CODE-O-PHOBIC?
Time to get over it!
Basics about me

Medical-technical writer 15 years
- Medically-oriented arena because I am an ex-nurse
- Doc Manager at Compressus Inc.
- Owner of Write On Communications

Based in Southern California
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- Please mention Code-o-phobic

MadCap Groupie
- Certified Flare Developer
- Attended, enjoyed and reviewed MadWorld this past April
- Devoted mother, software geek and prolific writer

Pam Coca

Code novice
- <Six months on the “other” side.
- Have always loved jigsaw puzzles—so for me, playing with code is fun!
- When I fix something in the code, I pat myself on the back for days.
Are you code-challenged?

- We fear what we do not understand.
- You don’t need to know very much.
- I hope today I can open the door to understanding the basics.

Note: You do not need to be a Flare user for this class. We will do everything both within and without Flare.
What we will cover today

**Known**
- Things you already know

**Structure**
- It’s just boxes inside of boxes

**Glossary**
- Just a few new terms to get a handle on

**In Flare**
- We will look behind the curtain and even split the screen vertically and horizontally

**Find errors**
- To fix an issue, you must first find it. We will use common sense to do exactly that

**Syntax colors**
- Give you a better perspective

**Autocomplete**
- Tags that complete themselves

**CSS**
- Makes it pretty

**Recap**
- What we covered today

**Resources**
- Things to check out later
Get your bearings

It all begins with an understanding of

- The *importance* of styles
- How to use h1s and h2s and paragraph or body styles
- Topic-based authoring (chunking)
Different formats/same result

- **Flare XML UI**
  - Code-o-phobic?
  - Getting over my fear of code
  - In order to get over it - I need to understand it.

- **MS Word**
  - Code-o-phobic?
  - Getting over my fear of code
  - In order to get over it - I need to understand it.

- **Flare text editor**
  - Code-o-phobic?
  - Getting over my fear of code
  - In order to get over it - I need to understand it.

- **Notepad**
  - Code-o-phobic?
  - Getting over my fear of code
  - In order to get over it - I need to understand it.

- **html**
  - Code-o-phobic?
  - Getting over my fear of code
  - In order to get over it - I need to understand it.
- Markup instructs the software displaying the text to carry out specific actions, but is not displayed in the browser
- Markup has both *structural* and *semantic* elements
  - Structural elements describe headings and paragraphs
  - Semantic elements provide extra info such as emphasis, quotes or acronyms
- There are many markup languages, but we will focus on two today
  - HTML (hypertext markup language) – common for websites
  - XML (extensible markup language) – code used in Madcap Flare

For our purposes, the basics are the same.
HTML glossary

HTML elements are characters that live inside angled brackets (<>)

**Elements**
- Divided into sections with opening and closing tags
  - Head element (information about the page)
  - Body element (the page your users will see)

**Tags**
- A tag < > marks the start and finish of an HTML element
  - Opening tag has *info* inside the brackets
  - End tag has same info but with a forward slash </>
  - Empty elements in xhtml need a space before the closing tag

**Attributes**
- Define the element
- Are specified in the start tag
- Come in pairs such as *name=“value”*
  - Name/lang (for language)
  - Value/en-us (for US English)
- Value must be in quotes
Each colored square below is an element or a container for information...just boxes inside of boxes inside of more boxes. Sometimes called block elements.

```html
<html>
  <head>
    Container for site info such as JavaScripts, CSS styles, meta tags, etc.
  </head>
  <body>
    <h1>Code-o-phobic?</h1>
    <h2>Getting over my fear of code</h2>
    <p>In order to get over it - I need to understand it.</p>
  </body>
</html>
```
Each element needs an opening and closing tag to designate where it starts and where it ends. Tags can define a region or specific content.

```html
<html>
  <head>
    Container for site info such as JavaScripts, CSS styles, meta tags, etc.
  </head>
  <body>
    <h1>Code-o-phobic?</h1>
    <h2>Getting over <em>my</em> fear of code</h2>
    <p>In order to get over it - I need to understand it.</p>
  </body>
</html>
```
Attributes further define the element.

```html
<html>
  <head>
    <title>Code-o-phobia</title>
  </head>
  <body>
    <h1 name="heading">Code-o-phobic?</h1>
    <h2>Getting over my fear of code</h2>
    <p>In order to get over it - I need to understand it.</p>
  </body>
</html>
```
Compare what you see on the web page to what you see in the code to get a real feel for what goes on behind the scenes.

- In IE – File>View>Source
- In Firefox – ctrl + u
- Mac users – please Google it for your particular OS
Flare’s Interface

Two sides of the same coin

XML Editor
Displays how your content looks in the real world

Text Editor
Displays the code behind the content
Lots of options

Flare users have many view options

1. XML editor
2. Text (code) editor
3. UI and code split vertically or horizontally

Click the horizontal icon to place the tabs at the bottom of the topic window.

Click the vertical icon to place the tabs at the side of the topic window.

Click the “v” icon to toggle between split and solid windows.

The location of the tabs at the time of the selection determines whether the window splits vertically or horizontally.
Note: Whatever is highlighted in one editor is highlighted in the other editor.
Syntax coloring

Feature that displays categories of terms in different colors

- Available in both the CSS and the text editor of Flare, as well as many code editors
- Eases code identification
- Helps identify errors
- Can be toggled on (see below) and off (black only) by clicking the center icon on the top bar of the Text Editor
**Autocomplete**

Feature that helps you place the correct element in the code

- Available in CSS, Flare's text editor, Notepad++, Dreamweaver, etc.
- In Flare, it can be toggled on and off by clicking the fifth icon on the top bar of the Text Editor (look for the letter “A” for Autocomplete).
- Type an open tag to start a new line of code to display a box with selections.
- Double-click the one you want and type your content between the two tags.
# Why go into the code?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why</th>
<th>When</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To learn</td>
<td>Now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To look for an issue</td>
<td>Last weekend for me</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| To fix a problem     | • Sometimes we will be able to fix it  
                         • Sometimes we won’t  
                         • At least we will have tried |

Let’s track one down now...
First things first...

