



Maximizing Re-use Within MadCap Flare



PRESENTED BY:

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BEFORE WE GET STARTED...



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and emailed to all registrants



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throughout the webinar

Matthew Ellison

- Consultant and trainer for User Assistance tools and technologies since 1993
- User of MadCap products since 2006
- Certified Flare Instructor
- Based in the UK



What we'll cover in this webinar

- What do we mean by maximising re-use?
- Brief survey of Flare re-use features
- Focus on Snippets and Variables
 - Creating
 - Using
 - Sharing
- Overriding snippet and variable content in a range of wonderful ways

**What do we mean by
re-use?**

Re-use

- Write once, use many times
- Content:
 - Word or phrase
 - Paragraph or content chunk
 - Topic
- Assets:
 - Style sheet
 - Master page
 - Skin, etc.

**What do we mean by
maximizing re-use?**

Maximizing re-use

- Take all reasonable opportunities for re-use
- Can we go too far?
 - additional management time must be < saved maintenance time
 - paragraph-level or higher
 - localization can be an issue

Flare features that support content re-use

Snippets

Variables

Glossary Term
Conversion

Project Linking

Master Pages

Page Layouts

Focus on Snippets and Variables

- What do they have in common?
- What are the key differentiating aspects?

Comparing Snippets and Variables

	Variables	Snippets
Content type	String of plain text	Chunk of XHTML
Typical size	Small	Typically larger (but < topic)
Examples of use	Product name Phone number	Warning Common steps
File type	.flvar	.flsnp
Storage location	Project>Variables	Content

Comparing Snippets and Variables

	Variables	Snippets
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File type	.fl	.flsnp
Storage location		Content

Can override
variable
definitions in
Targets!

Two distinct types of snippet

- Block-level
- Inline (< 1 para)

Creating a snippet

- Can create from existing topic content

Inserting a snippet

- Must insert block-level snippet into an empty paragraph
- Drag snippet from Context Explorer
- Can pin frequently use snippets
- Snippets as re-usable content templates

DEMONSTRATIONS

Viewing snippet usage

The image shows a file explorer interface with a context menu open for the file **Bank Holidays.flsnp**. The menu includes options like Preview, Open, Open with, Cut, Copy, Paste, Delete, Rename, Convert to XML..., Send to Folder..., Properties, **View Links** (highlighted with a yellow arrow), and Locate in TOC.

The **Link Viewer** pane on the right displays the following information:

