madcap software

Quantum

Quantum, a Data Storage Solutions Leader, Delivers Responsive HTML5-Based Documentation Centers Using MadCap Flare

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GOALS

» Reinvent product documentation by creating modern, web-based documentation centers that serve as documentation centers for users.

» Take a responsive HTML5 design approach that adapts to users' screens—from desktops and notebooks to mobile phones and tablets.

» Make it easier and more intuitive for users to navigate and find the information they need.

» Facilitate more efficient development and delivery of Quantum's documentation through content reuse and single-source, multi-channel publishing.

» Strengthen collaboration among Quantum's team of writers.

SOLUTIONS

» MadCap Flare native XML single-source, multi-channel content authoring software

» MadCap Analyzer for analyzing Flare content and recommending improvements

» MadCap Contributor for reviewing and contributing to Flare-based documentation

BENEFITS

» **EFFICIENCY**
Flare's topic-based single-source publishing facilitates content reuse and streamlines delivery of information across ten web-based documentation centers and supporting PDFs.

» **INTUITIVE EXPERIENCE**
HTML5-based responsive design, top navigation, and videos give users a modern, intuitive, web-based experience on their device of choice.

» **ROI**
Gain powerful web-based publishing and collaboration capabilities at 1/10th of the cost of an enterprise content management system or the added staff needed to support a CMS.

» **EASY NAVIGATION**
Expanding text, thumbnail images, and Google-like search functionality make it easier for users to find and access information.

Quantum Corporation is a leading expert in scale-out tiered storage, archive and data protection, providing solutions for capturing, sharing, and preserving digital assets over the entire data lifecycle. From small businesses to major enterprises, more than 100,000 customers have trusted Quantum to address their most demanding data workflow challenges. Quantum's end-to-end, tiered storage foundation enables customers to maximize the value of their data by making it accessible whenever and wherever needed, retaining it indefinitely and reducing total cost and complexity.

To help customers set up and optimize their use of its solutions, Quantum delivers product documentation centers. The HTML5-based documentation centers take advantage of MadCap Flare's top navigation output and responsive design to provide modern, web-based topics that automatically adjust to users' screens, from desktops to mobile devices. Meanwhile, MadCap Flare's single-source, multi-channel publishing functionality streamlines the process of also publishing PDFs in the web-based documentation centers, enabling customers to access information in their format of choice.

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Rethinking Documentation Delivery

For years, Quantum employed various authoring and publishing tools to produce its online help and PDF-based documentation. However, as the company's product lines expanded, the training and documentation team began to encounter challenges in developing and maintaining content.

"Even though our previous authoring and publishing tools were designed for producing long documents, book formats, and PDFs," recalled Troy Holmes, manager of training and documentation at Quantum, "it was getting too complex and time-consuming for multiple writers to maintain that content moving forward."

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> Manager of Training and Documentation | Quantum Corporation

Moreover, Quantum saw an opportunity to reinvent how it delivered documentation to better support the evolving ways in which customers accessed information. Making that move would require a different software approach to authoring and publishing.

"We wanted to transform our current documentation into HTML5-based documentation centers that would serve as a one-stop shop for our customer's product documentation needs," explained Charlotte Taylor, director of training and documentation at Quantum. "However, we realized that our previous authoring and publishing tool wouldn't be flexible or robust enough to support this transition."

The team realized they needed to move to topic-based authoring and single-source publishing to multiple outputs.

Wanted: Rich Functionality at a Reasonable Cost

Quantum began an evaluation of content management system (CMS) solutions as well as tools for authoring and publishing, and the search quickly led the team to MadCap Flare.

"We evaluated a trial version of Flare, and it checked off all of our requirements, including content reuse, output in multiple formats, responsive design, support for version control, and enhanced search capabilities," Taylor said. "We were blown away by its ease of use, the modern look and feel it gave, and the flexibility it provided for designing templates."

Taylor added, "Cost was another factor. Flare gave us the functionality we needed at roughly 10% of the cost of a traditional CMS, which would have also required us to add more staff."

In addition to MadCap Flare's comprehensive functionality, MadCap support contributed to Quantum's selection, noted Holmes: "I remember hearing feedback that MadCap's pre-sales support was terrific, and two years later, we continue to be impressed by their level of support."

Single-Source Publishing with MadCap Flare

Today, Quantum uses MadCap Flare to deliver ten HTML5-based documentation centers for customers. Additionally, there are several internal versions of the documentation centers for the company's service and support teams. A number of documentation centers also provide supporting PDFs. Quantum is planning to publish more documentation centers in the future, as time allows.

