SUPERCHARGING SEARCH

Delivering More Robust Search in Your HTML Outputs

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MAD For Flare V11
MadCap Advanced Developer

MADWORLD

Why do we tend to spend more time designing navigation hierarchy than the search experience?

We Need to Design the Search Experience

- Designing the search experience should be a major part our planning, development, and maintenance processes

- Research how your users are going to use search

- Develop search test cases that need to be satisfied before release

What search methods does your audience find most useful? How do they prefer to search

What keywords are users likely to search for?

What are the areas of greatest interest or potential confusion? What are the "big hitters"? Talk to support

Well designed and usable search increases the value of what your offer to your customers

Optimizing the Search Experience in Flare 11

- Understanding the Flare 11 search engine
- Optimizing your content for search
- Optimizing your site for search
- Questions and Answers

Flare 11 HTML5 Search Engine

Relevance
Results ranked based on where and how frequently keywords appear in the topic

Importance
The number of links to a topic

Keyword Relevance Ranking in Flare 11

Optimizing content based on where keywords appear in a topic

1. Title tags
2. Heading 1
3. Heading 2 OR meta description
4. Heading 3
5. Heading 4 OR index keywords
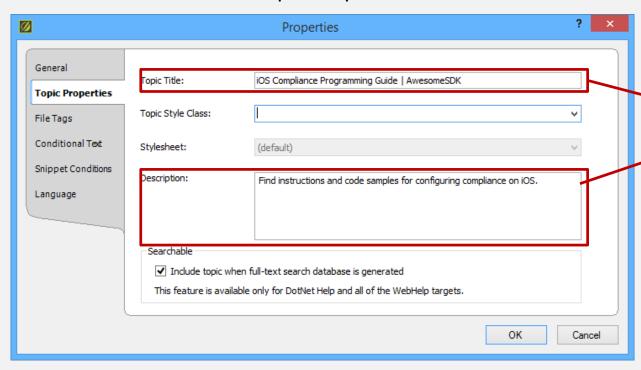6. Heading 5 OR glossary terms
7. Heading 6 OR keywords in body text[1]

A few considerations:
- Topics with frequent keywords are ranked higher than topics with fewer keywords.
- However, topics with more frequent keywords will never outrank a topic with a higher weighting (unless Importance is enabled)
- If Importance is enabled, Relevance ranking may be influenced

Topic Titles and Meta Descriptions

Flare Topic Properties

Output Search Results

From Content Explorer, right-click topic, and select **Properties**

If topic title and description are blank in the Flare topic properties, the search index will use the first heading as the title and the body text as the description
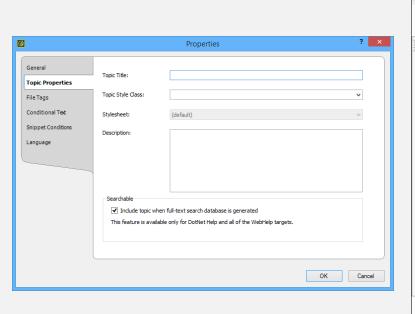
TIPS:

- Flare uses the Topic Title when adding the topic to TOC
- If no Topic Title is specified, the first heading in the topic is used.
- Limit the title length to 70 characters
- Description should contain 68-155 characters
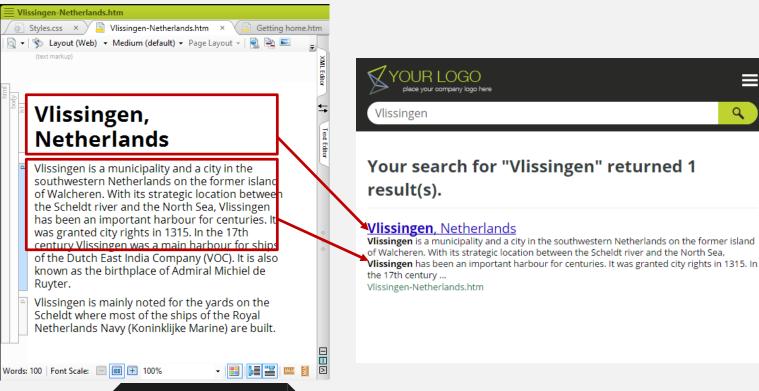- Place important keywords at the front of the title

What if I leave Topic Title and Description blank?