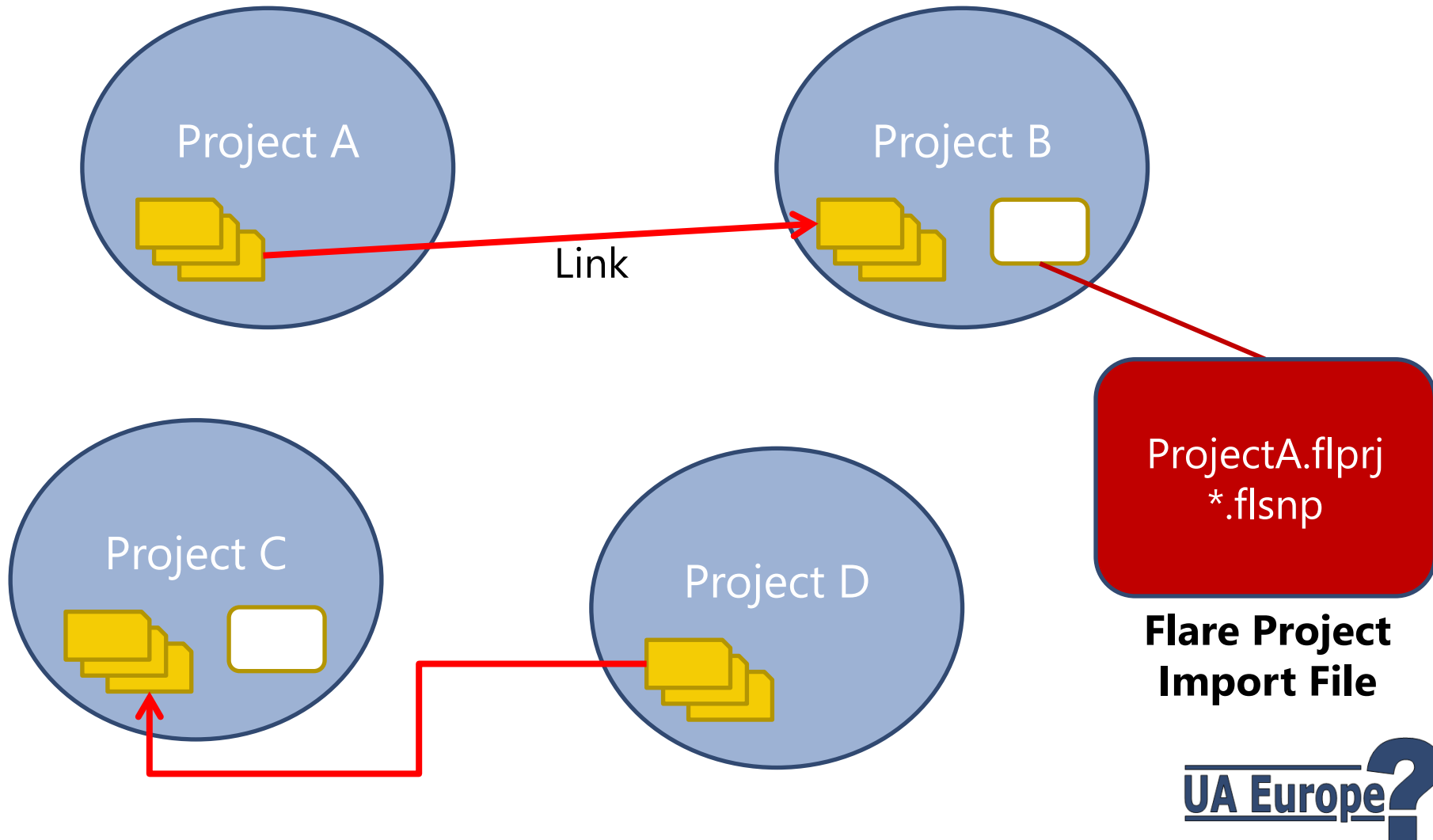
- File Information:**
 - File Name: **Bank Holidays.flsnp**
 - File Path: file:///D:/Dropbox/MadCap Software/MadWork...
- Associated Targets:**
 - HTML5 - Top Navigation
- Linked From:**
 - Key Dates in UK.htm
 - Calendar of Scotland.htm
 - Calendar of England and W
 - Calendar of Northern Irelan
- Linked To:**
 - Country sn
 - General.flv

