



Watertown, MA

<http://www.athenahealth.com>

athenahealth Uses MadCap Flare, Contributor and Feedback to Deliver State-of-the-Art Documentation and Online Help for its Cloud-based Physician Business Services

## INDUSTRY

- Healthcare
- Cloud-based services for medical groups



*MadCap's software makes it so much easier to provide our customers the information they need in their format of choice; it really makes my job enjoyable."*

Peggy Spencer | athenahealth, Inc.

### Goals:

- Support monthly SaaS release schedule
- Facilitate delivery of six print documentation and online Help versions for each new release
- Streamline the process of incorporating content from 45-plus subject matter experts
- Ensure the consistency of content in print and on the Web
- Enhance documentation and online Help usability

### Solutions:

- MadCap Flare native XML multi-channel content authoring software
- MadCap Contributor to enable subject matter experts to contribute content
- MadCap Feedback Service for analysis of documentation and online Help usage

### Benefits:

- Flare's single-sourcing and conditional build tags facilitate delivery of four PDF versions, two online Help versions, and a Word version for each monthly release
- Contributor lets 45-plus SMEs add content while eliminating the need to cut and paste the additions into Flare
- Feedback Service provides insights for enhancing users' documentation and online Help experiences



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# athenahealth Uses MadCap Flare, Contributor and Feedback to Deliver State-of-the-Art Documentation and Online Help for its Cloud-based Physician Business Services

For athenahealth, Inc., liberating doctors and patients from the administrative expense and stress of the health care system is not just a job; it's a passion. Today, more than 29,000 medical providers nationwide take advantage of the company's cloud-based practice management, electronic health record (EHR), and patient communication services. To help customers get the most out of these services, athenahealth uses MadCap's technical communications suite to deliver state-of-the-art documentation and online Help.

## Keeping Pace with Rapid Releases

As athenahealth's cloud-based services have grown, so too have the demands on the company's technical communications team to deliver timely and accurate documentation and online Help. Each month, there is a new release of the company's software that is pushed out instantly to the entire network. Recently the average number of topics per release has tripled from 15 to 45.

athenahealth already had installed MadCap Flare to provide streamlined, single-source publishing. However, athenahealth's technical writers still needed to manually incorporate content from the company's subject matter experts (SMEs), who were submitting information via Microsoft Word documents, emails, and even sheets of paper.

"The writing team and I wanted to be flexible, but as the numbers of topics and contributors grew, it was becoming harder to do so," recalls Peggy Spencer, athenahealth technical writer. "That is why when MadCap Contributor and Flare 7.0 came out, we jumped at the chance to upgrade."

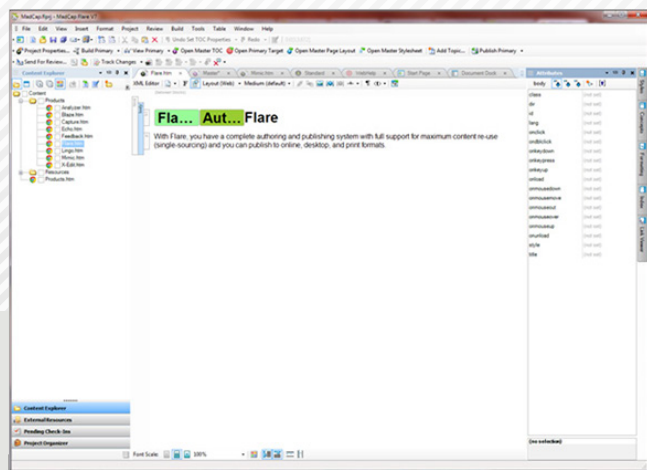
MadCap Contributor, launched in conjunction with MadCap Flare 7.0, enables athenahealth SMEs to enter their content into a pre-formatted template or to add comments or edits to text developed by the technical writers. Adding the new or edited content into the Flare-based documentation is simply a matter of clicking the "accept" button, eliminating the need to manually cut and paste.

"Within a couple months everyone was using Contributor," Peggy noted. "Nearly 45 of our SMEs had attended training, but even those who missed the training found the software easy to use." She added, "Since then, Contributor has allowed us to complete roughly twice the amount of work with the same number of technical writers; we couldn't have kept up with the increased workflow without it."

