

# EPUB Help: A viable Help delivery option?



STC Summit 2014 - Phoenix, AZ

Scott Prentice, Leximation, Inc.

# 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.
- [ Consulting for custom Help systems, creative/functional web applications, and EPUB solutions.

# EPUB Help, really?

- [ Demise of CHM (and HLP), no apparent ideal solution
- [ EPUB is a single-file container of content and navigation
- [ Provides TOC, Index, and typically Search and Bookmarks
- [ EPUB 3 is based on HTML 5 and CSS 3
- [ EPUB 3 allows scripting and interactivity
- [ EPUB 3 may be the answer!

# What is EPUB?

- [ EPUB is an ebook file format that can be read on almost every device and platform
- [ Requires a “reader” application or dedicated reader device
- [ A collection of XHTML, XML, CSS, and media files wrapped up in a “zip” archive
- [ Defines the content, navigation, and formatting of the ebook

# Brief history of EPUB

- [ EPUB specification is maintained by IDPF
- [ Initial EPUB format approved in 2007, superseding Open eBook standard
- [ EPUB 2.0.1 approved 2010
- [ EPUB 3 approved October 2011
- [ EPUB 3 Fixed Layout, May 2012; Indexes, Jan. 2014
- [ EPUB 3 Dictionaries Working Group, in progress



# EPUB 3 makes it possible!

- [ EPUB 3 specification provides for a self-contained website
- [ HTML 5, CSS 3, SVG, MathML .. everything you need
- [ Provide scripting and interactivity
- [ Responsive layout via media queries
- [ Include videos and audio
- [ Leverage 3rd party JS libraries

# Provides “Help” features

- [ TOC, Index, Search, Bookmarks
- [ Previous/Next browsing
- [ Topic-based presentation (vertical scrolling!)
- [ Wide tables and images are usable
- [ Context sensitivity (coming soon!)
- [ Cross-book linking (some day, in theory)

# Useful EPUB 3 readers

## — [ Desktop

- AZARDI (Mac, Linux, Windows)
- Chrome + Radium (Mac, Linux, Windows)

