked Questions

- **Question** – So now that I understand a bit more about XFM data modeling and the XFT object model, are Bentley Map VBA applications difficult to write?
- **Answer** – No, not really. Using Bentley Map VBA, basic operations such as creating features and sub-features, adding business properties, setting symbology and locating features are actually quite simple. Let's have a look at a few brief examples.

VBA References



Bentley Map VBA Example

- Find MicroStation line or linestring elements and convert them to XFM feature instances.
- Create new elements and add those as sub-features.
- Add business properties to both the root and all sub-features.
- Create a locate operation that searches the entire design file, fence contents or selection set for feature instances matching a particular search criteria.
- Load search results into the Data Browser application.

Create Feature Instances

```
Private Sub CommandButton1_Click()

    Dim oElementScanCriteria As ElementScanCriteria
    Dim oElementEnumerator As ElementEnumerator
    Dim oElement As Element
    Dim count As Integer
    Dim oNewRootFeature As xft.feature

    Set oElementScanCriteria = New ElementScanCriteria

    oElementScanCriteria.ExcludeNonGraphical
    oElementScanCriteria.IncludeOnlyVisible
    oElementScanCriteria.ExcludeAllTypes
    oElementScanCriteria.IncludeType msdElementTypeLine
    oElementScanCriteria.IncludeType msdElementTypeLineString

    Set oElementEnumerator = ActiveModelReference.Scan(oElementScanCriteria)

    count = 0

    Do While oElementEnumerator.MoveNext

        Set oElement = oElementEnumerator.Current

        If Not isFeature(oElement) Then

            count = count + 1

            Set oNewRootFeature = xft.FeatureMgr.CreateFeature(oElement)

            With oNewRootFeature

                .Name = "MyLineFeature1"
                addSubFeatures oNewRootFeature
                .SetProperty "ID", Str(count)
                .SetProperty "Points", Str(oNewRootFeature.SubFeatureCount)
                .ApplyAttributeChanges
                .Write False

            End With

            Set oNewRootFeature = Nothing

        End If

    Loop

    CommandState.StartDefaultCommand
    ShowStatus "Created " & count & " features."

End Sub
```

Create Sub-Features

```
Private Sub addSubFeatures(ByRef oFeature As feature)

    Dim oEllipseElement As EllipseElement
    Dim oVertices() As Point3d
    Dim oEllipseOrigin As Point3d
    Dim oFeatureGeometry As Element
    Dim vertexArray() As Point3d
    Dim vertex As Long

    Dim diameter As Double

    diameter = 10

    vertexArray = oFeature.Geometry.AsLineElement.GetVertices

    For vertex = 0 To (oFeature.Geometry.AsVertexList.VerticesCount - 1)

        oEllipseOrigin = vertexArray(vertex)

        Set oEllipseElement = CreateEllipseElement2(Nothing, oEllipseOrigin, diameter, diameter, Matrix3dIdentity)

        Dim oSubFeature As New feature

        With oSubFeature

            .Name = "MyPointSubFeature"
            .Geometry = oEllipseElement
            .SetProperty "Point", Str(vertex)
            .SetParentFeature oFeature

        End With

        oFeature.AddSubFeature oSubFeature

        Set oSubFeature = Nothing

    Next

End Sub
```

Add Business Properties

```
Private Sub addSubFeatures(ByRef oFeature As feature)

    Dim oEllipseElement As EllipseElement
    Dim oVertices() As Point3d
    Dim oEllipseOrigin As Point3d
    Dim oFeatureGeometry As Element
    Dim vertexArray() As Point3d
    Dim vertex As Long

    Dim diameter As Double

    diameter = 10

    vertexArray = oFeature.Geometry.AsLineElement.GetVertices

    For vertex = 0 To (oFeature.Geometry.AsVertexList.VerticesCount - 1)

        oEllipseOrigin = vertexArray(vertex)

        Set oEllipseElement = CreateEllipseElement2(Nothing, oEllipseOrigin, diameter, diameter, Matrix3dIdentity)

        Dim oSubFeature As New feature

        With oSubFeature

            .Name = "MyPointSubFeature"
            .Geometry = oEllipseElement
            .SetProperty "Point", Str(vertex)
            .SetParentFeature oFeature

        End With

        oFeature.AddSubFeature oSubFeature

        Set oSubFeature = Nothing

    Next

End Sub
```

