

# Getting Started with MadCap Flare

## Part 3: More Feature Concepts



# Who Am I?

» Neil Perlin – Hyper/Word Services.

- Internationally recognized content creation and delivery consultant.
- Helps create efficient, flexible content.
- Certified – Flare, Mimic, ViziApps.
- Works to make the complex understandable.



# Welcome to...

- » The third of four webinars for new Flare users.
- » We'll look at Flare's core single sourcing features and answer some other questions.
- » To help you use Flare better and maybe learn about features you didn't know existed.

# Today's Agenda

- » Single Sourcing Features
  - Conditionality
  - Variables and Snippets
- » Outputs vs. Targets
- » Building vs. Publishing Targets
- » Why import Word or Framemaker into Flare if all you want is print output anyway?

# What Is Single Sourcing?

- » Something new, exotic, and complex?
  - New? No. Appeared in '91 with Doc-To-Help.
  - Exotic? No. Just means using content for different outputs.
  - Complex? Could be...
- » The term has two accepted definitions.

# Definition 1

- » Write content once in one place and extract selective subsets for use:
  - In different formats...
  - On different devices...
  - In different markets...
  - For different audiences...
  - And so on...
- » Handled through conditionality.

# Definition 2

- » Create chunks of content to be re-used in a project or in different projects.
  - Like a Note or a dialog box description to be used in multiple topics.
- » Handled through “placeholders” – variables and snippets.

# Conditionality

» Equivalent to categorization.

» This stuff...



» Let's you break one large project into smaller categories, then pick which categories to use for a particular target.

» For example:

- US vs. Canada
- Online vs. print

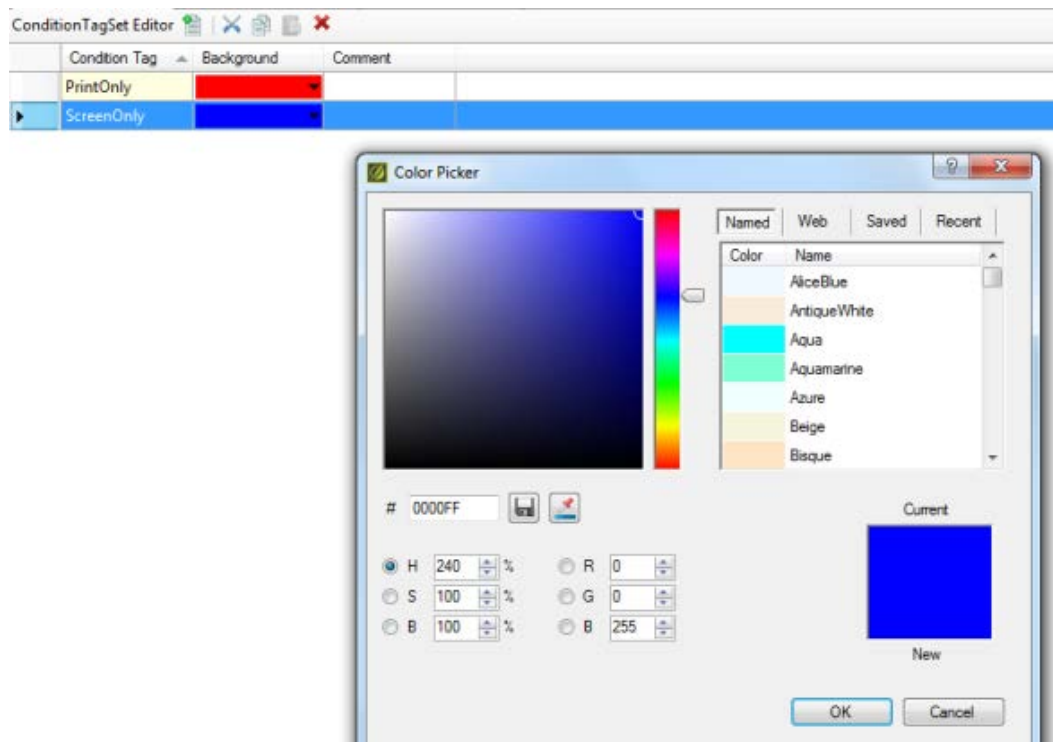


# How It Works

- » Create and assign conditional “build tags” to files or content that you want to be able to include or exclude from a target.
  - Tagged material can be included or excluded from a target.
  - *Untagged* material is always used.
- » Preview or build the output with the desired tags included or excluded.

