

Using DITA with FrameMaker

Introduction

- Scott Prentice, President of Leximation, Inc., specializing in FrameMaker plugin development as well as structured FrameMaker conversions, consulting, and development
- FrameMaker user/developer since 1991
- Custom Help system and web application developer
- Developed DITA-FMx, a FrameMaker plugin for efficient DITA authoring
- Introduced the concept of AIR Help (a platform independent Help system that uses Adobe's AIR technology)
- Coordinator for the Silicon Valley DITA interest group (SVDIG)
- Interested in developing innovative ways to provide online user assistance that is actually used

Overview of DITA

- DITA = Darwin Information Typing Architecture
- XML format that focuses on topic-based organization of content.
- Supports efficient content reuse with two unique constructs: topic maps and content references.
- Topic maps ("DITA maps") let you arrange DITA topic files and maps into components and deliverables (think TOC).
- Content references ("conrefs") let you reference other elements (any level) and reuse that content in other files.
- The concept of specialization lets you create new elements and content models based on the core elements (this is where the idea of inheritance comes in, hence the name "Darwin").
- The DITA Open Toolkit (DITA-OT) is a set of XSLT and Ant scripts that generate various types of output from DITA topics and DITA maps.

DITA Timeline

- Mar. 2001: IBM introduced DITA as a series of developerWorks articles and a small download package of sample processing tools.
- Apr. 2004: IBM formally released DITA to the open source community and handed over control to the newly formed OASIS Technical Committee.
- Feb. 2005: DITA Open Toolkit project initiated on Sourceforge.
- Jun. 2005: DITA 1.0 is approved as a an OASIS standard.
- Aug. 2005: DITA Open Toolkit 1.1 is released.
- Feb. 2006: DITA Open Toolkit 1.2 is released.
- Sep. 2006: DITA Open Toolkit 1.3 is released.
- Aug. 2007: DITA 1.1 is approved as an OASIS standard.
- Aug. 2007: DITA Open Toolkit 1.4 is released.

Overview of XML and FrameMaker

- First version of FM to support structured authoring (SGML) was version 3.0 in 1992; makes FrameMaker one of the oldest structured authoring tools.
- FM lets you author XML content in a "WYSIWYG" view; you can't edit the XML tags directly (it does provide a tags view).
- FM uses a "structure application" to define the rendered appearance of the XML elements.

- At the core of the structure application is an EDD (Element Definition Document) and a formatting template.
- The EDD provides instructions on how to programmatically map the styles defined in the template with the elements in the XML file (CSS on steroids).
- A structure application can also make use of an "import/export client" which allows programmatic manipulation of the elements in or out of FM.
- Additionally, a structure application can make use of XSLT scripts on import or export from FM.

History of DITA and FrameMaker

- Sep. 2005: Adobe shipped FM7.2 which included a DITA application. It was hard to use and didn't support key DITA features (conrefs and maps).
- Dec. 2005: Leximation started development on DITA-FM to support all of DITA's features without adding proprietary content so the resulting XML files could be shared with people using other XML editors.
- Sep. 2006: Adobe licensed DITA-FM from Leximation for use as the DITA Application Pack for FM7.2.
- Sep. 2007: Adobe released FM8 includes an updated version of DITA-FM.
- Sep. 2007: Leximation / Silicon Publishing released DITA-FMx 0.0 (FM7.1/FM7.2).
- Oct. 2007: Adobe released the DITA Open Toolkit plugin allowing output through the OT from FM8.
- Feb. 2008: Leximation / Silicon Publishing released DITA-FMx 1.0 (FM7.2/FM8).

Demo

- Start by showing FM8 DITA features, switch to DITA-FMx for remainder of demo.
- Create some sample files, add index entries, content references, code samples, graphics, etc.
- Show context-sensitive help on DITA elements.
- Create a map file, add topics to the map, then generate CHM output through the OT, show parent/child links.
- Edit map to add related links, then generate CHM output again.
- Add attribute values and filter with ditavals, generate CHM output again.
- Generate PDF output through Open Toolkit.
- Generate FM book from map and create PDF through FM.

Wrap Up

Resources:

- Info about DITA - <http://dita.xml.org>
- DITA-FMx (FM7/8) - <http://www.leximation.com/dita-fmx>
- DITA / FrameMaker Community KB - <http://kb.leximation.com/dfm/>
- FrameSLT and ABCM plugins (FM7/8) - <http://www.weststreetconsulting.com>
- Adobe's DITA Open Toolkit plugin (FM8) - http://www.adobe.com/devnet/framemaker/fm8_opentoolkit.html
- DITA Open Toolkit - <http://sourceforge.net/projects/dita-ot>

Questions?

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