Locate Feature Instances

```
Private Sub CommandButton2_Click()

    Dim oLocateOp As New locateOp
    Dim oCriteria As String

    oLocateOp.ClearHilited = True
    oLocateOp.IncludeOnlyFeatures = True
    oLocateOp.IncludeFeatureName "MyLineFeature1"

    If ActiveDesignFile.Fence.IsDefined = True Then

        oLocateOp.Mode = LocateOpMode.locateOpModeFence
        oLocateOp.AutoAcceptFence = True

    ElseIf ActiveModelReference.AnyElementsSelected Then

        Dim selectionSetValue As New InputValue

        selectionSetValue.SetTypeAndValue ValueType_VALUE, "1"
        oLocateOp.UseSelectionSet = selectionSetValue
        oLocateOp.AutoAcceptSelectionSet = True
        oLocateOp.Mode = LocateOpMode.locateOpModeIdentify

    Else

        oLocateOp.Mode = LocateOpMode.locateOpModeScan
        oLocateOp.AutoAcceptScanFile = True

    End If

    oCriteria = "/*/MyLineFeature1[Points=3]"
    oLocateOp.XPath = oCriteria

    oLocateOp.Execute

    If oLocateOp.LocatedFeaturesCount > 0 Then

        MsgBox "found " + Str(oLocateOp.LocatedFeaturesCount) + " matching feature instances"

        ActiveModelReference.UnselectAllElements

        Dim fe As FeatureEnumerator
        Set fe = oLocateOp.GetLocatedFeatures

        Do While fe.MoveNext
            With fe.Current
                .AddToSelectionSet True
                .Display msdDrawingModeHilite
                .ZoomInView CommandState.LastView, 1#, 50#, True
            End With
        Loop

        CadInputQueue.SendCommand "map query browse selection"

    Else
        MsgBox "no matching feature instances found"
    End If

End Sub
```

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Question** – Can I use MicroStation VBA with Bentley Map VBA?
- **Answer** – Yes and in some cases use of MicroStation VBA is required. For example, when working with the geometry of an XFM feature instance, element creation or manipulations are done using standard MicroStation VBA objects and methods.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Question** – By learning Bentley Map development using VBA and the XFT object model, what advantages do I gain?
- **Answer** – Beyond having the ability to create VBA applications to create, manipulate and analyze Bentley Map XFM data, by learning the XFT object model a transition to .NET development using C# or Visual Basic .NET becomes easier since XFT can also be used with COM interop.

Development Languages

- **.NET**
  - C#
  - C++ (managed)
  - Visual Basic .NET
  - MicroStation .NET Addins
  - Bentley Map XFT Object Library
- **COM**
  - Visual C++
  - Visual Basic
  - Microsoft Access
  - Microsoft Office (Excel, Word etc…)
  - Bentley Map XFT Object Library
- **MDL**
  - Native C/C++ (unmanaged)
  - XFM Native C API
  - MDL Interpreted Code (not recommended)
- **VBA**
  - MicroStation Object Library
  - Bentley Map XFT Object Library

Bentley Map

Additional Resources

Documentation

API Documentation

Bentley Map XFM Programmer's Reference Guide	Bentley Map VBA Programmer's Reference Guide	Bentley Map GeoDataInterchange API Reference	Bentley Map MapQuery API Reference Guide	Bentley Map MDL Programmer's Reference Guide
• xft.chm	• gfc.chm	• GeoDataInterchangeAPI.chm	• MapQueryAPI.chm	• Map_SDK.chm

Geospatial Desktop Platform Extranet

Bentley Geospatial Desktop Platform Extranet

RATE THIS

The "Bentley Geospatial Desktop Platform" extranet site hosts the "**Bentley Map - Development and Product Customization Guide**" and "**Bentley Map - Product Development Notebooks**" which are frequently updated online resources for anyone interested in learning more about customizing or developing applications for the Bentley Map product line.

Geospatial Desktop Platform Account Request Form

First Name: *

Last Name: *

E-mail: *

Repeat E-mail: *

Company Name: *

Bentley Contact:

Submit Reset

* indicates a required field

If your organization is a current Bentley SELECT subscriber or Bentley Development Network (BDN) member you may request access to these online resources using the **Geospatial Desktop Platform Account Request Form** listing your Account Manager (preferred) or Jeff Bielefeld as the Bentley contact.

Please note that access requests may take few a days to be processed. Once approved you will receive a confirmation mail message with additional information. Access requests submitted with incomplete information or those not including a valid and verifiable Bentley contact cannot be approved.