## — [ Mobile

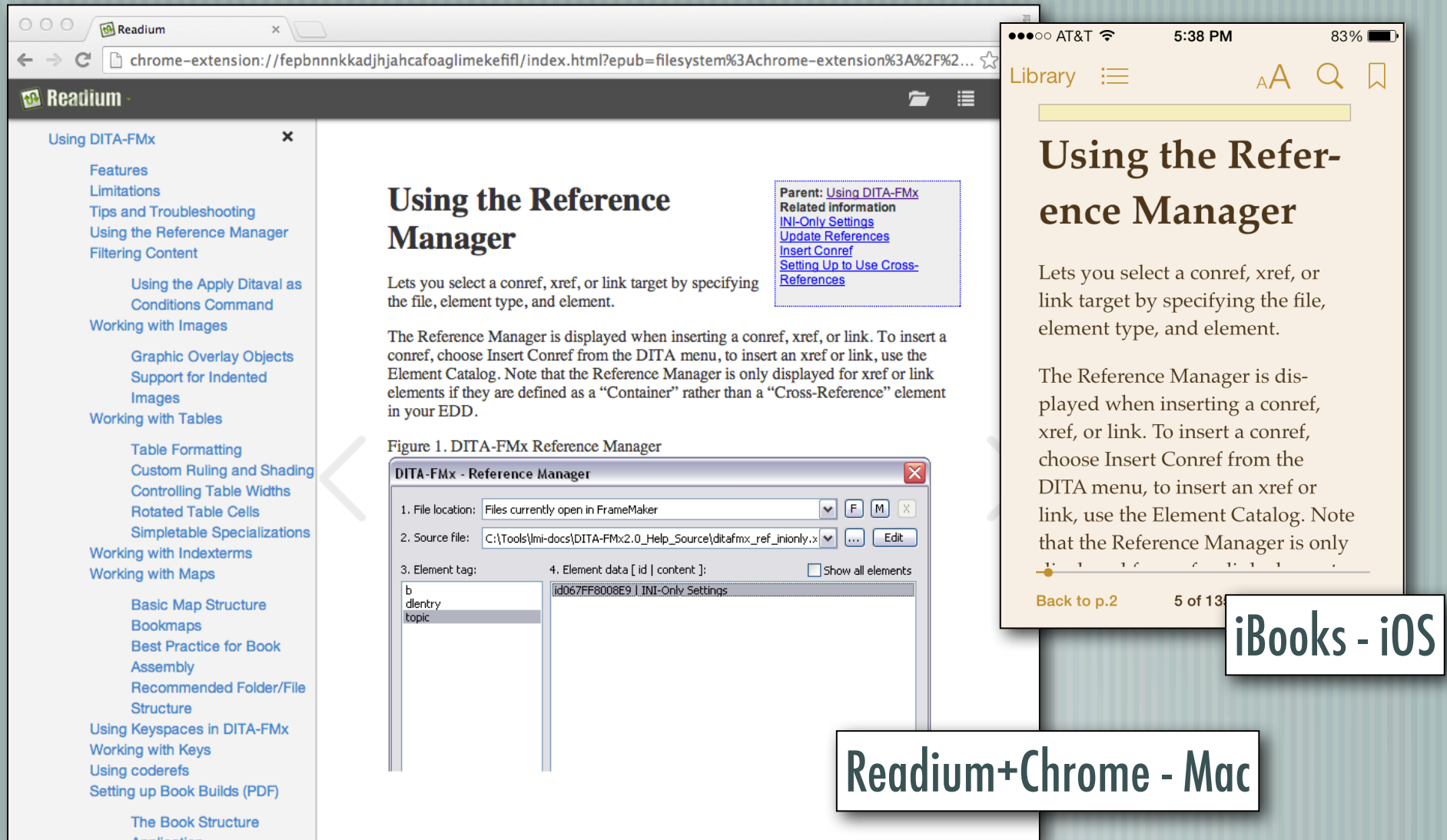
- Apple iBooks (iOS)
- Gitden Reader (Android, iOS)



