Harnessing the Power of Flare’s Stylesheet Editor

PRESENTED BY

Neil Perlin
Hyper/Word Services
Who Am I?

• Neil Perlin - Hyper/Word Services.
  – Internationally recognized content consultant.
  – Help clients create effective, efficient, flexible content in anything from hard-copy to mobile.
  – Certified – Flare, Mimic, Viziapps, other tools.
  – Train, consult, and troubleshoot on Flare, CSS, etc. for MadCap.
  – Working in CSS since 1999-ish.
Some Context – Overview of Styles and Stylesheets
What’s Local Formatting?

- Formatting using the Font and Paragraph options on the Home ribbon.

- The root of much evil – use styles instead.
What’s a Style?

• A named set of format properties for a type of content.
  – Like H1, defined as 16pt, Navy, Arial, Bold.
• You must apply most styles – but Flare does apply h1 and p when you create a topic.
• If you have to change a property, you only have to do so once, for the style – the change applies to every use of the style.
What’s a Style Sheet?

- A file containing all (ideally) styles and their properties for all topics in a project.
- Called a cascading style sheet, or “CSS”.
  - Like Word’s styles conceptually but:
    - An open standard, not MS-proprietary.
    - Separate from the content template.
“Cascading” – Definition 1

• “Cascade” of three ways to apply styles.
  – External – CSS file to which each topic links.
    • Highest efficiency, lowest priority.
  – Embedded – Stored in topic to which styles apply.
    • Middle efficiency, middle priority.
  – Inline/Local – Formatting via text formatting toolbar.
    • Lowest efficiency, highest priority.
“Cascading” – Definition 2

• “Child” styles (“sub-classes”) inherit settings from their parent styles.
  – For example, if Normal style uses Arial and you add a child style based on Normal, it uses Arial.
  – The more properties you can define in a parent style, the more efficient your CSS.
**Parent vs. Child Example**

- The styles under “p” are child styles (“sub-classes”) of p.
- Changing a property of p changes that property in all the p sub-classes unless you defined them separately.
A Terminology Issue – “body”

• In HTML, “body” is the top-level parent style.
• Changing a property of “body” changes that property for all other styles in the CSS unless you defined them separately.
• And now, to the Stylesheet Editor.
## Stylesheet Editor – Simplified View

![Screenshot of Stylesheet Editor in Simplified View]

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<th>Tag</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Pseudo Class</th>
<th>Preview</th>
<th>Comment</th>
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Stylesheet Editor – Simplified View
Stylesheet Editor – Advanced View

This is MadCap Software
This is MadCap Software
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Display Style Categories

- Can display all the styles or list them by category.
Display Property Categories

- Can display properties in different ways.
Property Views

• Show Assorted Relevant Properties – Those properties you’re most likely to use. Shown in functional groups.
More Property Views

- Show All Properties – All the properties in functional groups.
More Property Views

- Switch to Alphabetical View – All properties in alphabetical order instead of in functional groups.
**Repeated(?) Properties**

- Some properties, like Padding, appear in multiple places.
- They’re the same properties; they just fit into multiple functional groups.
Mediums

- A medium is a formatting exception for a given target based on a single stylesheet.
  - Assume you set h1 to blue as the color default but want it to use black for print targets.
Mediums

• You can use the predefined mediums.
  – And define the h1 settings for the Default and Print mediums.

• Or create custom mediums via the Options pulldown.
Mediums

• Flare automatically assigns the medium for common targets on the Advanced tab of the Target Editor.
• You can override the automatic setting and use your own medium.
• Mediums are available in pre-12 versions of Flare but with fewer features.
Where Are the Property Values?

- Some properties, like color and font size, are clearly labelled.
- Others are harder to find in the property list.
  - For example, where do you set up underlining?
Where Are the Property Values?

– Under Text Decoration in the Font group…

– obviously…

– Learning this takes practice, training helps…
What Are the Property Values?

- Many properties are available from drop-downs, like color:
- And text decoration:
What Are the Property Values?

- Others are available from drop-downs but with no guidance, like the orphans setting.

- You have to know what the defaults are.
  - “2” in this case.
What Are the Property Values?

• Why are most fields blank?

• Why does a field remain blank when I select its (default) option?
What Property Values Are There?

• A blank field means that property uses the users’ browser’s default for that property.
• You’d use the (default) option for a property if you made another setting for the property and want to zero it out and return to users’ browser defaults.
How To Create a New Style

- Select the style to act as the parent, like p.
- Click the Add Selector button on the local toolbar.
- Type the class name.
- Specify the new style’s property values.
- Save.
- The style then appears in the Styles pane and the Style list on the Home ribbon.
How To View Your Styles

• The Styles pane.
How To View Your Styles

• The Styles dropdown.
How To View Your Styles

- The Styles slide-out, for sub-classes of a style.
Demo

• Create a “caution” sub-class of p with Default and Print medium settings.
• Apply and demo the “caution” sub-class.
Summary

• There’s enormous power, including features that I haven’t even discussed.
• Plan to do a lot of reading, experimentation, and consider a class to learn more about it.
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madcap FLARE™

2017 r2

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• **Google Search Using Custom Search Engine (CSE):** Use Google Search for the HTML5 Top Navigation and skinless outputs

• **Top Navigation Enhancements:** Added control with Fixed Headers, Fixed Topic Menus, Topic Headings in the Side Menu, and Tree Format for Slide-Out Menus

• **FrameMaker® 2017 Import Support:** Easily import FrameMaker® 2017 files directly into Flare

• **Favicon Support:** Generate favicons for web-based output

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978-657-5464
nperlin@nperlin.cnc.net

www.hyperword.com

Twitter: NeilEric