Re-thinking what you do

Case study: stepping outside your comfort zone

Communicator

The Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators

Spring 2013

My first year as a technical communicator

Recruit a technical communicator

Volunteer in a mechanical role

Read about MadCap Flare 9

Real–life responses

Readers' letters in response to John's dilemma, described in the Winter 2012 issue of *Communicator*.

Summary of John's dilemma

John's company had not been fully paid for work on a user guide they'd been commissioned to do. The client was demanding that he hand over the source files. In addition, he'd learnt that the client was intending to resell the source files to another company.

What should John do? Should he hand over the source files to his client, or should he refuse, on the basis that he has not been paid in full?

Who owns the copyright for the user guide in this instance? Would that be John's technical writing company, the sub-contracted authors who had worked on it or the software company who'd commissioned the work?

Is the software company allowed to resell the guide to other companies without John's permission? C

Editor's note

In the United Kingdom, copyright is governed by the Copyright Design and Patents Act 1998. The first owner of the copyright is always the author who created the work. The author must assign the copyright to the commissioning company, in order for the copyright to pass to that company. This must be a written assignment, and, for example, may be included in the agreement between the parties.

To avoid the situation described by John, it would be wise to ensure that the contract between the parties provides details of the terms of assignment of the copyright. In the absence of a written agreement assigning copyright, the courts are likely to read into the relationship between the parties the minimum level of assignment that would be considered necessary to make the contractual relationship between the parties work.

So they may interpret that John has given the software company the license to use the documentation for a specific purpose, but not to resell this on to other clients. Based on this same principle, without any agreement, they might interpret that John has licensed the use of the final PDF versions, but not the source content – it would all depend on what evidence is brought before a court. So, any terms and conditions, specs, briefs or quotes may be used as evidence to reflect the intention of the parties.

The court findings would hinge on the precise facts of the case. Any court proceeding is likely to be a lengthy and expensive procedure. As can be seen from the case literature, initial rulings can be appealed and the initial findings overruled. For this reason, John would be best advised to avoid litigation proceedings if possible.

My recommendation would be for John to seek professional legal advice in these circumstances before commencing any course of action.

The MadCap column

In this regular column, Adrian Morse provides tips for complex searches in Flare.

Flare's Find and Replace window enables you to easily search for text in your projects. However, finding entities such as tables, graphics, highlighting, variables and conditions is not so intuitive. Table 1 shows how to perform such searches. (For all searches the **Find in source code** check box must be selected.)

Backing up prior to replace operations

Table 1 includes tips for globally replacing code. You should back up your project prior to performing any such operations.

Regular expressions

Besides the operations shown in the table you can use **regular expressions** to perform **find** operations, (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regular_expression).

Although Flare enables you to use regular expressions in the **Find what** field, it does not support regular expression 'backreferences' in the **Replace with** field. You can only replace a found string with a standard string. For example, you cannot remove tags around text while leaving the text between the tags intact. To do this use a third-party tool such as Microsoft FrontPage or FAR HTML.

Pre-loading the 'Find what' list

When a Flare project is opened, the last 15 searched terms appear in the drop-down list of the **Find what** field (the list is not project-dependent). You can easily create a Windows registry file to pre-load the list with search terms that are hard to remember. Then, whenever you want to refresh the list you just close Flare, double-click the registry file and restart Flare.

Note: Users need administrative rights to run the registry file.

Caution: Take great care when working with the Windows registry as incorrect edits can leave your system totally unusable.

The safest procedure for creating the registry file is as follows:

1. In any Flare project, search one by one for up to 15 terms in the Find and Replace window.
2. Open the registry. (Windows 7: Click the **Start** button and type regedit in the **'Search programs and files'** field; other systems: consult the system help file).
3. Find the key: HKEY_CURRENT_USER\ Software\MadCap Software\ Flare\DialogSettings\B3.AppKit. FindAndReplaceDialog version.1\ Values_mWord
4. Right-click Values_mWord, select **Export**, choose a name and location for the registry file and click **OK**.
5. Close the registry.