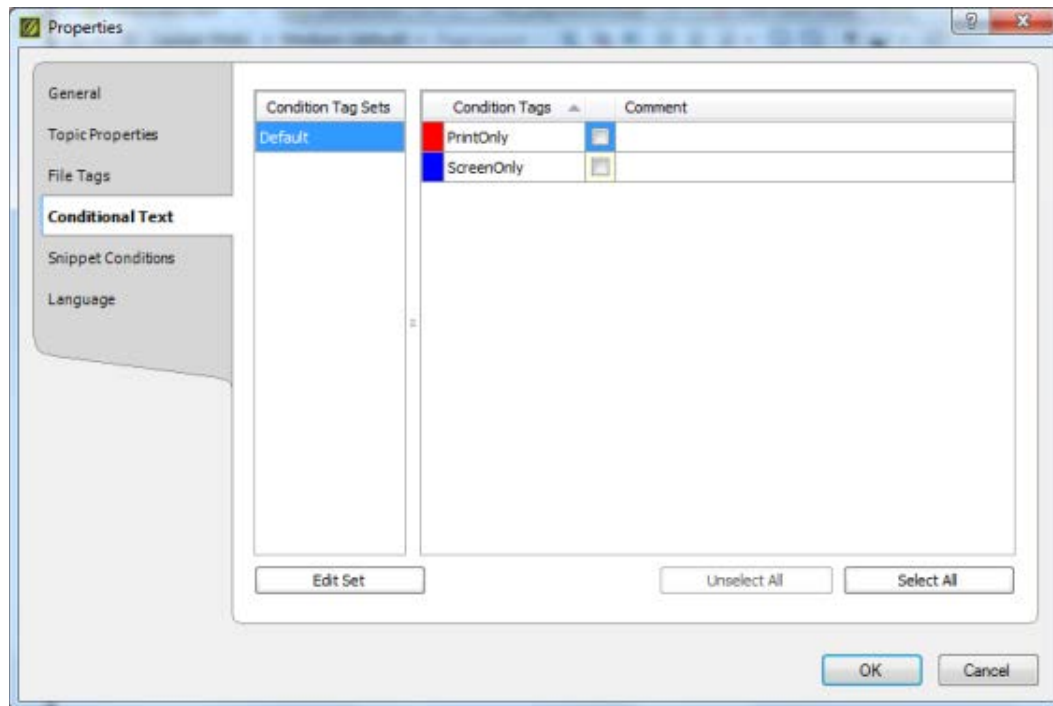
# Create

- » Using the Condition Tag Set Editor on the Project Organizer pane.