Sharing snippets between projects

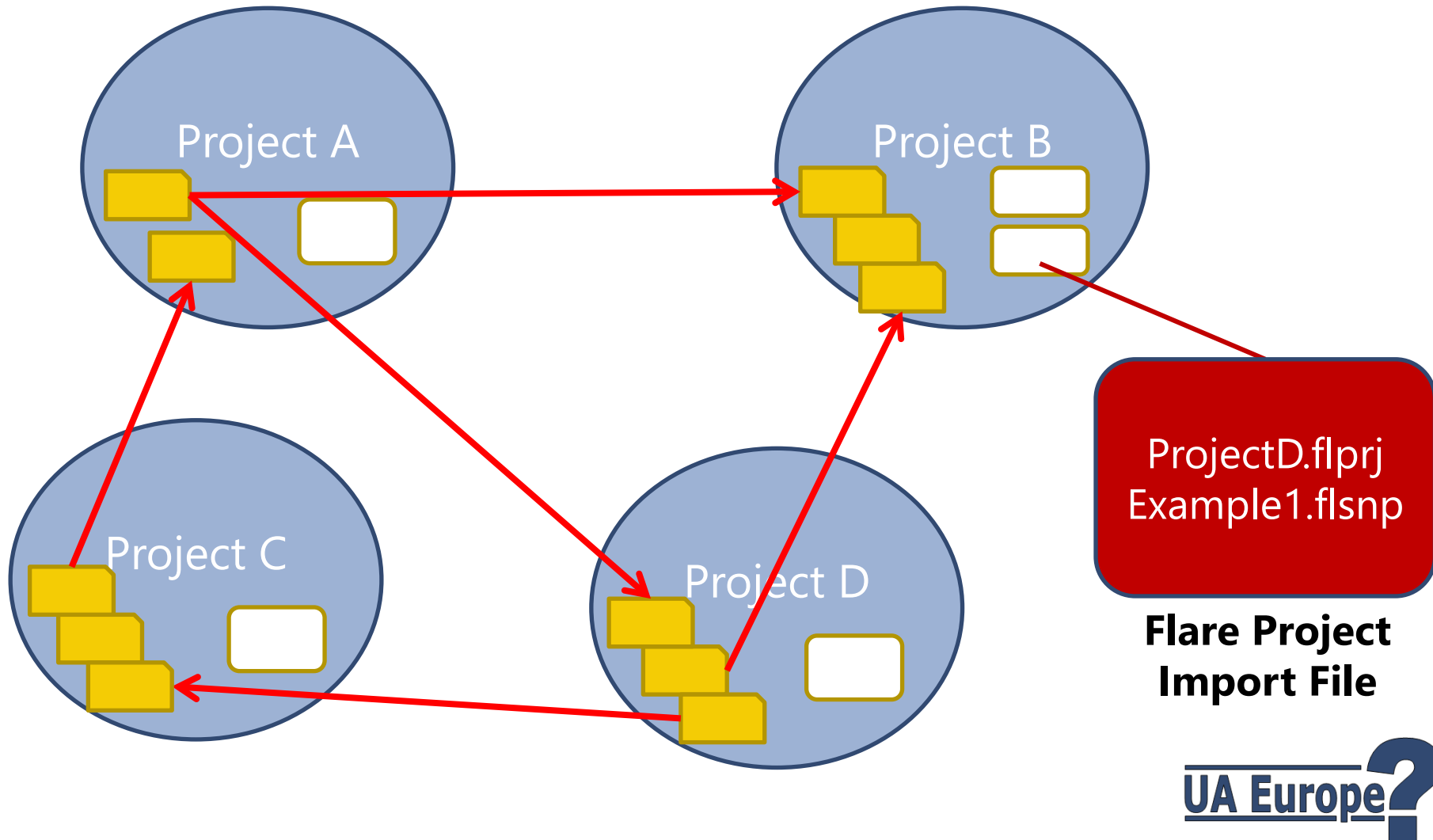
- Cut and paste – what's wrong with that?
- Project linking:
 - Related projects
 - Adhoc/opportunistic
 - Top-down