Always back up your files.
Track down an issue

This is how the footer of my website is supposed to look on every page:

![Supposed footer]

But, this is how it looked on my index page:

![Index footer]

Obviously my footer had a problem.
At line 250 and above, everything is fine. Line totals are different (272 lines versus 267 lines). Footer with issue has five extra lines of code. Extra lines are unnecessary DIVs (DIV tags are divisions within the html structure). Deleting the extraneous tags fixed the footer.
This footer now matches all the other footers on my site!
Stylesheets make it pretty

Cascading style sheets (CSS) work with the code to make everything look pretty to the end-user.

- A stylesheet formats the content (defining color, font, tables, image placement, borders, etc.)
- One external css (stylesheet) can be used to format hundreds of documents
- The stylesheet to use is identified in the head element of the html/xml code
- Called cascading because the styles cascade downward like a waterfall (inheriting from the parent) until something tells it to be different
  - Example: If you made the body purple then everything that inherits from the body will also be purple unless told otherwise
Flare’s CSS

To display a stylesheet in the Text Editor, right-click the CSS file in the Content Explorer and select Open with>Internal Text Editor.

Autocomplete also works in the CSS in Flare.

Inside brackets, press CTRL+SPACEBAR to display a selection box of CSS properties. Then double-click to add that property.
Hands on...

Now, later or both.

1. Go to **pcoca.com** (aka Write On) and select the *happenings* tab.

2. On the *happenings* tab under *Featured Events*, click **Class Files**.

3. Page 1 is resources and page 2 is the actual text you will need.
Open a generic text editor

1. Select **Start>All Programs>Accessories>Notepad** or **Notepad++**
2. Type the text below or use the *Class Files* mentioned on slide 25.

```html
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html>
  <head>
    <title>Getting Over the Fear of Code</title>
    <link href="style.css" type="text/css" rel="stylesheet"/>
  </head>
  <body>
    <h1>Nothing to Fear</h1>
    <p>I <i>really</i> want to begin to gain an understanding of what goes on behind the scenes.</p>
    <h2>The Cure</h2>
    <p>I know that as I work more and more with code, I will begin to understand it. It will no longer bother me to look behind the content.</p>
  </body>
</html>
```
Save and view

1. Click **File > Save As** (select a location and **Save as type-All Files**) **MyFirstTry.htm**
   - Make sure you do not have a secondary extension like *.htm.txt—you should only have *.htm [The default save is *.txt.]

2. To view in a browser, drag the closed file into your browser window.

   To edit your new html file:
   a. In Notepad, right-click and select **Open with Notepad**.
   b. In Notepad++, right-click and select **Edit with Notepad++**.
   c. Mac users – use control-click and select "open with“...
1. Select **Start>All Programs>Accessories>Notepad** or **Notepad++**
2. Type the text below.

```html
body {
  font-family: Arial, Verdana, sans-serif;
}

h1, h2 {
  color: #ee3e80;
}

p {
  color: #665544;
}
```

3. Click **File> Save As> styles.css.**
4. Save to same folder as your html file.
5. Drag your html file into your browser again. This time you will see color.
Admire your work

Nothing to Fear

I really want to begin to gain an understanding of what goes on behind the scenes.

The Cure

I know that as I work more and more with code, I will begin to understand it. It will no longer bother me to look behind the content.

Right-click your CSS file and open/edit again. This time change the text or background colors. Change the font. Add a bulleted list. Each time you make a tiny change, save it and view it in your browser to see what happens.

TIPS:
• Browsers see text as boxed - so if you color the background of any word or sentence the text will display as if it were in a colored box.
• A single space is all that is ever needed. More spaces mean nothing. Use as little or as much spacing as you like to keep it clean and neat.
• Pressing *Enter* does not break a line.
Resources

Everything is on pcoca.com

home        about        portfolio        happenings        blog        contact us

Write On Communications

Communication is key to stellar documentation

w3 schools has lots of places to test code

Just change it in the left window and click “Submit Code” to see the results in the right window

http://www.w3schools.com

Reagle aficionado and online help guru, Laura Charles Johnson has an amazing blog on Madcap Flare (A Fire for Help)

http://www.flareforhelp.com/

Book: HTML & CSS by Jon Duckett

http://htmlandcssbook.com/

Review of the book on my website

http://www.udel.edu/edtech/video
### The fear is gone because...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>HTML</strong></th>
<th>You know how to set styles</th>
<th>You know how to chunk text</th>
<th>You know it is all just boxes inside of boxes</th>
<th>You know what markup language is</th>
<th>You learned a few new terms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CSS</strong></td>
<td>You see why HTML &amp; XML need CSS</td>
<td>You saw CSS make it pretty</td>
<td>You understand cascading style sheets</td>
<td>You can locate your CSS in Flare</td>
<td>You can connect a CSS in notepad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Flare</strong></td>
<td>You can open and close the text editor</td>
<td>You can split your screen vertically or horizontally</td>
<td>You see the benefits of syntax coloring</td>
<td>You can use auto-complete</td>
<td>You can track down an issue and find its code</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
You are now a code-star!

Everything will be on www.pcoca.com. Select the “happenings” tab.

Mention “code-o-phobic” to connect with me on linkedin.

www.linkedin.com/in/pamcoca/
Want more?

If you are interested in having me take this code-quest to the next level, just let us know.
MADWORLD

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APRIL 13-15, 2014

www.MadWorldConference.com
Thank you for watching!

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