Customizing a FrameMaker Structured Application

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You can do it!

STC Summit 2012 - Chicago, IL

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Introduction

- Scott Prentice, President of Leximation, Inc.

- Specializing in FrameMaker plugin development as well as structured FrameMaker conversions, consulting, and development. FrameMaker user/developer since 1991.

- Developed DITA-FMx, a FrameMaker plugin for efficient DITA authoring and publishing.

- Developer of custom Help systems and creative/functional web applications.

Before we start...

I'll be working with a DITA structured application. These concepts apply to all apps, don't get caught up in "DITA".

I'll be using DITA-FMx apps and processing tools. This is just for convenience, it is not required.

Live demo with real content ...

Structured application?

- Structured application applies formatting to XML files opened in FrameMaker

- Similar in concept to CSS / HTML .. but more

- Applies formatting based on context

- Can perform transformation of structure

But why?

- FrameMaker is both an XML authoring and publishing tool

- "Front-loads" the PDF publishing effort

- Want well-formatted PDFs?

- Conceptually similar to XSL-FO development (but far easier)

Structapp components

- DTD - Document Type Definition

- EDD - Element Definition Document

- Template

- Read/write rules

- XSLT import and/or export stylesheets

- Import/export FDK client

Relationship of components

- DTD - defines the model

- EDD - created from the DTD, references styles in template

- Template - defines the styles and page layout, contains a copy of the EDD

- Read/write rules - defines special element properties as read from or written to XML on disk

- XSLT import and/or export stylesheets - optionally perform transformation on import or export

Create a new app?

- Creating complex app can be a bit of work
  - Create EDD from DTD
  - Modify EDD to apply context rules
  - Import EDD into template
- You can create an app from a DTD and CSS
  - Open DTD as EDD
  - Import CSS into EDD

Customize existing app?

If possible, it's best to start from an existing app

First, clone the structured application files

Next, create a new structured application definition

Then, start with template modifications:

  Modify paragraph or character styles and formats

  Update the page layout headers/footers (master pages)

  Update the reference pages as needed

<DEMO - Clone apps>

Show location of app files

Copy main app folder to new name

Rename app name in each EDD and import into templates

Update app name and rename paths in stub files

Add stubs to structapp file

Read structapp file

<DEMO - Modify template>

- Open DITA map in FrameMaker + DITA-FMx

- Generate book from map

- View generated book .. locate items that require change

- Modify in generated file

- Open Book template and import formats from modified file

- Regenerate book and see changes

change main title font
change side-head space
add colored box to title
change chapnum color/font

Need "structural" changes?

- If you want to modify the structure:
  - New elements or attributes
  - General rule changes
  - Special context rules
- You'll need to modify the EDD
- Then import the EDD into the template (don't forget!)

<DEMO - EDD changes>

- Show general structure of EDD and element definitions
- Locate element to change, determine modification type
- Update EDD and import into test document
- Repeat until satisfied
- Import EDD into template
- Regenerate book and see changes

Set color of shortdesc based on parent topic type
task
Then add support for concept
concept
Then add a level rule to add a SingleLine under
shortdesc at first topic

Other types of processing?

- Read/write rules allow definition of special element properties when reading or writing to disk

- Import/export XSLT for serious modifications to the structure or content

- Import/export FDK client (plugin) can perform any other automated processing needed

It's worth the effort!

- Fine tuning a structured application can take time

- Leverages existing FrameMaker template skills

- Start simple and learn as you go

- Puts you in control of your PDF layout and formatting

Resources / questions

Structured Application Developer's Guide is your "friend"
http://www.adobe.com/support/documentation/en/framemaker/

Structured FrameMaker Forum
http://forums.adobe.com/community/framemaker/framemaker_structured

Questions?

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