Need
conventions for
naming and
categorization

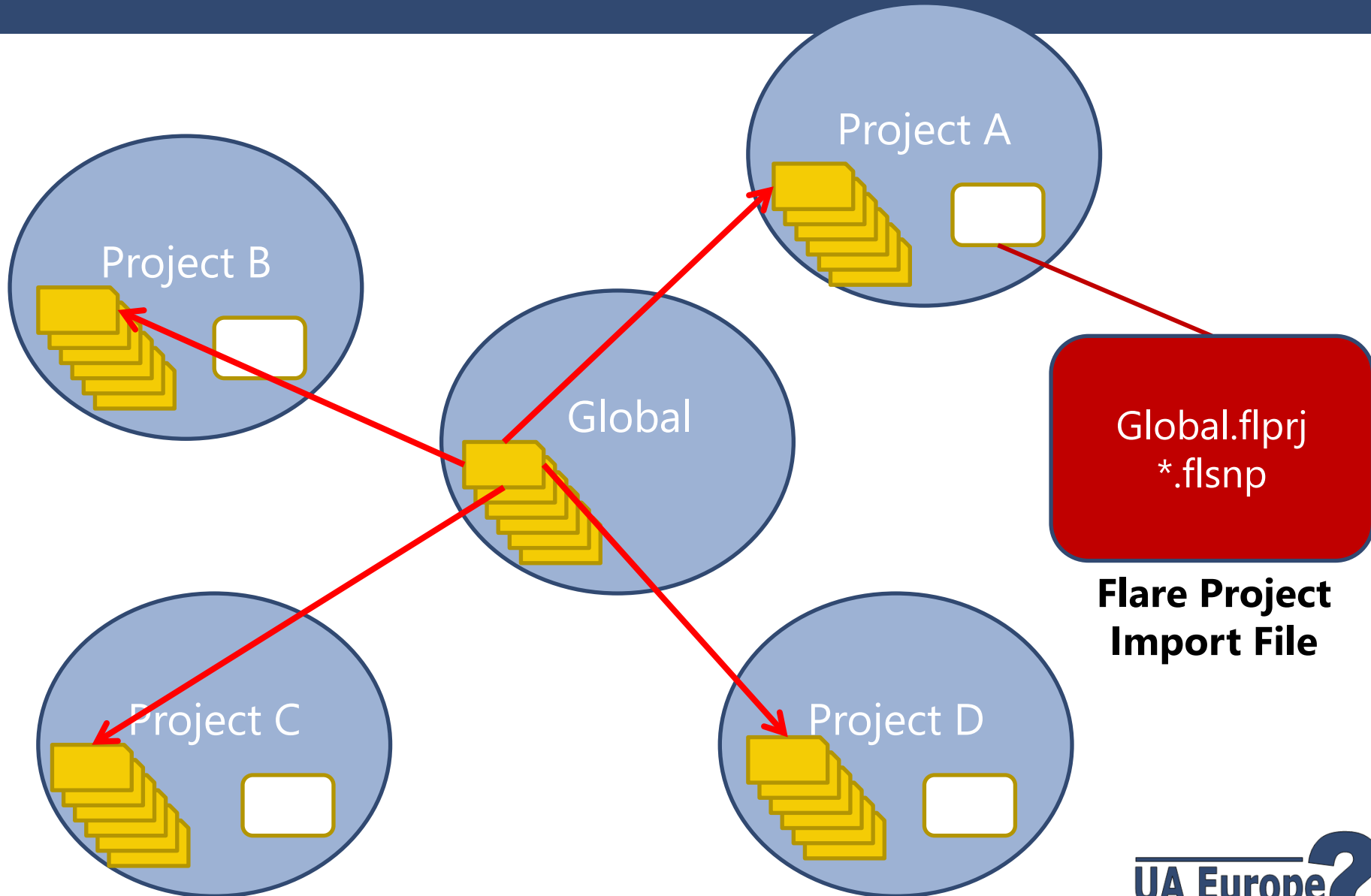
Sharing between related projects



Adhoc/opportunistic sharing



Global project



Alternative – External Resources

- Two-way synchronization
- Lack of central control

Variables

3 different types

- System
- Custom text
- Date/Time

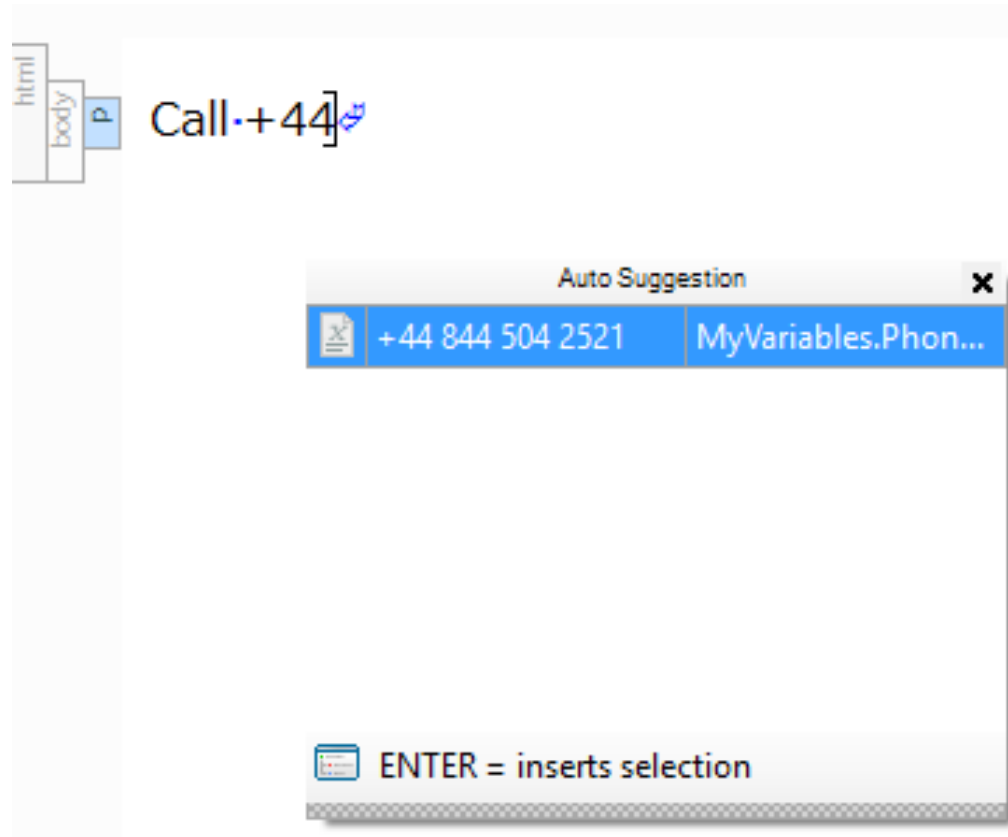


Add
[alternative]
Variable
Definition

DEMONSTRATION

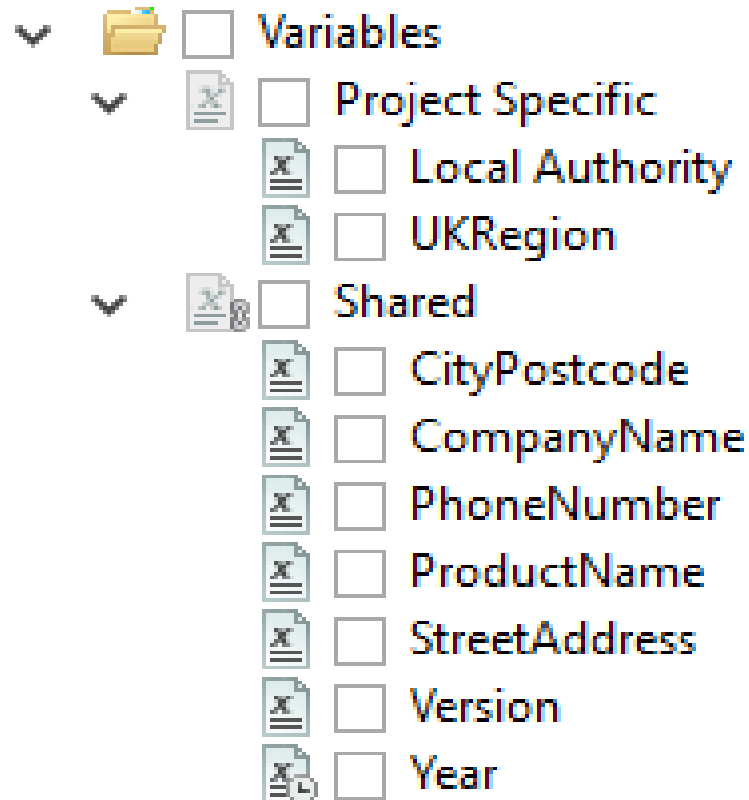
Inserting a custom text variable

- Type first three characters of definition



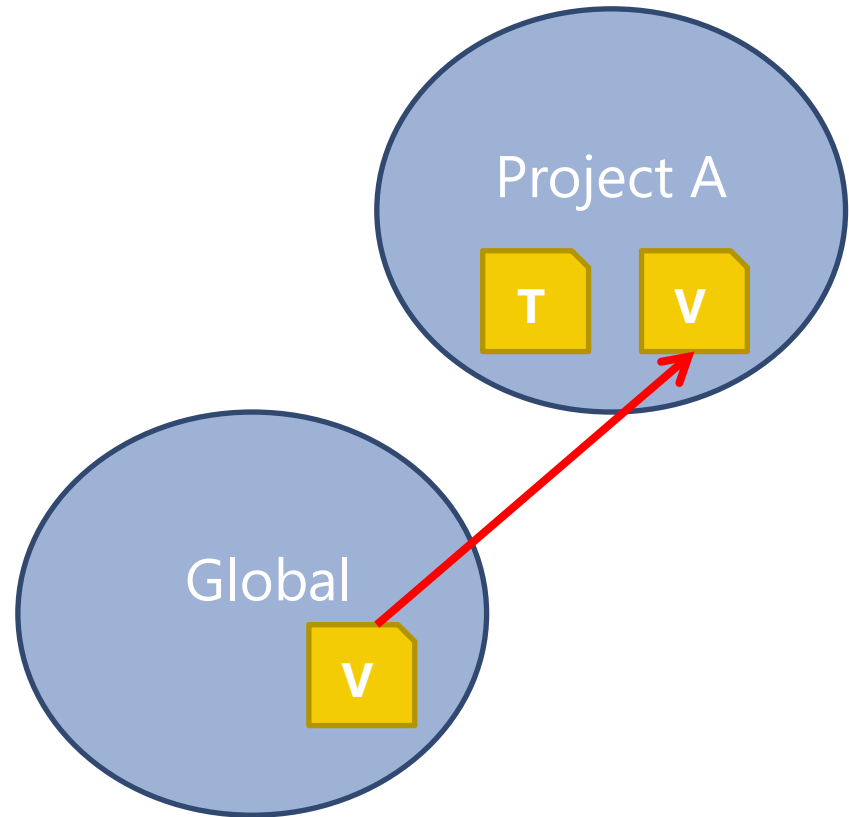
Sharing variables between projects