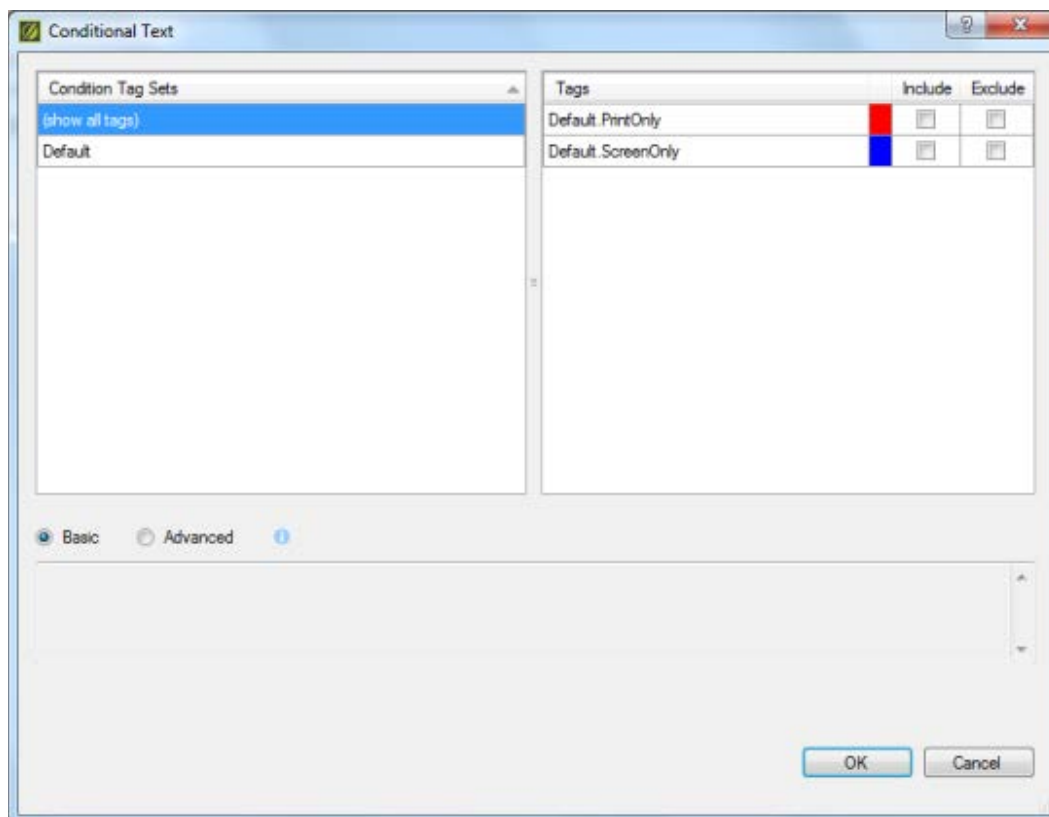
# Assign

- » Using the Conditional Text tab on the file's Properties dialog box.



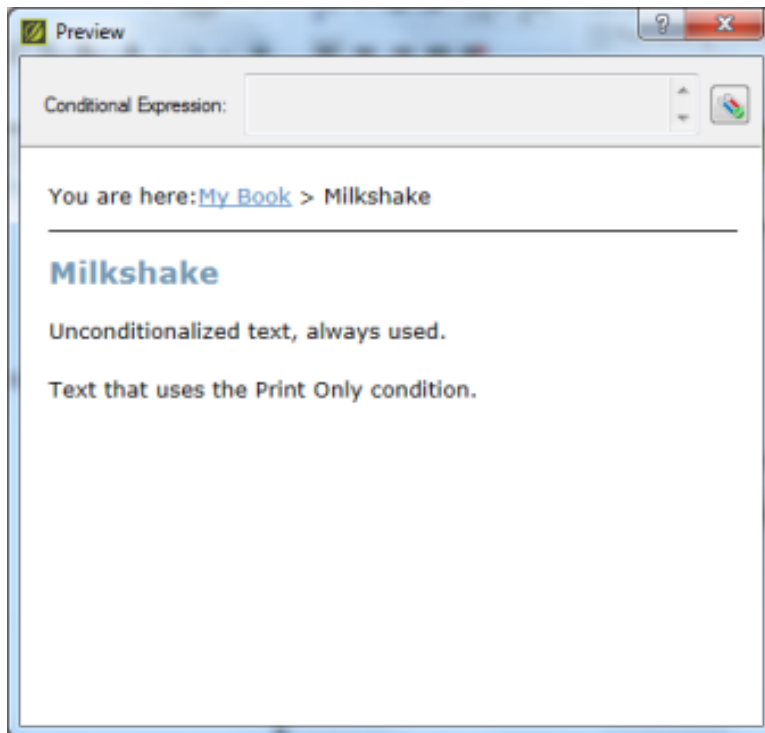
# Include/Exclude

» For previews or builds, using the Conditional Text dialog box.