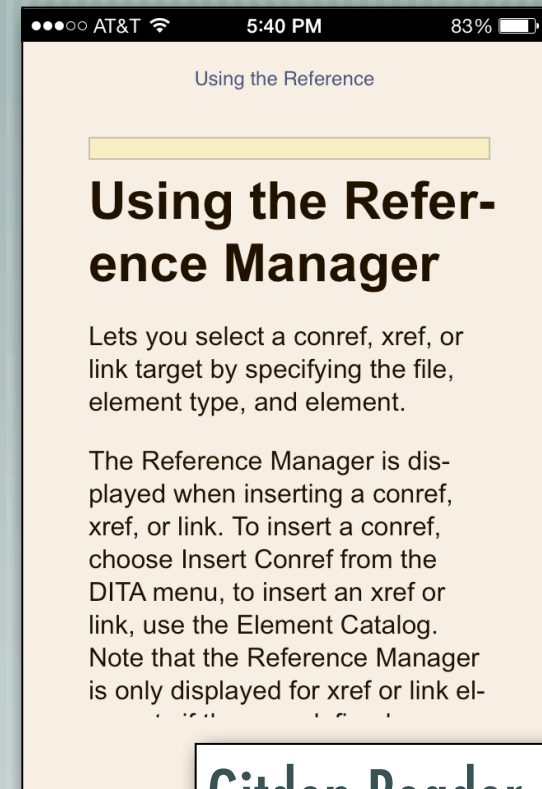
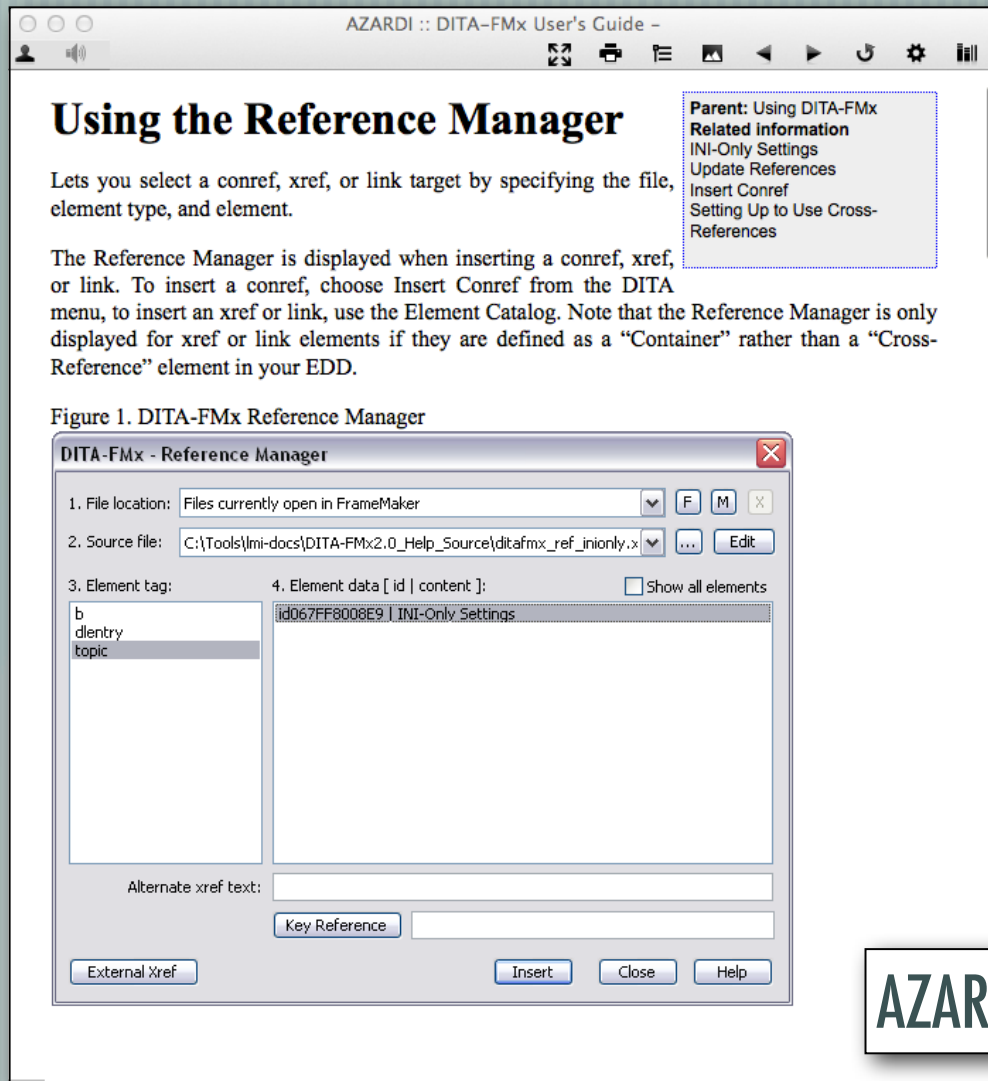
# Some useful JS libraries

- [ jQuery, jQuery-ui, jQuery-mobile - so many features
- [ highlight.js - code syntax highlighting
- [ Shadowbox.js - image viewing
- [ Raphaël - vector graphic manipulation
- [ gRaphaël - interactive charts and graphs
- [ Try your favorite library, most seem to work!