By taking advantage of MadCap Flare's topic-based single-source publishing, Quantum's writers have been able to speed the development and delivery of content that is tailored for external and internal users.

"The ability to publish to multiple outputs from a single source with Flare has been a huge time-saver," Holmes noted. "Because we can now store, develop, and edit content within a single Flare project, we're able to maximize content reuse for products that share similar content, as well as reduce the risk of user error. We also take advantage of SVN's Externals. Externals allows us to update all of our master pages, skins, stylesheets, shared images, and shared topics all in a central location for all projects tied to Externals."

Taylor agreed, "With Flare's single sourcing and topic-based approach, it's significantly easier for multiple authors to work on content. We're able to do so much more now because the process is more simple and efficient."

Quantum's writers also rely on the integration of MadCap Flare with Apache Subversion (SVN) for version control to facilitate collaboration.

"Having writers be able to directly check files in and out of Flare to create or update content in a central location is huge," Holmes said. "Integration of SVN with Flare was a smooth and easy transition and works great for us."

Additionally, the team uses MadCap Contributor. Fully integrated with MadCap Flare, it allows Quantum's departmental editor to review and edit documentation without having to know how to use Flare.

Maximizing Content Reuse

In addition to single-source publishing, Quantum's writers make extensive use of snippets and conditional tags in MadCap Flare to maximize content reuse and consistency.

"Flare snippets and compatibility with SVN are features we highly value; they remove the need to retype content, which helps us eliminate redundant efforts," Holmes observed.

Meanwhile, conditional tags enable writers to update sections of documentation for new product releases in advance, apply conditional tags to that content, and then have Flare automatically make the updates when the product version goes into production.

"Flare provides functionality that makes it easy to generate and publish directly to our documentation centers in one step. This has drastically reduced the time it takes to update the documentation for product releases, which is especially helpful since a lot of our products share similar content," explained Taylor. "With our previous authoring tool, we had to generate a PDF, do some minor formatting, and then ask someone to post it on our website. Now we can just make one update, and the information is live in the documentation center as soon as the product launches. The process is so much faster now that we don't have to repost another series of documents."

To ensure the quality of its documentation, Quantum's writers rely on MadCap Analyzer, which is fully integrated with MadCap Flare. MadCap Analyzer goes through Quantum's Flare-based documentation to find broken links and identify extraneous content, which the team then corrects.

Creating a Modern Web Experience

With the rollout of their HTML5-based documentation centers, Quantum's writers have placed a priority on creating a modern, intuitive web experience for users regardless of the device they

use. Central to this effort has been the use of MadCap Flare's responsive design functionality in enabling the documentation centers to automatically adjust to users' screens—from desktops, to notebooks, smart phones, and tablets.

"The HTML5 responsive design feature is one of Flare's biggest attractions," Taylor says. "We're able to provide our customers a whole new level of flexibility to access information however they want without creating specialized output."

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More recently the team implemented the frameless top navigation functionality that became available with MadCap Flare. By replacing the tri-pane format of traditional online help with top navigation, Quantum has achieved a cleaner, more modern layout for its documentation centers.

"With Flare's top navigation, our documentation centers now have a state-of-the-art look and feel to them, creating an interactive and intuitive experience for users while ensuring consistency across our different sites," explained Holmes. "Not only are our documentation centers visually attractive, our content is more concise."

Enhancing Ease of Use

Quantum relies on additional features in Flare to enhance the customer experience and make it easier for users to access information. Among these features are drop-down text, pop-up images, search functionality, and integrated video.

"The ability to expand and collapse a section of content with Flare has been a huge plus for our users," Taylor said. "In the past, some of our PDFs were too long and intimidating to navigate. Now users can easily find and look at just the information they want."

