

Epub Help: A viable Help delivery option?



STC Summit 2014 - Phoenix, AZ

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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.

— [Developed DITA–FMx, a FrameMaker plugin for efficient DITA authoring and publishing.

— [Consulting for custom Help systems, creative/functional web applications, and EPUB solutions.

EPUB Help, really?

- [Demise of CHM (and HLP), no apparent ideal solution
- [EPUB is a single-file container of content and navigation
- [Provides TOC, Index, and typically Search and Bookmarks
- [EPUB 3 is based on HTML 5 and CSS 3
- [EPUB 3 allows scripting and interactivity
- [EPUB 3 may be the answer!

What is EPUB?

- [EPUB is an ebook file format that can be read on almost every device and platform
- [Requires a “reader” application or dedicated reader device
- [A collection of XHTML, XML, CSS, and media files wrapped up in a “zip” archive
- [Defines the content, navigation, and formatting of the ebook

Brief history of EPUB

— [EPUB specification is maintained by IDPF

— [Initial EPUB format approved in 2007,
superseding Open eBook standard

— [EPUB 2.0.1 approved 2010

— [EPUB 3 approved October 2011

— [EPUB 3 Fixed Layout, May 2012; Indexes, Jan. 2014

— [EPUB 3 Dictionaries Working Group, in progress



EPUB 3 makes it possible!

- [EPUB 3 specification provides for a self-contained website
- [HTML 5, CSS 3, SVG, MathML .. everything you need
- [Provide scripting and interactivity
- [Responsive layout via media queries
- [Include videos and audio
- [Leverage 3rd party JS libraries

Provides "Help" features

- [TOC, Index, Search, Bookmarks
- [Previous/Next browsing
- [Topic-based presentation (vertical scrolling!)
- [Wide tables and images are usable
- [Context sensitivity (coming soon!)
- [Cross-book linking (some day, in theory)

Useful EPUB 3 readers

— [Desktop

- AZARDI (Mac, Linux, Windows)
- Chrome + Radium (Mac, Linux, Windows)

— [Mobile

- Apple iBooks (iOS)
- Gitden Reader (Android, iOS)

Some useful JS libraries

- [jQuery, jQuery-ui, jQuery-mobile - so many features
- [highlight.js - code syntax highlighting
- [Shadowbox.js - image viewing
- [Raphaël - vector graphic manipulation
- [gRaphaël - interactive charts and graphs
- [Try your favorite library, most seem to work!

Prototype

Using DITA-FMx

- Features
- Limitations
- Tips and Troubleshooting
- Using the Reference Manager
- Filtering Content
 - Using the Apply Ditalval as Conditions Command
- Working with Images
 - Graphic Overlay Objects
 - Support for Indented Images
- Working with Tables
 - Table Formatting
 - Custom Ruling and Shading
 - Controlling Table Widths
 - Rotated Table Cells
 - Simpletable Specializations
- Working with Indexterms
- Working with Maps
 - Basic Map Structure
 - Bookmaps
 - Best Practice for Book Assembly
 - Recommended Folder/File Structure
- Using Keyspaces in DITA-FMx
- Working with Keys
- Using coderefs
- Setting up Book Builds (PDF)
- The Book Structure Application

Using the Reference Manager

Parent: [Using DITA-FMx](#)
Related information
[INI-Only Settings](#)
[Update References](#)
[Insert Conref](#)
[Setting Up to Use Cross-References](#)

Lets you select a conref, xref, or link target by specifying the file, element type, and element.

The Reference Manager is displayed when inserting a conref, xref, or link. To insert a conref, choose Insert Conref from the DITA menu, to insert an xref or link, use the Element Catalog. Note that the Reference Manager is only displayed for xref or link elements if they are defined as a “Container” rather than a “Cross-Reference” element in your EDD.

Figure 1. DITA-FMx Reference Manager

DITA-FMx - Reference Manager

1. File location: Files currently open in FrameMaker
2. Source file: C:\Tools\lmi-docs\DITA-FMx2.0_Help_Source\ditafmx_ref_inionly.x
3. Element tag: b
4. Element data [id | content]: id067FF8008E9 | INI-Only Settings

| | |
|--------|-----------------------------------|
| b | id067FF8008E9 INI-Only Settings |
| dentry | |
| topic | |

Library

Using the Reference Manager

Lets you select a conref, xref, or link target by specifying the file, element type, and element.

