

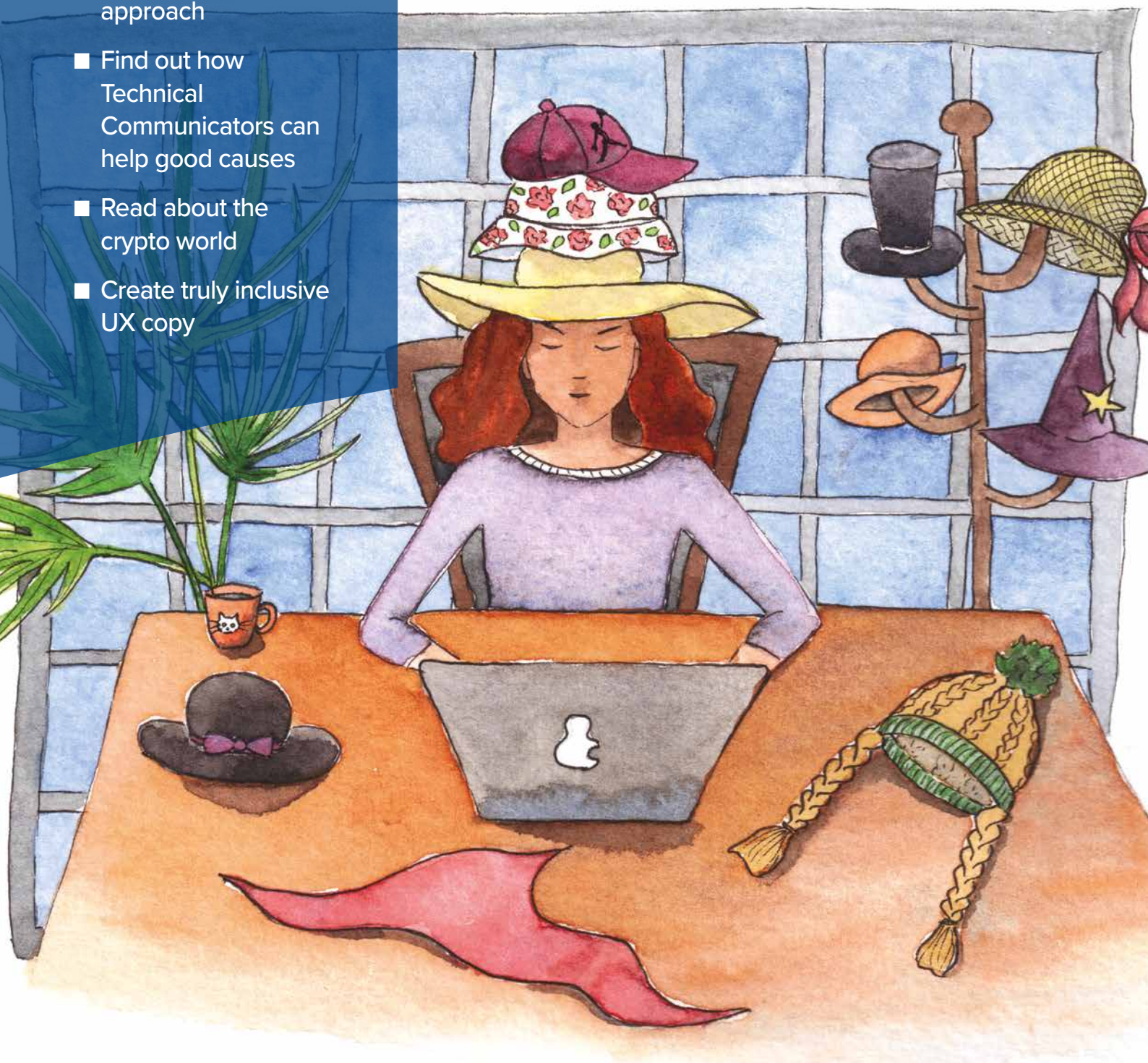
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MadCap Flare 2021 r2 Review

Victoria Parsons Clarke assesses the features of the latest release from MadCap Software.

Determining how to deliver eLearning content can be a challenge, especially when you want to deliver it in multiple outputs. In the past, building an output for a Learning Management System (LMS), and building HTML output for quick reference, required two separate tools. Working between the tools wasn't easy and often required copy and paste, which resulted in multiple sources of truth.

That's why I was so excited to learn that the MadCap Flare 2021 r2 release included eLearning functionality. With Flare 2021 r2, you now can create both the LMS output and the HTML output, all from the same tool, using the same content. It's a game changer!

eLearning Ribbon

The first thing you'll notice in the new release is the eLearning ribbon, which contains all the new functionality for creating courses. From here you can build and modify tests and test questions, create a results page to display after a test, or add the previous and next buttons to a **Template Page** (the new name for Master Pages).

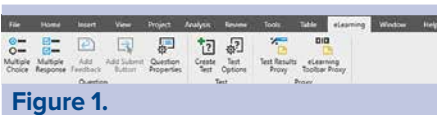


Figure 1.

Questions and Tests

Setting up questions in your content is quite easy and can be approached in several ways. You could add a knowledge check question into a page for self assessment. Or, you can create a formal course with a graded test at the end. Either can be used in HTML or LMS output, but only the LMS output will track the test outcome for an individual learner.

Tracked or not, adding questions into your content is an excellent way to engage your learners and help them to self evaluate if they are picking up the content.

Flare enables you to add **Multiple Choice** or **Multiple Response** question types from the eLearning ribbon.

Alternatively, you can highlight existing content and convert it to your preferred question type.