- Separate **shared** variables from **project-specific** variables



Shared variables with project-specific definitions








- Can't redefine within Project A variable set
- Instead, define within **Target**






Defining variables within Target

Shared x Start Page x

VariableSet Editor

	Name	Definition
	CityPostcode	Romsey, SO51 &JH
▶ 	CompanyName	UA Europe
	PhoneNumber	+44 844 504 2521
	ProductName	[Enter product name in target]
	StreetAddress	20 Cupernham Lane
	Version	[Enter version number n.n in target]
	Year	vvvv

Target Editor |  Build  View ▾  Publish  Open Build Log

General

Skin

Conditional Text

Variables








Publishing

Glossary

Variable Sets

Project Specific

Shared

	Name	Definition
	CityPostcode	Romsey, SO51 &JH
	CompanyName	UA Europe
	PhoneNumber	+44 844 504 2521
▶ 	ProductName	FictionSoft
	StreetAddress	20 Cupernham Lane
	Version	1.3
	Year	yyyy

**Final piece of re-use flexibility:
Customizing the content of
snippet instances**

Changing variable definitions...

2017 Bank Holidays in Scotland

Date

2 January

3 January

14 April

1 May

29 May

Snippet Variables

Variable Sets	Name	Definition	Comment
Project Specific	Local Authority	Test Valley	
Shared	UKRegion	Scotland	

