Getting Started with MadCap Flare
Part 3: More Feature Concepts
Who Am I?

  • Internationally recognized content creation and delivery consultant.
  • Helps create efficient, flexible content.
  • Certified – Flare, Mimic, ViziApps.
  • Works to make the complex understandable.
Welcome to...

» The third of four webinars for new Flare users.

» We’ll look at Flare’s core single sourcing features and answer some other questions.

» To help you use Flare better and maybe learn about features you didn’t know existed.
Today’s Agenda

» Single Sourcing Features
  • Conditionality
  • Variables and Snippets

» Outputs vs. Targets

» Building vs. Publishing Targets

» Why import Word or Framemaker into Flare if all you want is print output anyway?
What Is Single Sourcing?

» Something new, exotic, and complex?
   • Exotic? No. Just means using content for different outputs.
   • Complex? Could be...

» The term has two accepted definitions.
Definition 1

» Write content once in one place and extract selective subsets for use:
  • In different formats...
  • On different devices...
  • In different markets...
  • For different audiences...
  • And so on...

» Handled through conditionality.
Definition 2

» Create chunks of content to be re-used in a project or in different projects.
  • Like a Note or a dialog box description to be used in multiple topics.

» Handled through “placeholders” – variables and snippets.
Conditionality

» Equivalent to categorization.

» This stuff...

» Let’s you break one large project into smaller categories, then pick which categories to use for a particular target.

» For example:
  • US vs. Canada
  • Online vs. print
How It Works

» Create and assign conditional “build tags” to files or content that you want to be able to include or exclude from a target.
  • Tagged material can be included or excluded from a target.
    • *Untagged* material is always used.

» Preview or build the output with the desired tags included or excluded.
Create

» Using the Condition Tag Set Editor on the Project Organizer pane.
Assign

» Using the Conditional Text tab on the file’s Properties dialog box.
Include/Exclude

For previews or builds, using the Conditional Text dialog box.
A Sample Result

» No setting

Exclusion setting
Conditionality Pros and Cons

» Pros
  • Highly customizable.
  • Effects ripple out to TOC, index, links, etc.
  • Advanced option in Conditional Text dialog box lets you create full Boolean formulas.

» Cons
  • Can get very complex.
  • Can get out of control if not watched carefully.
Placeholders - Variables

» Three types:

• Heading – To insert dynamic headers in topics.
• System – To insert system information like date, page count, and page number.
• User-defined – Text only, any wording you need such as product name or customer name.
User-Defined Variables

» Create using the Variable Set Editor on the Project Organizer.

» For text (only) to be inserted in a paragraph.
  
  • Product name
  • Customer name

» Inherits the formatting of the paragraph in which it’s inserted.

» Can be conditionalized.
Placeholders – Variables

» Setting Product_Name = Longhorn:

» Produces this:
placeholders – variables

» Changing Product_Name to Vista:

» Produces this:
placeholders – snippets

» Similar to variables but can contain anything you’d put in a topic – text, graphics, tables, movies, variables, etc.

» Generally stand alone but can be inserted into an existing paragraph.

» Can be conditionalized.
Placeholders – Snippets

» Can convert existing text to a snippet – select existing text, then Home > Create Snippet.
» Can create a new snippet from scratch – File > New > Snippet.
Outputs vs. Targets

» “Output” refers to the technical format options.
Outputs vs. Targets

» “Target” refers to an output for a specific audience.

- For example, if you need one HTML5 output for all users, your target is “HTML5”.
- But if you need one HTML5 output for the US and one for Canada, your targets are “HTML5 - US” and “HTML5 – Canada”.
Outputs vs. Targets

» Your Targets folder might look like this
» You’d then use TOCs, conditional build tags, variables, glossaries, CSSs, etc. to customize each target.
Build vs. Publish

» “Build”

• Generating interim outputs for review or a final output for publishing.
• A build sits on your local PC in the Output folder.
• The idea is to generate the output to check how a feature looks or works, return to the project to make changes, then build again, go back...
• When you’re happy with the result, you “publish.”
Build vs. Publish

» “Publish”

• Making the final build available to users.
• Several options, including:
  – Use Flare’s Publishing feature to publish the build to a server or shared drive.
  – Copy the build to Sharepoint.
  – Copy the build to a CD or USB drive and deliver it to engineering.

» So you must build before you can publish.
Just Want Print? Why Use Flare?

» If all you want is print, why buy Flare?

» Two common reasons:
  • You’re a Word/FM shop and want to remain such but want to use Flare to generate online output.
  • You want to develop in Flare and create Word/FM as a Flare target and have the option to generate other outputs as well.
Summary

» Next, we’ll cover options for structuring your Flare projects.

» These webinars may be repeated, so let us know if there’s a topic you think should be added for next time.
Hyper/Word Services Offers...

Training // Consulting // Development

Flare // Advanced Flare (thru MadCap)
ViziApps Mobile Apps // Single Sourcing
Structured Authoring
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