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iBooks - iOS

Radium+Chrome - Mac

Prototype

Using the Reference Manager

Lets you select a conref, xref, or link target by specifying the file, element type, and element.

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Parent: Using DITA-FMx Related information
INI-Only Settings
Update References
Insert Conref
Setting Up to Use Cross-References

Figure 1. DITA-FMx Reference Manager

DITA-FMx - Reference Manager

1. File location: Files currently open in FrameMaker [F] [M] [X]

2. Source file: C:\Tools\lmi-docs\DITA-FMx2.0_Help_Source\ditafmx_ref_inionly.x [Edit]

3. Element tag: b, dentry, topic

4. Element data [id | content]: Show all elements
id067FF8008E9 | INI-Only Settings

Alternate xref text: []

[]

Using the Reference

Using the Reference Manager

Lets you select a conref, xref, or link target by specifying the file, element type, and element.

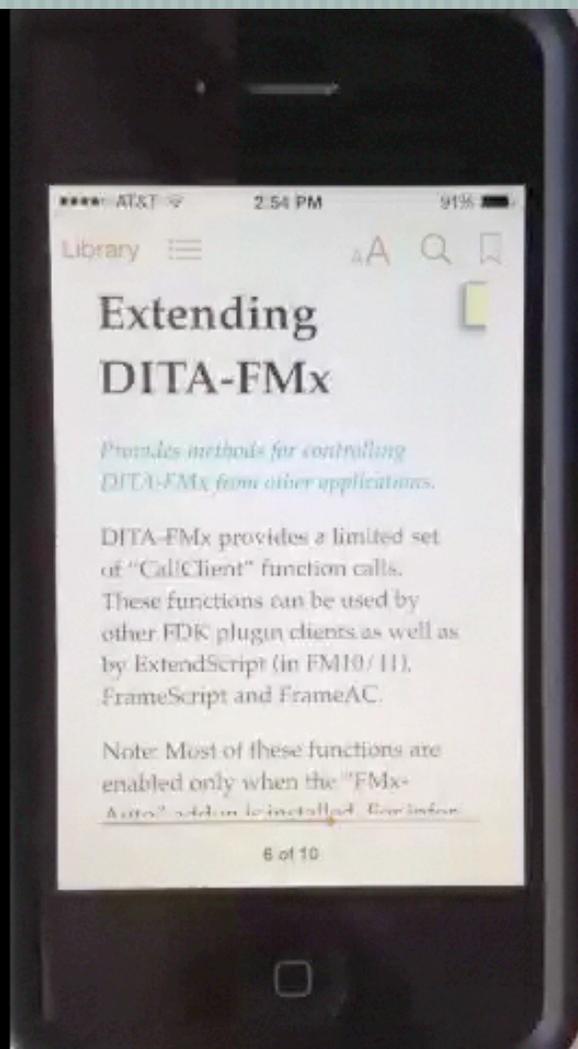
The Reference Manager is displayed when inserting a conref, xref, or link. To insert a conref, choose Insert Conref from the DITA menu, to insert an xref or link, use the Element Catalog. Note that the Reference Manager is only displayed for xref or link el-