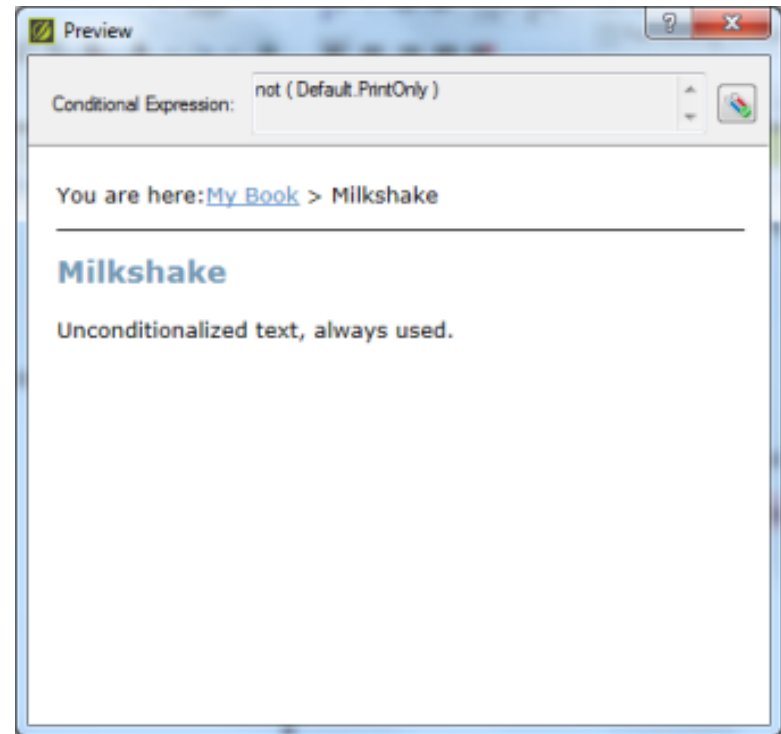


# A Sample Result

» No setting



Exclusion setting



# Conditionality Pros and Cons

## » Pros

- Highly customizable.
- Effects ripple out to TOC, index, links, etc.
- Advanced option in Conditional Text dialog box lets you create full Boolean formulas.

## » Cons

- Can get very complex.
- Can get out of control if not watched carefully.

# Placeholders - Variables

## » Three types:

- Heading – To insert dynamic headers in topics.
- System – To insert system information like date, page count, and page number.
- User-defined – Text only, any wording you need such as product name or customer name.

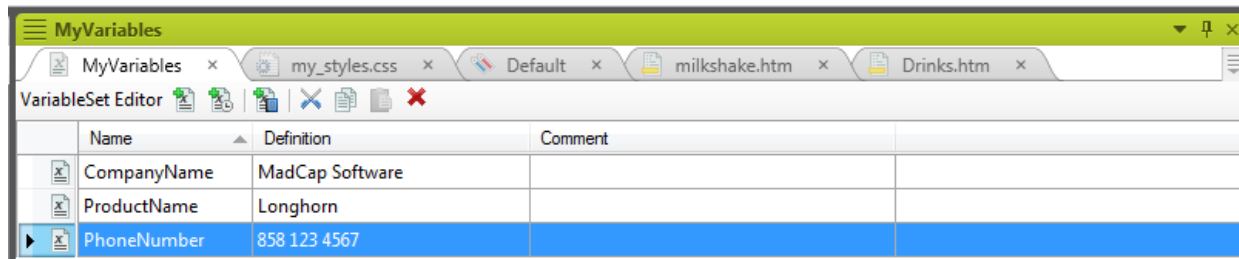
# User-Defined Variables

- » Create using the Variable Set Editor on the Project Organizer.
- » For text (only) to be inserted in a paragraph.
  - Product name
  - Customer name
- » Inherits the formatting of the paragraph in which it's inserted.
- » Can be conditionalized.