# Prototype



# Prototype

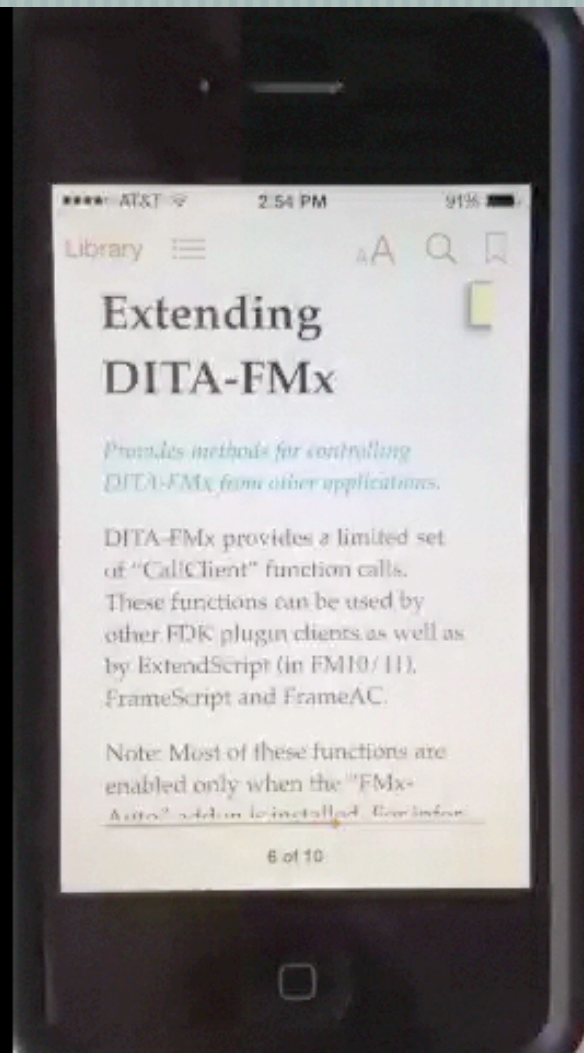


Gitden Reader - iOS

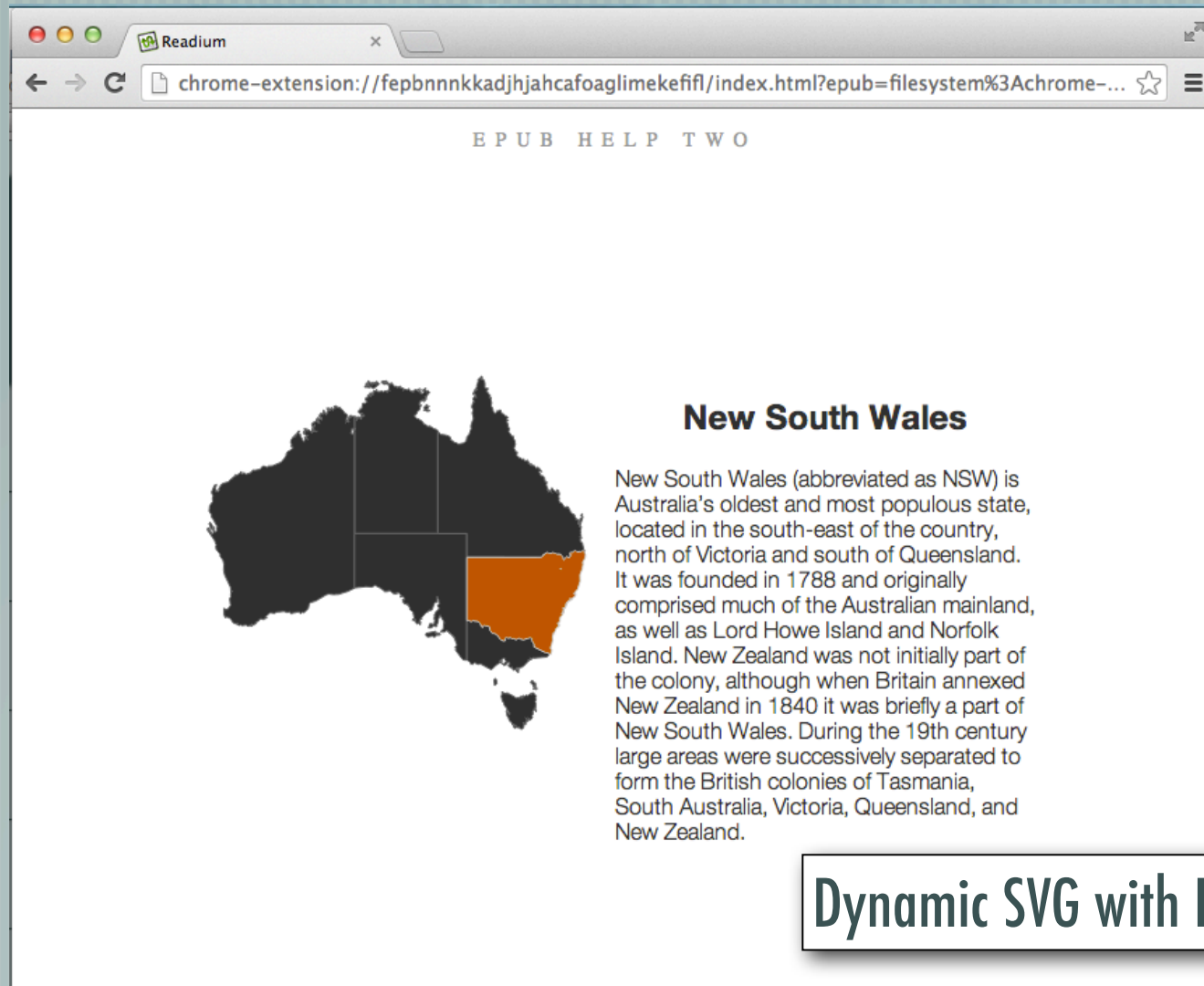
AZARDI Desktop - Mac

# Prototype

Responsive design  
turns related links  
into “pop-up” on  
small screen



# Prototype



Dynamic SVG with Raphaël

# Well, almost...

- [ Most reader applications don't support the full spec (yet)
- [ There's no option for context sensitivity (yet)
- [ You'll need to hand-code (for now)
- [ Not likely to work well on Kindle (but you can try)
- [ Not consistent rendering on reader applications
- [ Give it another couple of years?

# Tips

- [ Don't use JS code in content files, always reference JS files
- [ Don't use @style attributes, always use @class
- [ Mouse events may not work as expected on “touch” devices
- [ Don't go overboard, best to allow for graceful failures
- [ Test on as many readers and devices as possible, inform users of “tested” readers

# EPUB tools and utilities

- [ EPUB 3 editors

- Oxygen XML editor

- BlueGriffon EPUB Edition

- [ Calibre - multi-purpose tool

- [ epubcheck - validator

- [ kindlegen - converts EPUB 3 to KF8



# DEMO!

- [ Prototype EPUB Help in Windows using AZARDI
- [ Prototype EPUB Help in OS X using AZARDI and Radium
- [ Additional EPUB Help tests
- [ Open EPUB in Oxygen to show internal structure

# Let's make this happen!

- [ To make this into a reality, contact the reader developers and request the following:
  - Provide full text search
  - Support command line arguments for target topic (context sensitivity)
- [ AZARDI is the most likely for desktop use, but all readers should support these features.

# Resources

— [ EPUB 3 specification - [idpf.org/epub/30](http://idpf.org/epub/30)

— [ CSS 3 Module Info - [www.css3.info/modules](http://www.css3.info/modules)

— [ Liz Castro – [www.pigsgourdsandwikis.com](http://www.pigsgourdsandwikis.com)

— [ Ebook Ninjas Podcasts - [ebookninjas.com](http://ebookninjas.com)

— [ Resources – [www.epubtest.com/resources.php](http://www.epubtest.com/resources.php)

— [ Follow #eprdctn on Twitter

— [ Scott Prentice <[scott AT leximation.com](mailto:scott@leximation.com)> – [www.leximation.com](http://www.leximation.com)