

PDFs from DITA without Compromising Quality and Control



TC Camp 2013 - Santa Clara, CA

Scott Prentice, Leximation, Inc.

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.

Publishing from DITA

Content authored in DITA can be easily published to various output formats

HTML

CHM

WebHelp

JavaHelp

Eclipse Help

EPUB

PDF

and more...

We're here to talk about PDF publishing from DITA

DITA to PDF Publishing Tools

- [XSL-FO processors

- [CSS processors

- [Proprietary rendering engines

- [How does the DITA-OT fit in?

- Automation component aggregates the DITA topics and resolves references

- Sends files to many of these tools for PDF creation

XSL-FO Processors

— [Apache FOP - free; all platforms

— [Renderex XEP - \$400/\$4750/up; all platforms

— [Antenna House Formatter - \$560/\$2800/up; all platforms

— [Quadralay ePublisher - \$795 (?); Windows-only

CSS Processors

— [Prince - \$495/\$3800; all platforms

— [others ?

Proprietary Rendering Engines

— [SDL XPP - \$50K and up; Windows, Solaris, Linux

— [DITA Exchange OpenXML Publishing - \$?; Windows-only

— [MadCap Flare - \$999; Windows-only

— [Adobe FrameMaker - \$999; Windows-only

— Leximation DITA-FMx - \$235; Windows-only

XSL-FO Benefits

— [Low entry cost

— [XSL-FO is an XML language for formatting XML documents

— [Typically used for generating PDFs

— [Part of the W3C's XSL specification (with XSLT and XPath)

— [FO markup language is largely based on CSS

— [Designed to work for all written human languages

XSL-FO Limitations

— [XSL-FO development (coding) is expensive and complicated

— [Tables that span pages may not break as expected

— [No way to render elements on one page in relation to another page

— [Difficult to apply balanced vertical spacing on a page

— [Processors may use extensions to implement features, so the FO stylesheets may not be portable between processors

CSS Benefits/Limitations

— [CSS developers are readily available

— [Limitations similar to FO

— [Not enough info at this point

Proprietary Tools Pro/Con

— [Potential for higher quality output

— [Limited interoperability

— [Tied to one vendor

— [??

Determine your PDF Needs

— [Online and/or print PDF deliverable?

— [One layout or many?

— [Frequent changes to formatting/layout?

— [Need to make minor adjustments to the output?

— [High quality typographic requirements?

— [Large output volume?

Assess Available Resources

— [Do you have an XSL-FO developer on staff?

— [Do you have in-house expertise with FM template/EDD development?

— [Available contract developers?

Why FrameMaker?

- [FM is both an authoring and publishing tool
- [Relatively easy to define the layout and formatting
- [Easy to make minor adjustments as needed
- [Likely to have in-house expertise
- [May already have FM licenses in-house
- [Likely to be less expensive in the long run

Additional Benefits of FM

— [Ability to modify the pagination/formatting after composition but before PDF creation

— [Easily set up templates for multiple languages

— [Can use FM for PDF generation even if you're using another tool for DITA authoring

— [Save time and ensure consistent output with DITA-FMx

Adobe FrameMaker

- [Proprietary layout/formatting through template and EDD
- [Native PDF export or through Adobe Distiller
- [Automated publishing using FM Server and scripting or FDK development
- [Requires a considerable amount of work to get it all working

FrameMaker “build” process

— [Develop templates and EDDs

— [Save DITA map to FM book and chapter files

— [Set up generated lists (toc, index, etc.)

— [Apply formatting and pagination properties to each component

— [Save book to PDF

FrameMaker + DITA-FMx

— [Supports FrameMaker versions 7.2, 8, 9, 10, and 11

— [Proprietary layout/formatting through template and EDD

— [Native PDF export or through Adobe Distiller

— [Automated publishing through FMx-Auto and FM Server

— [Can be integrated into publishing process of most CMSes

— [“One-click” publishing to PDF is possible

DITA-FMx “build” process

— [Develop templates and EDDs

— [Configure for automated creation of generated lists (toc, index, etc.) and component formatting / properties

— [Set up additional automation

— [Run “book-build” to generate FM book and chapter files from DITA map

— [Save book to PDF

Demo time

— [Let's see how it all works...

Thanks!

— [Questions?

— Scott Prentice <scott AT leximation.com>

— Leximation, Inc. - www.leximation.com