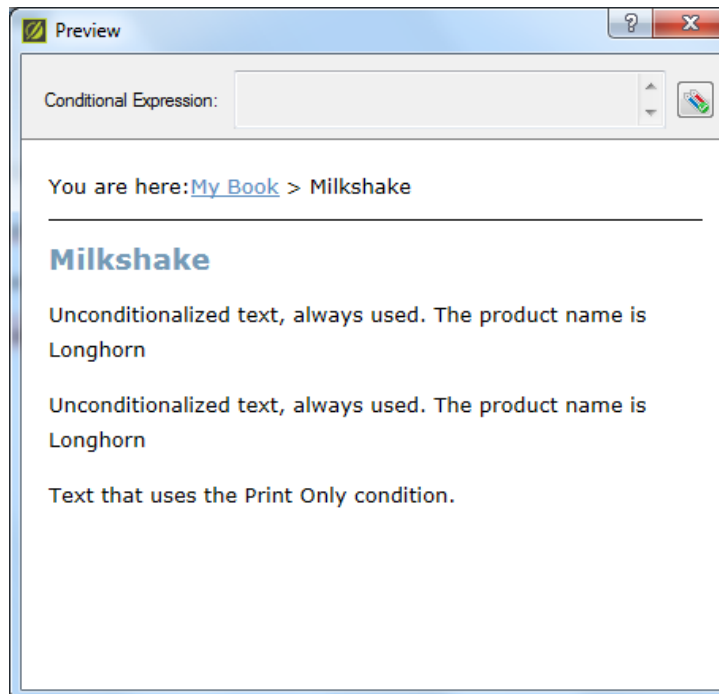
# Placeholders – Variables

» Setting Product\_Name = Longhorn:



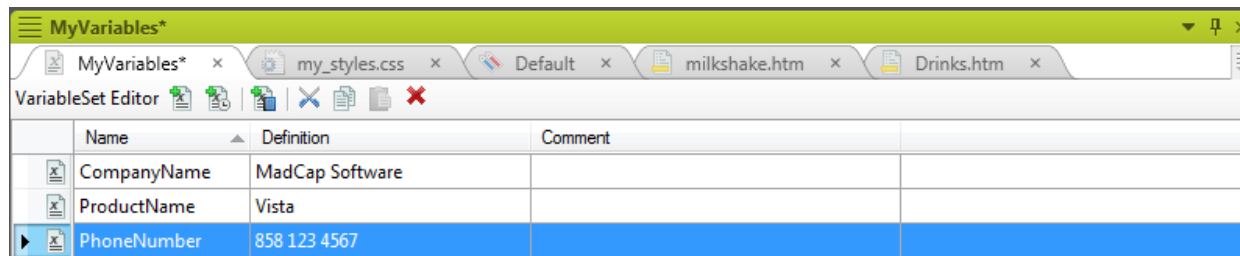
Name	Definition	Comment
CompanyName	MadCap Software	
ProductName	Longhorn	
PhoneNumber	858 123 4567	

» Produces this:



# Placeholders – Variables

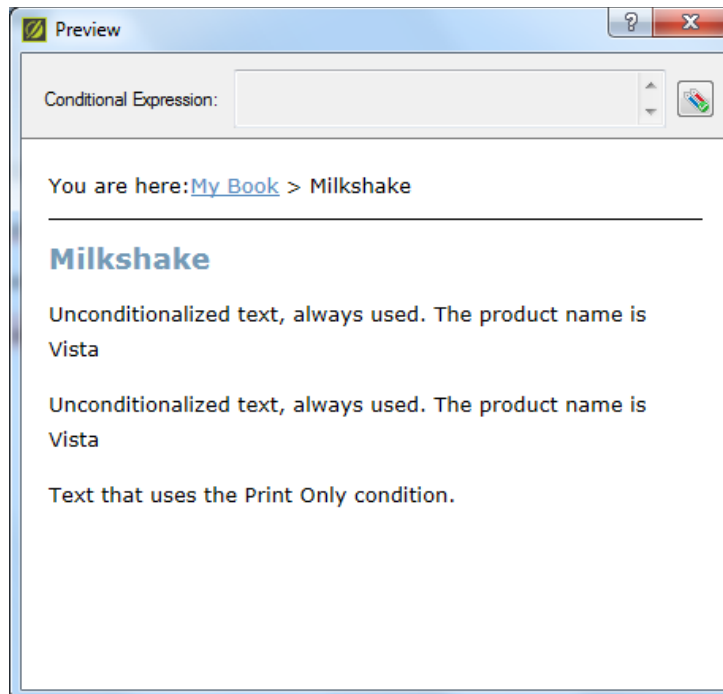
» Changing Product\_Name to Vista:



The screenshot shows the 'VariableSet Editor' window with a table containing three variables. The 'ProductName' variable is highlighted in blue.

Name	Definition	Comment
CompanyName	MadCap Software	
ProductName	Vista	
PhoneNumber	858 123 4567	

» Produces this:



The screenshot shows the 'Preview' window with the following content:

Conditional Expression:

You are here: [My Book](#) > Milkshake

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**Milkshake**

Unconditionalized text, always used. The product name is Vista

Unconditionalized text, always used. The product name is Vista

Text that uses the Print Only condition.

# Placeholders – Snippets

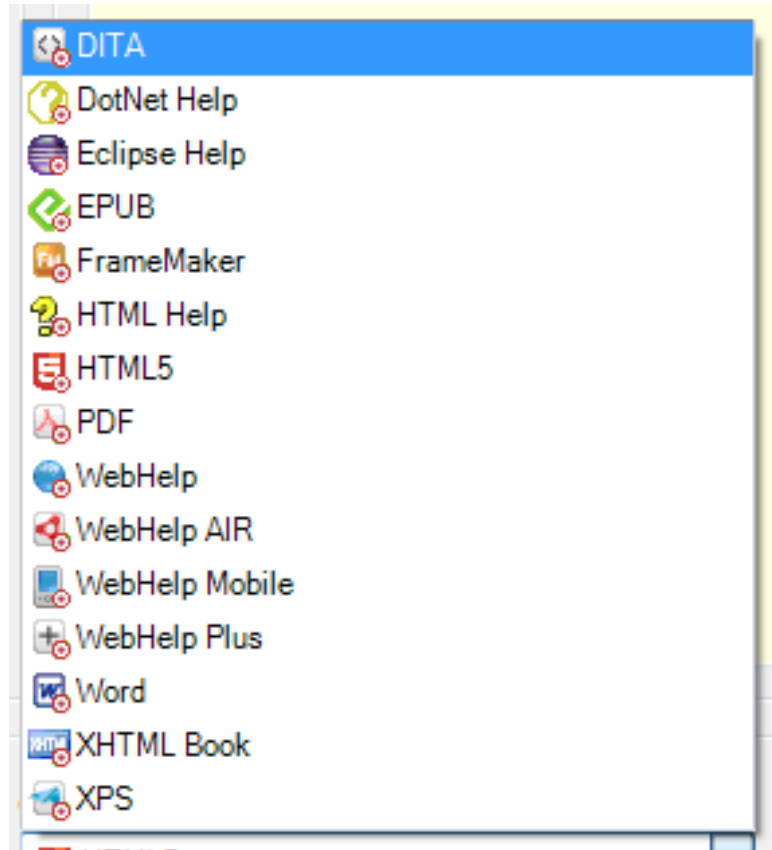
- » Similar to variables but can contain anything you'd put in a topic – text, graphics, tables, movies, *variables*, etc.
- » Generally stand alone but can be inserted into an existing paragraph.
- » Can be conditionalized.

# Placeholders – Snippets

- » Can convert existing text to a snippet – select existing text, then Home > Create Snippet.
- » Can create a new snippet from scratch – File > New > Snippet.

# Outputs vs. Targets

» “Output” refers to the technical format options.



