

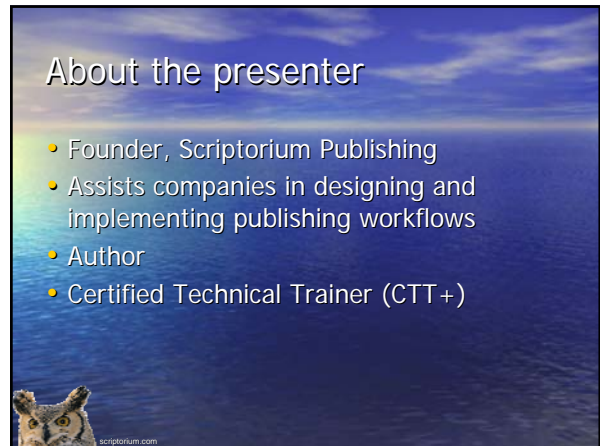


LavaCon 2005

Creating User-Specific Online Documentation Using XML

Sarah O'Keefe
Scriptorium Publishing

(Background: A sunset over a mountain range with an owl in the bottom left corner.)



About the presenter

- Founder, Scriptorium Publishing
- Assists companies in designing and implementing publishing workflows
- Author
- Certified Technical Trainer (CTT+)

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Agenda

- Content reuse scenarios
- Traditional versioning techniques
- Bringing XML into the picture

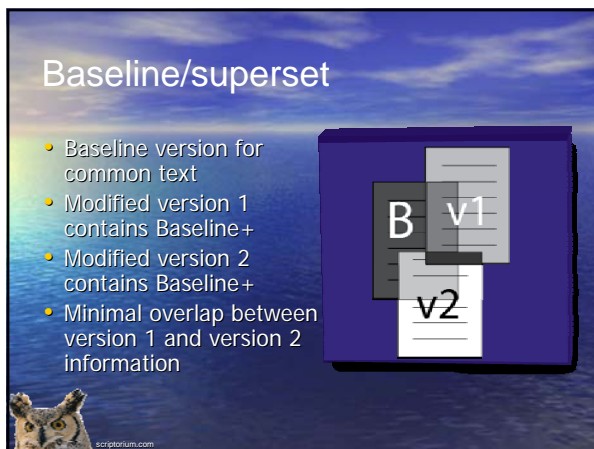
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Content reuse scenarios

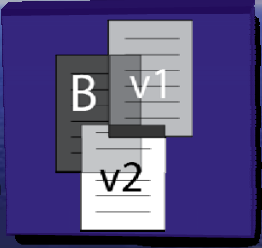
- Baseline/superset
- One-off customization
- Topic assembly
- Customization per user or role

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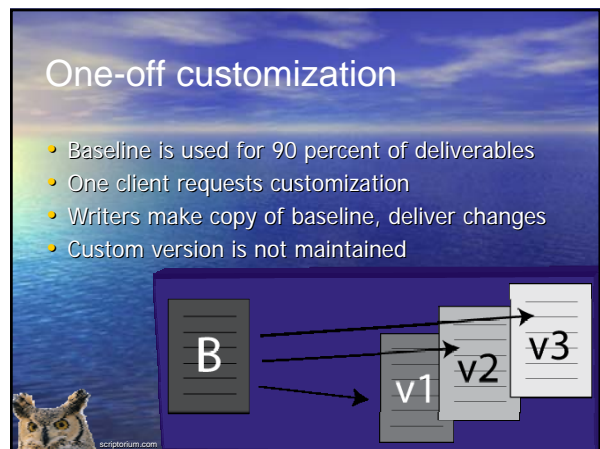


Baseline/superset

- Baseline version for common text
- Modified version 1 contains Baseline+
- Modified version 2 contains Baseline+
- Minimal overlap between version 1 and version 2 information