Topic Title: Flare uses the first heading in the topic as the title ***BEST PRACTICE***

Description: Flare uses the first 300 characters of the topic body

Code View: Topic Title and Meta Description

```
1    <?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8"?>
2    <html xmlns:MadCap="http://www.madcapsoftware.com/Schemas/MadCap.xsd" MadCap:conditionTagExpression="include[Default.
     iOSOnly]exclude[Default.AndroidOnly]" MadCap:lastBlockDepth="4" MadCap:lastHeight="848" MadCap:lastWidth="733">
3    <head><title>iOS Compliance Programming Guide | AwesomeSDK</title>
4        <meta name="description" content="Find instructions and code samples for configuring compliance on iOS." />
5    </head>
6    <body>
7        <h1>Compliance Programming Guide for iOS</h1>
8        <MadCap:snippetBlock src="../Resources/Snippets/compliance.flsnp" />
9    </body>
10   </html>
```

Other Considerations

TOPIC STRUCTURE: Multiple short topics vs. Fewer lengthy topics (Note that CTRL+F remains a primary search feature for many users)

HEADINGS: Include important keywords in h1 tags. Keep h1 tags unique from other h1s in project, and limit h1s to one per topic.

BODY TEXT: Flare's search engine gives preference to topics that use a keyword often, although keywords in headings receive higher relevance ranking

FILE NAMES: Use hyphens to separate words of a filename. Not recommended to run keywords together or use underscores to separate words. Shorter filenames are better.[2]
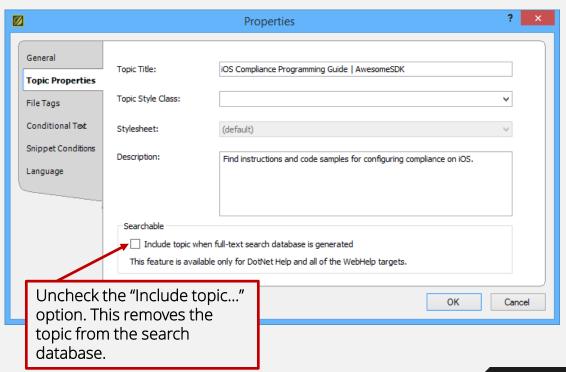
GLOSSARY AND INDEX TERMS: Remember that glossary and index entries influence search results even more than body text does. Can choose to exclude index terms from search database (see slide 13)
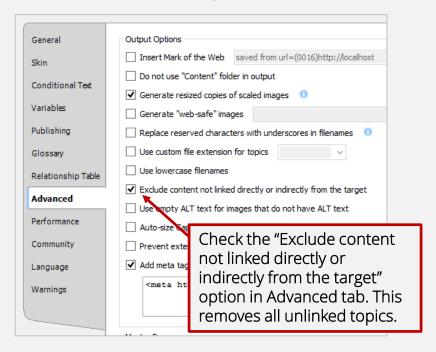
Including / Excluding Content from Search

All topics in your Content Explorer are built and added to the search index by default, even the topics that aren't linked in the TOC.
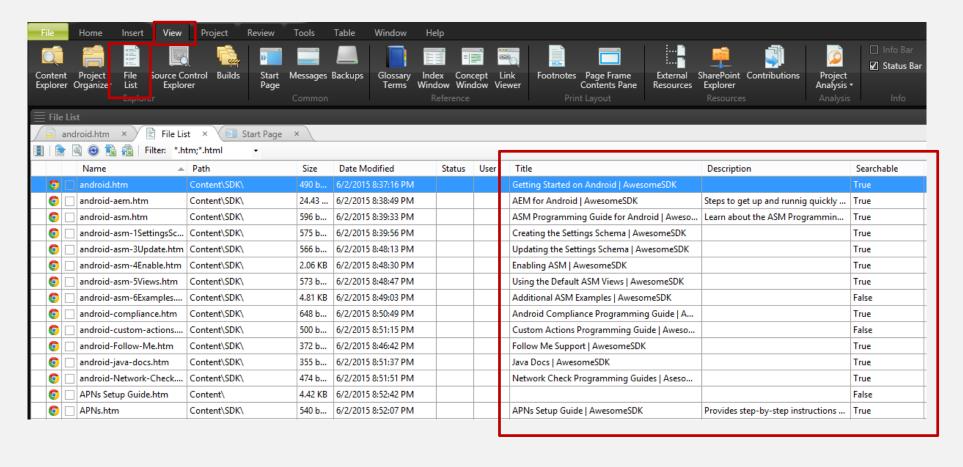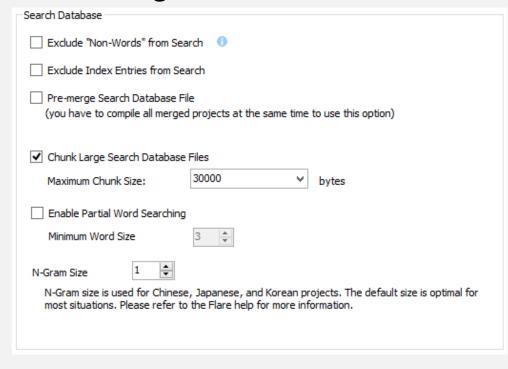
From topic properties...