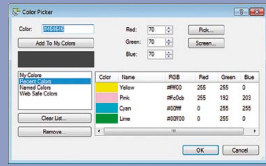Any user can now pre-load the **Find what** list by double-clicking this registry file.

Adrian Morse is Documentation Manager at Picis, a US-based provider of Healthcare software.
E: AdrianMorse@picis.com
W: www.linkedin.com/ in/adrianmorse

Table 1. MadCap Flare Find scenarios

To do this:	…enter this search term (change the text in bold according to your project)	Notes
Find manually applied highlighting	background-color:	This will only detect manually applied background colour; it will not detect any colour that is applied by a stylesheet for example, shaded boxes for notes.
Find a specific highlight colour	background-color: **#Hexadecimal code for the colour;** *Examples:* *Yellow: #ffff00* *Green: #00ff00* *Blue: #00ffff* *Pink: #ffb6c1*	You can see the hexadecimal code for any colour by looking at the RGB column in the **Color Picker**: You can also find the colour of a particular instance of highlighting using the **Pick Screen Color** command.
Find and remove a specific highlight colour	FIND: style="background-color: **Hexadecimal code for the colour;**" *Example: style="background-color: #ffff00"* *REPLACE:* Replace with blank (not a space) *Note*: There could still be some undetected highlighting in situations where there is additional character formatting for example: *style="font-style: italic;background-color: #ffb6c1;"* To remove such instances, you must perform an additional find/replace as follows: *FIND:* background-color: **Hexadecimal code for the colour**; *Example: background-color: #ffff00;* *REPLACE:* Replace with blank (not a space) (*Note*: It is important to perform the two find/replace operations in the order specified)	For entire paragraphs that are highlighted this method will remove all trace of the original highlighting code. However, if only part of a paragraph is highlighted this method will leave behind empty <span> tags. These will not affect the project outputs, and can be safely left alone. That said, if you prefer to remove these, you can do so easily using a third-party tool such as Microsoft FrontPage or FAR HTML (www.helpwaregroup.com/products/far)
Find any condition	MadCap:conditions=	
Find a **particular condition**	**ConditionsFile.ConditionName** *Example: Default.PrintOnly* (*Note*: Do not include the expression 'MadCap:conditions' in the search as this will not find any instances where the condition exactly overlaps with another condition.)	Because condition tags can overlap it is not safe to use Replace functionality to remove conditioning; you might remove the wrong end tag. However, you can safely use Replace functionality to change the condition that is applied to text. (If you have overlapping conditions, using Replace can result in the same condition overlapping itself in the code but this will not affect the way the text appears in the XML Editor or the output.) For example, in versions prior to V8, editing the name of a condition in the Conditions file breaks all links from topics to that condition; this find/replace method enables you to repair such breaks.
Find any **variable**	<MadCap:variable name=	
Find a **particular variable**	<MadCap:variable name="**VariableFile.VariableName**" /> *Example:* *<MadCap:variable name="MyVariables.Phone" />*	You can safely use Replace functionality to remove all occurrences of a variable (replacing the Find expression with blank). You can also use it to change one variable file/name to another, or to change a variable to text (replace the entire Find expression with the text you want). For example, in versions prior to V8, editing the name of a variable in the Variables file breaks all links from topics to that variable; this find/replace method enables you to repair such breaks.
Find any **table**	<table	
Find tables with a specific table style	class="**TableStyle-TableStyleSheetName**" *Example: class="TableStyle-IndentedTable01"*	If you want to change the stylesheet used by tables, the safest way is via the Apply Table Style window rather than using Find/Replace functionality (see the Flare help file for more information).
Find a **particular bookmark**	<a name="**BookmarkName**"> *Example: <a name="PatientChartSection">*	If you remove or edit a bookmark any links pointing to it will be broken.
Find any **image**	<img	