Similarly, the ability to display pop-up images in Flare, which can expand to their full-size when users click them, means customers can control what they see.
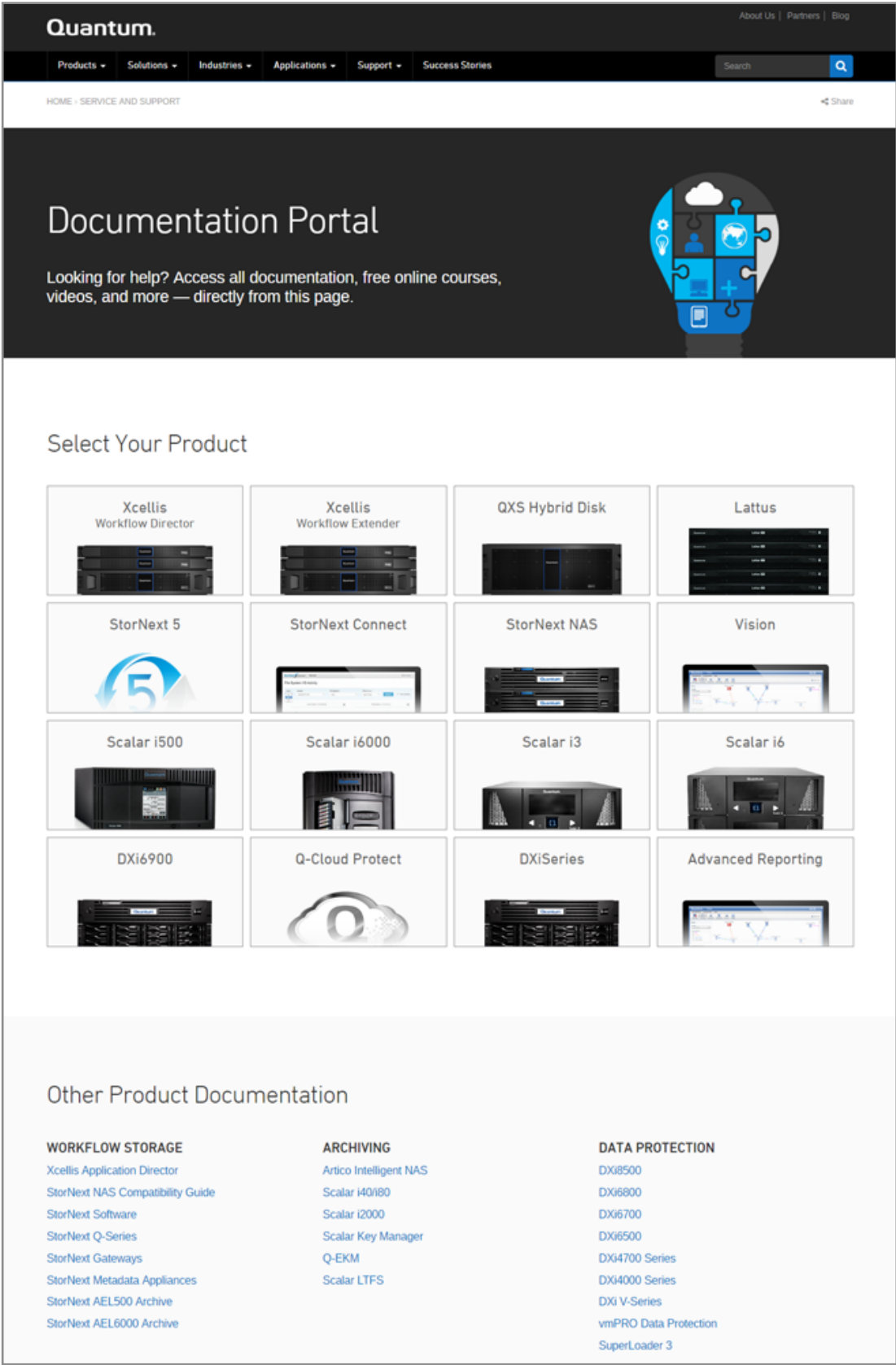
Quantum Corporation's Documentation Portal

Quantum Corporation's DXi6900 Documentation Center — HTML5 Top Navigation

Quantum Corporation's StorNext Connect Documentation Center — Embedded Video Content

The technical writing team also makes extensive use of the Google-style search bar provided with MadCap Flare.

"Flare's robust search functionality has been valuable in cutting the time it takes our customers to navigate through content," explains Holmes. "Before, you had to manually search through a long list of products and would need to know which documentation category to look under. Now, users can easily search terms in the documentation centers by typing in a keyword. Our users love our documentation centers!"

Finally, multimedia support in MadCap Flare enables a more interactive and seamless experience.

"Being able to embed videos in Flare is a great feature for giving users everything they need on one page," Taylor said. "In addition to reading about the product, they can now watch a video. It really lets them learn in the format of their choice."

Energizing Writers

The ability to reinvent Quantum's documentation and inject a new level of creativity has led to higher satisfaction for the writing team.

"Our writers love the flexibility that comes from working with Flare, which has really allowed us to put control in the writers' hands more than we ever could in the past," Taylor observed.

Holmes added, "Our writers are really proud of their end product, and the state-of-the-art documentation centers are a direct reflection of how much more we've been able to do because of Flare."

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