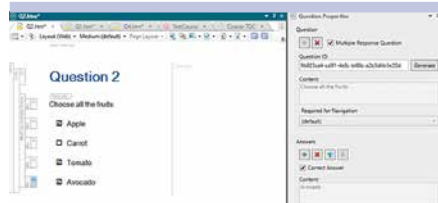


Figure 2.

You can configure the question in the **Question Properties** pane, or for more options right-click a question and choose from the shortcut menu:

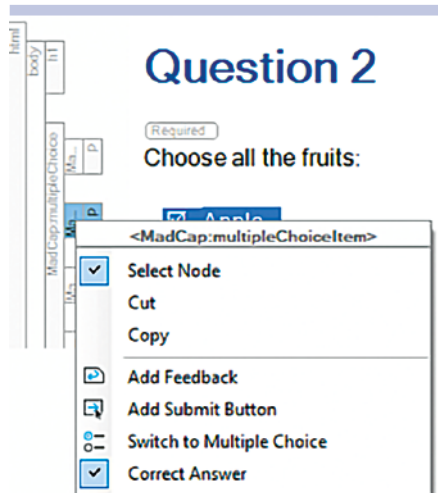


Figure 3.

Choose whether the selected answer is correct and if you want to display feedback to the user if they select this answer. If you are adding a question to a page as a knowledge check, add a **Submit** button so the learner can submit their answer and see the results.

Once your questions are set up, you might want to build a test. You'll likely use this option for content that's output for an LMS because the LMS can track the test results for individual learners.

Flare manages tests through a **Test Node** that you add to your Table of Contents (TOC) by clicking **Create Test** in the eLearning ribbon.

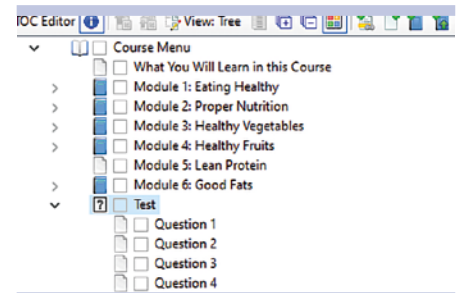


Figure 4.

If you want to include tests throughout your HTML output, it's important to note that Flare 2021 r2 only allows you to add one test node per TOC. So, while you can add questions to many pages in your site, you can't add multiple gradable tests.

eLearning Toolbar Proxy

A course is comprised of a collection of topics (lessons), knowledge checks, and potentially a test, which you navigate through from start to finish. MadCap Flare 2021 r2 provides a new eLearning Toolbar Proxy for course navigation, whose elements are customizable in both appearance and label.

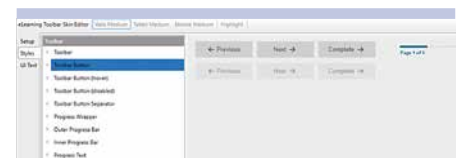


Figure 5.

Like other proxies in Flare, you add this one to a **Template Page** built specifically for your course layout and apply it to the topics in your course. Once built, your course will appear with the navigation buttons you designed, following the order of the topics in your TOC.



Figure 6.

By default, Flare requires learners to answer questions first before the **Next** button is clickable. This is a nice feature that encourages your learners to engage with the questions before moving on. If you don't care that the learner has answered a question, you can remove it from 'required' and open the navigation.

Another helpful feature is the **Progress** bar, which shows how far along you are in the course. It's important to note that the **Progress** bar determines its progression by counting where you are in the TOC. So, while this feature is great for a course you export for an LMS, or an HTML site that only includes one course, it does not work well for a large site with multiple courses and topics.

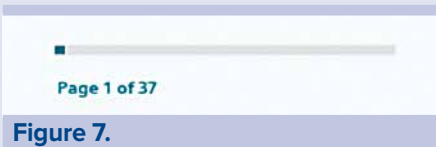


Figure 7.

Test Results Proxy

Upon completion of a test, a learner will want to know if they passed. The **Test Results** proxy provided by Flare does a good job of displaying the results to the learner. And, like all proxies, it is completely customizable.



Figure 8.

Setting Your eLearning Target

Flare 2021 r2 includes a new tab in your Target called **eLearning**. This tab enables you to output your content into a file that can be read by your LMS.

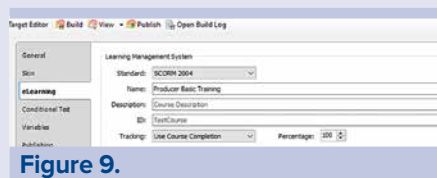


Figure 9.

Flare can output your file into one of three popular standards:

- SCORM 1.2
- SCORM 2004 (4th edition)
- xAPI (Tin Can)

You can also set how the LMS will grant learners credit for passing the course:

- Use **Course Completion** - Once the learner completes the course, they will receive credit.
- Use **Test Results** - Once the learner passes the test in the course at the set percentage, they will receive credit.

Provided you have one of the standards selected on this tab, when you build the course, Flare will generate a zipped file that you can load into your LMS.

Final Thoughts

The eLearning features released in MadCap Flare 2021 r2 have been long anticipated and didn't disappoint. Not only can I now incorporate knowledge checks directly into my online content, I can also package up a portion of my content into a course and export it as a SCORM file so it can be tracked in the LMS. Any barriers I had to having content directly in Flare are now lifted, and I can finally have all my source in one place. I look forward to seeing how the eLearning functionality in Flare evolves over time, but for a first release, I am very pleased with the features already there. ■

Victoria Parsons Clarke

Victoria has more than 23 years of experience managing, mentoring, and instructing others in the fields of technical writing and instructional design and is considered a thought-leader in her industry.

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