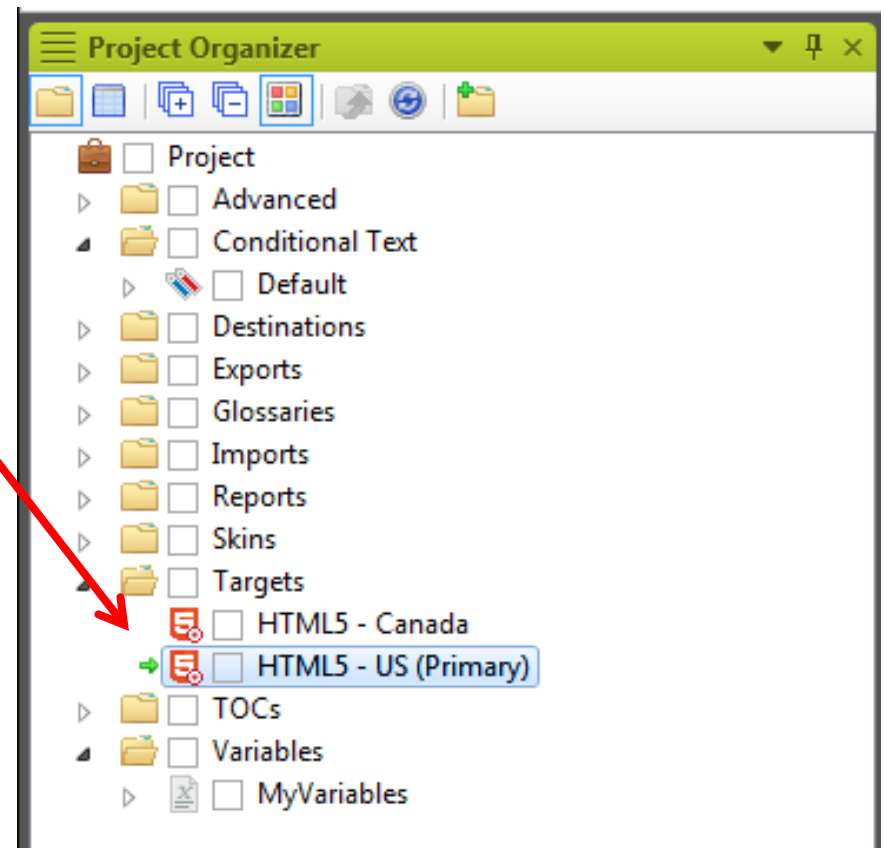
# Outputs vs. Targets

» “Target” refers to an output for a specific audience.

- For example, if you need one HTML5 output for all users, your target is “HTML5”.
- But if you need one HTML5 output for the US and one for Canada, your targets are “HTML5 - US” and “HTML5 – Canada”.

# Outputs vs. Targets

- » Your Targets folder might look like this
- » You'd then use TOCs, conditional build tags, variables, glossaries, CSSs, etc. to customize each target.



# Build vs. Publish

## » “Build”

- Generating interim outputs for review or a final output for publishing.
- A build sits on your local PC in the Output folder.
- The idea is to generate the output to check how a feature looks or works, return to the project to make changes, then build again, go back...
- When you're happy with the result, you “publish.”



# Build vs. Publish

## » “Publish”

- Making the final build available to users.
- Several options, including:
  - Use Flare’s Publishing feature to publish the build to a server or shared drive.
  - Copy the build to Sharepoint.
  - Copy the build to a CD or USB drive and deliver it to engineering.

» So you must build before you can publish.

# Just Want Print? Why Use Flare?

- » If all you want is print, why buy Flare?
- » Two common reasons:
  - You're a Word/FM shop and want to remain such but want to use Flare to generate online output.
  - You want to develop in Flare and create Word/FM as a Flare target *and* have the option to generate other outputs as well.

# Summary

- » Next, we'll cover options for structuring your Flare projects.
- » These webinars may be repeated, so let us know if there's a topic you think should be added for next time.

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Structured Authoring



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# Thank you... Questions?



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