Gitden Reader - iOS

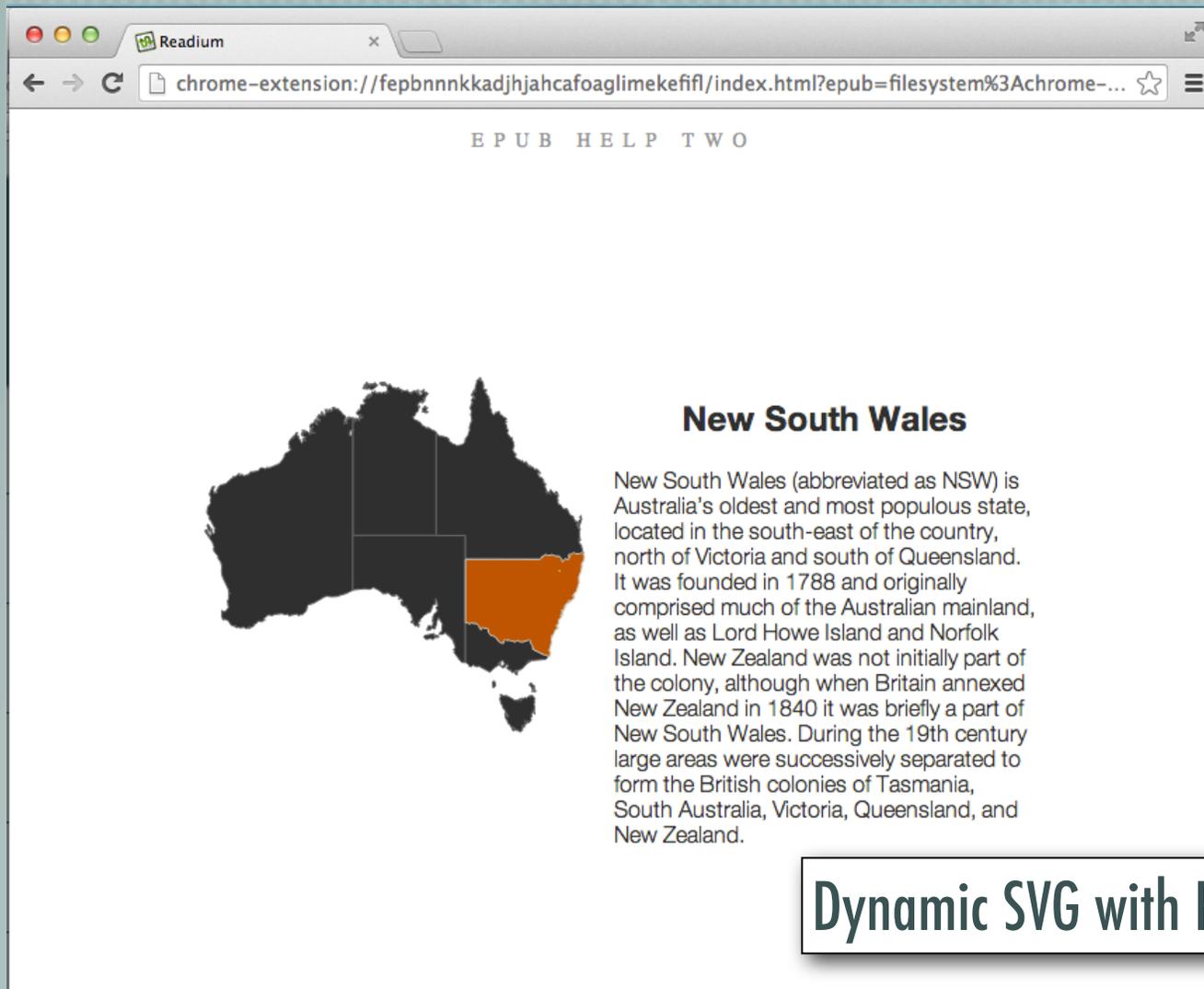
AZARDI Desktop - Mac

Prototype

Responsive design
turns related links
into "pop-up" on
small screen



Prototype



Well, almost...

- [Most reader applications don't support the full spec (yet)
- [There's no option for context sensitivity (yet)
- [You'll need to hand-code (for now)
- [Not likely to work well on Kindle (but you can try)
- [Not consistent rendering on reader applications
- [Give it another couple of years?

Tips

- [Don't use JS code in content files, always reference JS files
- [Don't use @style attributes, always use @class
- [Mouse events may not work as expected on “touch” devices
- [Don't go overboard, best to allow for graceful failures
- [Test on as many readers and devices as possible, inform users of “tested” readers

EPUB tools and utilities

- [EPUB 3 editors

- Oxygen XML editor

- BlueGriffon EPUB Edition

- [Calibre - multi-purpose tool

- [epubcheck - validator

- [kindlegen - converts EPUB 3 to KF8

DEMO!

- [Prototype EPUB Help in Windows using AZARDI
- [Prototype EPUB Help in OS X using AZARDI and Radium
- [Additional EPUB Help tests
- [Open EPUB in Oxygen to show internal structure

Let's make this happen!

- [To make this into a reality, contact the reader developers and request the following:
 - Provide full text search
 - Support command line arguments for target topic (context sensitivity)
- [AZARDI is the most likely for desktop use, but all readers should support these features.

Resources

— [EPUB 3 specification - idpf.org/epub/30

— [CSS 3 Module Info - www.css3.info/modules

— [Liz Castro – www.pigsgourdsandwikis.com

— [Ebook Ninjas Podcasts - ebookninjas.com

— [Resources – www.epubtest.com/resources.php

— [Follow #eprdctn on Twitter

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