

Converting FrameMaker Content to DITA

FM ➤ DITA

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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.
- [Offers consulting for custom Help systems, creative/functional web applications, and EPUB solutions.

FM to DITA conversion options

- [FrameMaker (conversion table and scripting)]
- [Mif2Go]
- [Stilo Migrate (and others)]
- [WebWorks]
- [Consultants]
- [Copy and paste .. (yes, this is a viable option)]

FrameMaker conversion tables

- [More flexible for “imperfect” content
- [Able to adapt to issues as they arise
- [Review every page
- [Can be done as time permits
- [Gives “you” control over the outcome

Conversion “tools”

- [FrameMaker (from FM7.1 on up)]
- [DITA DTD files (XML model)]
- [Structured application]
- [Conversion table]
- [Scripting and/or plugins (FrameSLT, FM2DITA, and ?)]
- [Structured Application Developer’s Guide/Reference
(they are your friend!)]

Structured application

- [Instructs FM how to apply formatting to elements and provides validation rules
 - DTD
 - Template (with embedded EDD)
 - Read/write rules
 - Optional XSLT processing
- [May need separate structured app for conversion/authoring

Conversion table basics

[Map styles and objects to elements, optionally set attributes

Wrap this object	In this element	Qualifier	Notes
P:ChapterTitle	title		
P:Body	p	L0	
P:Bullet1	p	B1	
P:BulletCont1	p	L1	
C:Bold	b		
C:BoldItalic	ph[outputclass="bolditalic"]		
M:Index	fm-indexterm		

[Wrap elements in other elements

E:[B1], E:[L1]*	li		
E:li+	ul	L0	
E:[L0]+	body		
E:title, E:body	topic		

Conversion table basics

- [Make effective use of qualifiers
- [Add a “Notes” column and formatting
- [Can apply to single file or entire book
- [Creates structured FM binary file

Creating a conversion table

- [Analyze styles and objects in FM files
- [Create document with examples of all tags and objects
- [Start with .. StructureTools > Generate Conversion Table
- [Rearrange rows into logical groups
- [Map objects to elements
- [Wrap elements in other elements
- [Test, then add more mappings and wrappings (repeat)

Potential issues

- [Conversion table maps named styles and objects
- [Document's consistent use of tags is very important
- [Overstyled information is lost
- [Only the “main flow” exports to XML
- [Multiple graphics or objects in a frame need to be combined

Potential issues

- [Tabs and forced line breaks are typically lost]
- [Conditional text can be difficult (especially inline)]
- [Cross-references will require scripting to re-link]
- [User variables turn into entities (typically not useful in XML)]
- [Text insets may not convert properly (depends on content)]

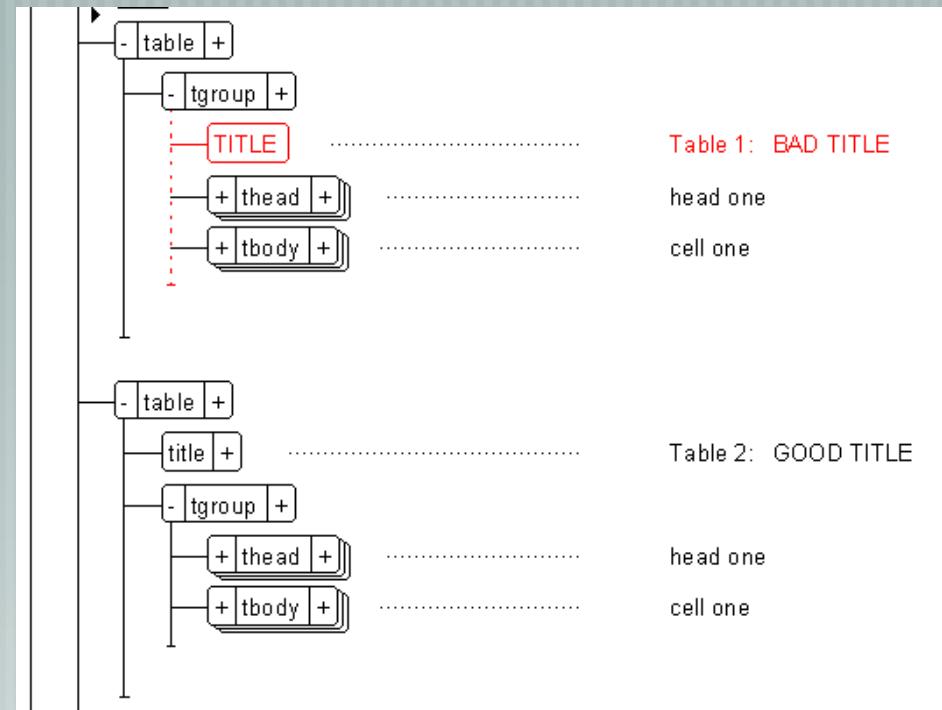
Potential issues

Tables with titles end up in the wrong place

Custom table shading and rules are difficult to convert

Table layout is based on table format properties

Don't use tables for formatting (like fancy "note" paragraphs)



Potential issues

- [Order of source content may not match the data model
- [Each “topic” needs an ID
- [If naming topics based on titles, collisions are possible
- [Typically shouldn't convert title page and generated files (toc, index, etc)
- [Certain element types have restrictions on content, cross-ref and marker must be empty

Typical conversion process

- [Cleanup (and rewrite?) FM files
- [Apply conversion table to book
- [Import EDD and template into structured FM files
- [Cleanup and validate structured FM files (FrameSLT helps!)
- [Export to XML
- [Possible additional cleanup via XSL or other scripting
- [Open XML in Frame using structured application to validate

DEMO TIME!

- [Walk through conversion table
- [Apply conversion table, show problems and how to fix
- [Convert entire book
- [Perform cleanup
- [Export DITA map and topic files
- [If time allows .. generate FM book from DITA map then save to PDF!

Thanks!

[Resources:

- Structure Application Developer's Guide
- FrameSLT from West Street Consulting

[Questions?

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