Uncheck the "Include topic..." option. This removes the topic from the search database.

From the target...

Check the "Exclude content not linked directly or indirectly from the target" option in Advanced tab. This removes all unlinked topics.

Using the File List to Review Search Settings

Customizing the Search Database

Target > Performance Tab

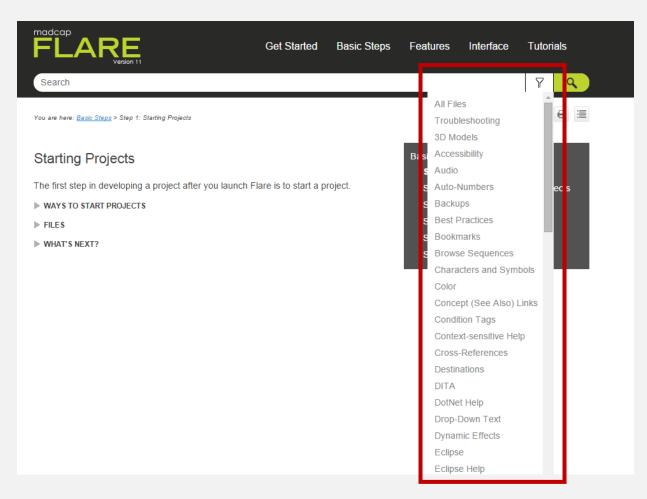|	
Exclude "Non-Words" from Search	Omits common non-words (such as angle brackets) from search database.
Exclude Index Entries from Search	Excludes index entries from search database.
Pre-merge Search Database File	If you are merging output from multiple Flare projects, this option merges the search databases from all the merged projects.
Chunk Large Search Database Files	Chunks the search database files and establishes the maximum size. The tradeoff: • Smaller chunk size = faster search but slower build • Larger chuck size = slower search but faster build
Enable Partial Word Searching	Enables users to search for just part of a word or string. Increases build time and size of search database. Example: Searching for "**art**" would also return results for "p**art**" and "st**art**"
N-Gram Size	Used to improve search results for Chinese, Japanese, and Korean. See Flare help.[3]

Search Engine Optimization in Flare 11

Target > Advanced Tab

Generate Sitemap	Helps 3rd party search engines find your output. Enter the path where the output is published in the Web URL field.
Include Importance	Instructs the search engine to consider the number of links to a topic in ranking search results.
Results Per Page	Specifies the number of search results to display per page
Abstract Character Limit	Sets the character limit that will display on the search results page. The abstract is determined by the topic description, or, if there is no description, by the body content. Maximum abstract recommendation is 155.

Creating Search Filters

Provides users the opportunity to limit the topics that are searched.

FLARE DEMO:
1. Create "Concepts"
2. Add Concepts to topics
3. Create search filters based on concepts
4. Activate search filter in skin

See http://goo.gl/TGo3l9 in Flare help for instructions

Creating Synonyms

What is a synonym?

One or more similar keywords that can be included in a search when just one of the terms is searched on. Can be uni-directional, bi-directional, or omni-directional (in the case of a group or more than two keywords).

Stored in a Synonyms file in Flare and automatically included in build.

Examples:
House=Home
Color=Colour
Recieve=Receive
Bird=Duck=Goose=Penguin

See http://bit.ly/1FHYvIA in Flare help for instructions

Flare Demo:
Create synonyms file

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Questions and Answers

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References

1 http://goo.gl/dBbP9N. Click **Additional New Features** > **Search Enhancements** > **Search Result Rankings**

2 http://goo.gl/Xu6puX. See also https://goo.gl/s7HqXh.

3 http://goo.gl/GH3aW9