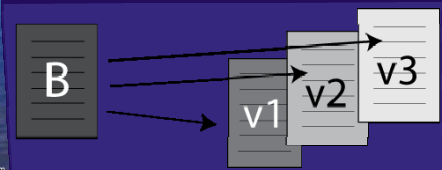


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One-off customization


- Baseline is used for 90 percent of deliverables
- One client requests customization
- Writers make copy of baseline, deliver changes
- Custom version is not maintained



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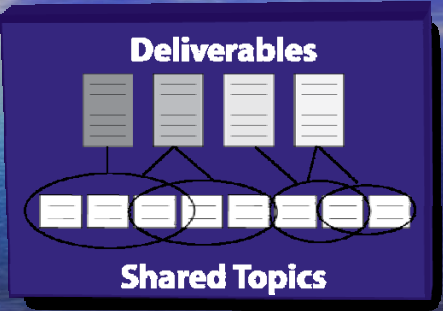
Topic assembly

- Content library contains modules
- Each deliverable uses some of the modules
- Modules are the same for each deliverable
- Assembly done by identifying relevant modules for each delivery




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Topic assembly



Deliverables


Shared Topics



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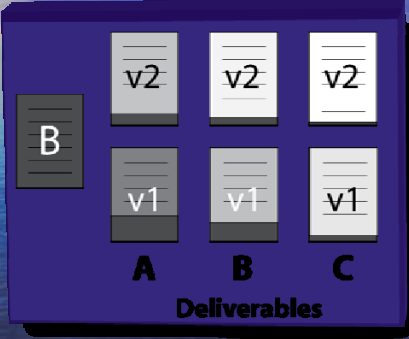
Customization per user or role

- Baseline information is limited
- Almost all information is customized
- Information is often included in multiple versions
- Large number of versions



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Customization per user or role



Deliverables

A B C


v1 v2



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Traditional versioning techniques


- Conditional text
- Build tags
- Reuse in AuthorIT



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Conditional text and build tags


- Excellent for baseline/superset with no overlap among superset versions
- Problems with content that requires multiple conditions



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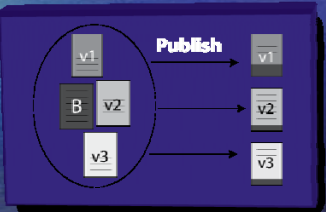
Reuse in AuthorIT

- Suitable for topic assembly
- Need a defined set of deliverables because topic lists must be defined ahead of time




Traditional versioning

- Customization occurs during publishing


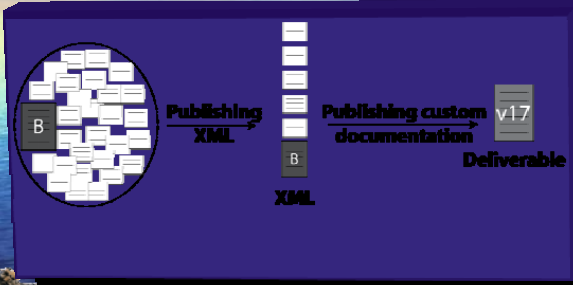


Creating user-specific content

- Number of variations is too large to manage with traditional techniques
- Software interface changes based on user permissions
- Customization shifted from publishing to delivery




Customization upon user request




XML for content reuse

- Developing the content model
- Creating user-specific processing



Developing the content model

- Analyze user-specific requirements
- Develop elements and especially attributes to support versioning
- Write content that can be sliced and diced




Creating user-specific processing

- Write filters based on user profile information
- Filter based on attribute values?
- Real-time versus static versioning



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Demo



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Q & A



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Summary


- XML-based versioning supports traditional, limited versioning.
- Can go beyond traditional options.
- Excellent solution for user profiling or documentation that's customized on the fly.



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Summary (continued)


- Expensive to implement (see Business Case presentation).
- Attribute-based versioning will require custom(-ized) structure.
- All XML project caveats apply.



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Resources

- XML white papers: www.scriptorium.com/papers.html
- *XML Architecture for Customized User Assistance*: www.winwriters.com/articles/xml/
- DITA: www.oasis-open.org/committees/tc_home.php?wg_abbrev=dita



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