## Single-Sourcing Maximizes Content Re-use

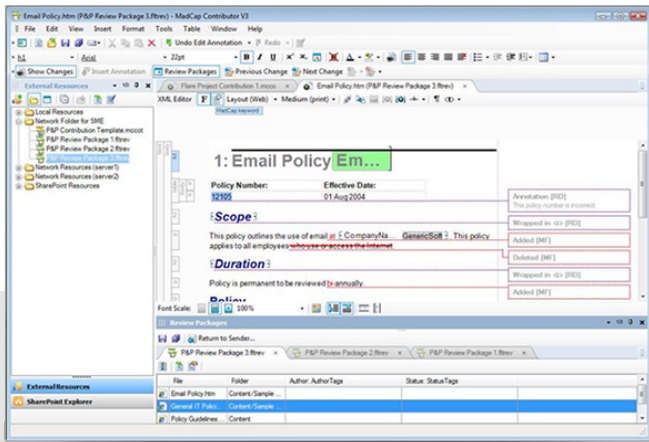
The use of MadCap Contributor builds on the efficiencies that athenahealth has gained by using MadCap Flare to create and publish both its print documentation and online Help. Central to these efficiencies are the use of single-sourcing and conditional build tags to produce multiple outputs from a single, central Flare project.

In any release cycle, athenahealth first publishes a PDF of the beta release note to internal employees. Then the technical writers use conditional build tags in Flare to generate a subset of that information as a PDF for beta customers.



MadCap Flare screenshot\*

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MadCap Contributor screenshot\*

## Enhancing the User Experience

In addition to delivering new documentation and online Help versions each month, the athenahealth technical writing team also uses the hosted MadCap Feedback Service to enhance its users' experiences.

“We try to get as many insights into customers' experiences with our documentation and Web-based Help as possible, but we have to balance that with government protections on healthcare privacy,” Peggy observes. “One important resource is MadCap Feedback Service, which lets us monitor what clients are looking for and how many hits a particular topic is getting. It gives us the knowledge we need to enhance our content for our users.”

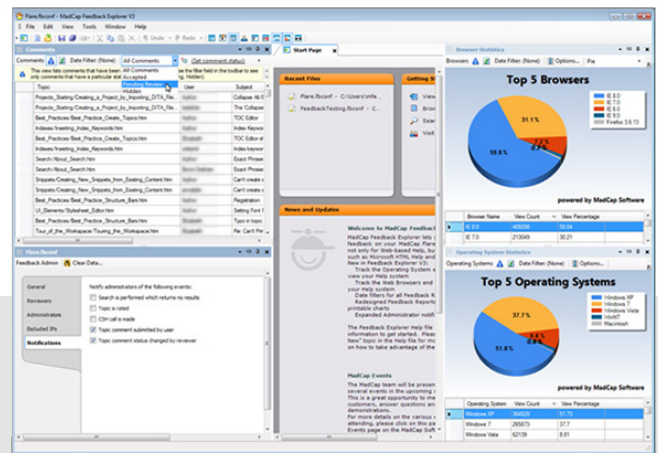
Next, athenahealth updates the release note for the production version and creates PDF documents for both its internal team and customers. These are delivered two weeks in advance of the new SaaS release, so employees and customers know what to expect. Last, when the new release is available, the technical writing team publishes updated internal and customer versions of athenahealth's online Help based on the approved release note content.

“We basically have a three-week cycle for each software release to create and publish six print and online versions of our documentation,” Peggy explains. “We rely on Flare's conditional build tags and single-source publishing to meet that schedule and ensure consistency across our content.”

The conditional build tags and single-source publishing support additional documentation requirements from the government and customers. For example, each year athenahealth needs to certify its EHR technology with the Certification Commission for Health Information Technology (CCHIT).

“Delivering the printed manual for CCHIT certification used to be a time-consuming effort,” Peggy recalls. “However, with Flare, it is just a matter of creating a conditional build of our Flare-based project.”

Similarly, Peggy notes, “Some of our customers want to receive our documentation in Microsoft Word, so that they can modify the content for their own practice. Supporting our customers' requests is as simple as creating a conditional build for Word.”



MadCap Feedback screenshot\*

To further enhance documentation, athenahealth's technical writers have augmented their use of MadCap's technical communications software with the training sessions offered by MadCap.

“We have a very strong commitment to customer service, and I feel that MadCap shares a very similar mission,” Peggy says. “I always come back from the product road show with a boat load of new ideas and new techniques.”

Peggy adds, “MadCap's software makes it so much easier to provide our customers the information they need in their format of choice; it really makes my job enjoyable. I look forward to seeing what MadCap does next.”

\* MadCap screenshots in this article are not images captured from the athenahealth system due to government restrictions on what healthcare information can be shared publicly.