DEMONSTRATION

Variable
redefined for this
instance of the
snippet

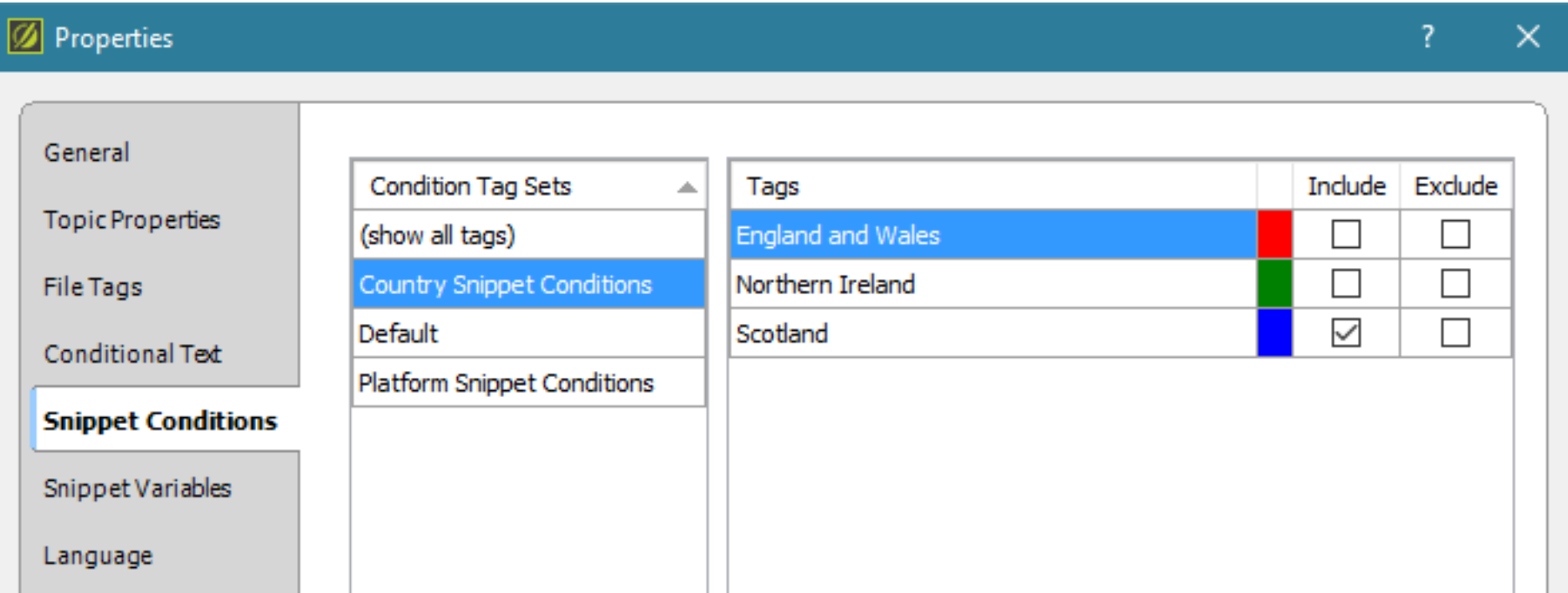
**Changing other content
within snippets...**

Apply conditions within Snippet

2018 Bank Holidays in England and Wales

Date	Holiday
1 January	New Year's Day
2 January	2nd January
19 March	St Patrick's Day (substitute day)
30 March	Good Friday
2 April	Easter Monday
7 May	Early May bank holiday
28 May	Spring bank holiday
12 July	Battle of the Boyne (Orangemen's Day)
6 August	Summer bank holiday
27 August	
30 November	St Andrew's Day
25 December	Christmas Day
26 December	Boxing Day

Select Snippet Conditions in Topic Properties



The screenshot shows a 'Properties' dialog box with a sidebar on the left containing the following options: General, Topic Properties, File Tags, Conditional Text, **Snippet Conditions** (highlighted), Snippet Variables, and Language. The main area is divided into two panes. The left pane, titled 'Condition Tag Sets', contains a list with an upward arrow: (show all tags), Country Snippet Conditions (highlighted), Default, and Platform Snippet Conditions. The right pane, titled 'Tags', contains a table with three columns: 'Tags', 'Include', and 'Exclude'.

Tags		Include	Exclude
England and Wales	Red square	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Northern Ireland	Green square	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scotland	Blue square	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Result

Calendar of Scotland

Sed ut perspiciatis unde omnis iste natus error sit voluptatem accusantium doloremque laudantium, totam rem aperiam, eaque ipsa quae ab illo inventore veritatis et quasi architecto beatae vitae dicta sunt explicabo.

2018 Bank Holidays in Scotland

Date	Holiday
1 January	New Year's Day
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30 March	Good Friday
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26 December	Boxing Day

Benefit of Snippet Conditions

- We can create larger, more flexible, easier-to-maintain snippets

Alternative solution without Snippet Conditions

2017 Bank Holidays in Northern Ireland

Date	Holiday
1 January	New Year's Day
19 March	St Patrick's Day (substitute day)
30 March	Good Friday
2 April	Easter Monday
7 May	Early May bank holiday
28 May	Spring bank holiday
12 July	Battle of the Boyne (Orangemen's Day)
27 August	Summer bank holiday
25 December	Christmas Day
26 December	Boxing Day

Snippets for
content common
to multiple
regions

Summary

- Flare has a range of features that support content re-use
- Snippets and variables can make content creation and update more efficient, as well as ensuring consistency
- Consider storing shared snippets and variables in a global project
- Variables can be redefined in targets and snippets
- Consider using snippet conditions for increased flexibility



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