How to Integrate MadCap Flare HTML5 Outputs with a Marketing Site

PRESENTED BY:
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BEFORE WE GET STARTED...

The webinar will be recorded and emailed to all registrants

Use the Question Panel in GoToWebinar to ask questions throughout the webinar
Bridge the gap between marketing and support

Creating a contiguous experience between Flare HTML5 and a marketing web site
About me

• Technical writing for 10 years
• Studied other topics in education
• Learned about web technologies so I could be a better technical writer
• Learned about HTML and CSS in the context of Flare
• Flare work in the wild: www.licor.com/env/support/
Things I’m going to talk about

1. How we integrated a Flare-created technical support site with a marketing site
2. Demonstration project
3. Risks and considerations
Objectives

Use Flare to create a technical support site that is integrated with our marketing site.
Requirements

Maintain a consistent look and feel between support content and marketing web pages.
Avoid ‘silos’ of content that are separate from marketing pages and other product support pages.
Requirements

Add features created by our web team to support pages, wherever required.
Our Solution

Server Side Includes:

- “Directives that are placed in HTML pages, and evaluated on the server while the pages are being served.” – Apache.org
- A way to add dynamically generated content to static content on a server before it is delivered to a client.
What is a Server Side Include?

- Conceptually similar to a snippet in Flare
- Snippets are combined with their containing topic upon build
What is a Server Side Include?

• Conceptually similar to a snippet in Flare
• Snippets are combined with their containing topic upon build
• SSIs are combined with their container when delivered by a web server
Flow of content

Technical Writer
- Publish content from Flare

WebHelp Server
- HTML5 Help

Clients:
Consumers of web content
Flow of content

Technical Writer
- Publish content from Flare

Website Developers
- Site navigation
- Web apps
- Input forms

WebHelp Server
- HTML5 Help

Web Server
- Marketing and Support Website

Clients: Consumers of web content
Flow of content

Technical Writer
- Publish content from Flare

Website Developers
- Site navigation
- Web apps
- Input forms

Technical Support
Web Server
HTML5 Help

Clients: Consumers of web content
What can be in an SSI

- Nearly anything that goes into a web page
  - HTML content
  - External stylesheets
  - JavaScript
What can be in an SSI

- Headers and footers
- Repeated content
- SDS lookup tool
- Dynamically updated customer training schedule
- Input forms
Adding an SSI to a page

• Called a **directive**
• Format will depend on your server configuration
• Example directives:

  <!--#echo var="DATE_LOCAL" -->
  <!--#include virtual="/includes/header.xhtml" -->
  <!--#include virtual="/includes/sign-up.xhtml" -->
Adding an SSI to a page

1. Paste the directive into master pages, topics, or snippets in Flare’s text editor

   Can be in `<html>`, `<head>`, or `<body>`

2. Publish your HTML5 help to the server

   Be sure that the referenced files are present on the server and that the server is configured to support SSIs
SSI demonstration

MadCap’s “Cardiff” template
https://www.madcapsoftware.com/downloads/madcap-flare-project-templates/
SSI demonstration

- Show the original Cardiff output
- Show the modified Cardiff output
- Show the output after publishing to a web server
Risks and considerations
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Risks and considerations

• Browsers follow the rules of inheritance. Additional stylesheets can cause stylesheet conflicts
  • Can affect styles defined or not defined in your Flare project stylesheets
  • Can affect styles defined or not defined in Flare default stylesheets (skins, foundation.css, etc.)
Risks and considerations

Styles will cascade:

- 1st Stylesheets: Those from Flare’s skin
  - 2nd Stylesheet: Your stylesheet from Flare
  - Last Stylesheet: Has the final say
Risks and considerations

- JavaScript conflicts
- Examples
  - Sticky navigation broke animated header
  - The spinning wheel that never stopped
Risks and considerations

• It may depend on other people doing things a certain way
• Make friends with your backend web developers
• Make friends with your web designers
Tips

- Use ‘virtual=’ file paths in Flare
- Be aware of what the SSI brings along
- Reload the page often (Ctrl + R or Cmd + R)
Tips

• Don’t be afraid to try something awesome!
• You can do it
Conclusions
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• SSIs can be used bridge the gap between a marketing website and Flare HTML5 outputs
Conclusions

• SSIs can be used bridge the gap between a marketing website and Flare HTML5 outputs
• There are risks, but they are manageable
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- Sam Egel
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Register by March 15 to Save Up to $400

WWW.MADCAPSOFTWARE.COM/CONFERENCE/MADWORLD-2019
Questions?

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