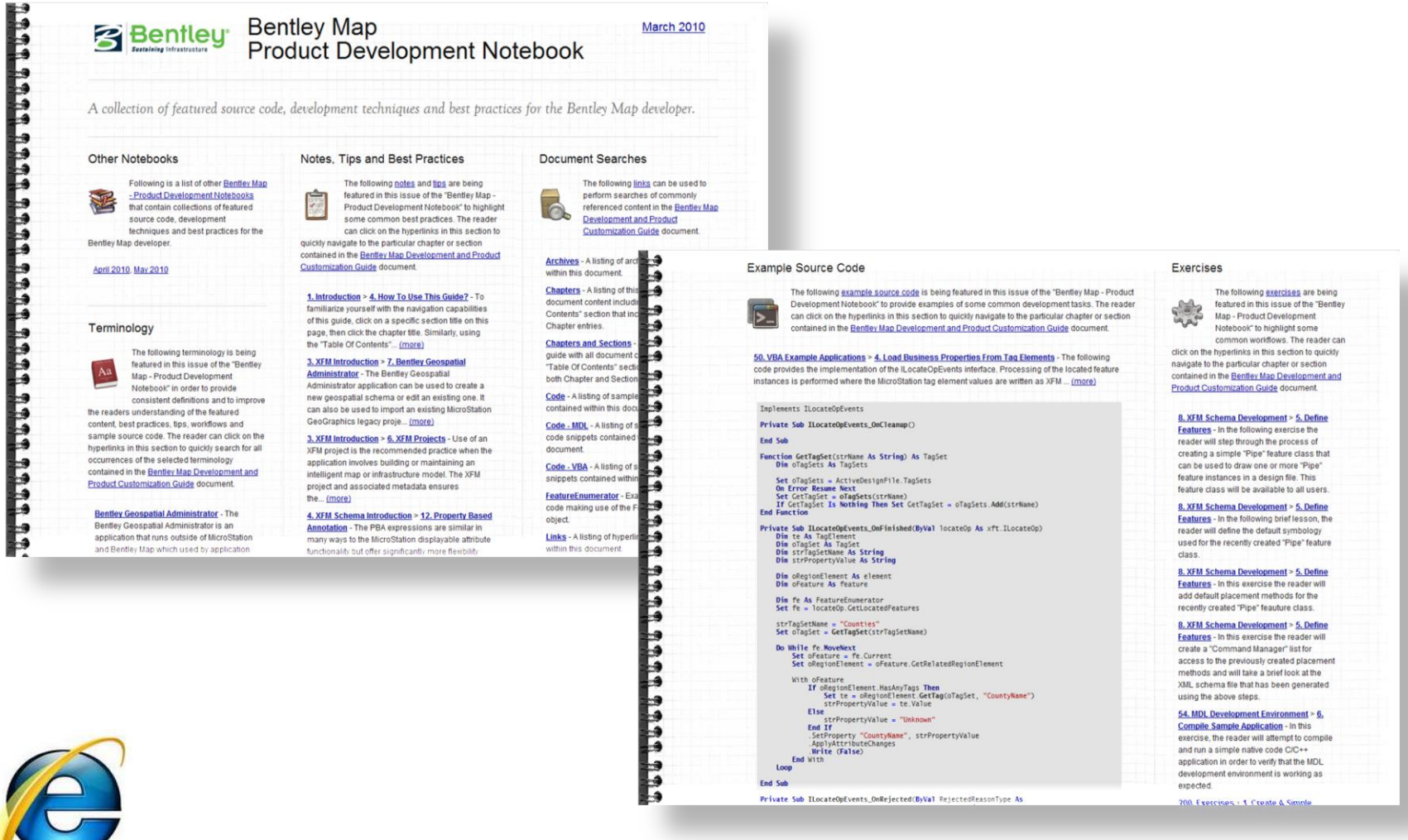
If you have any questions regarding the above, please contact Jeff Bielefeld at Bentley for more information.

☆ **Favorite this page** | **Bentley Map, Development, Programming, XFM, XFT** Edit tags

Bentley Sustaining Infrastructure

Online Development Guide

Online Developer Notebooks



Bentley Sustaining Infrastructure

Be Together - Development Workshop

Bentley Sustaining Infrastructure

Additional Resources

- Be Communities
  - Geospatial Desktop Forum
    - http://communities.bentley.com/products/geospatial/desktop/f/5924.aspx
  - Bentley Developer Network Group
    - http://communities.bentley.com/programs/bentley_developer_network/default.aspx
- Direct E-Mail
  - bdn@bentley.com
  - jeff.bielefeld@bentley.com

Thank You