

# Integrating Structured Authoring into Your Technical Communication Program



Dave Kmiec  
Scriptorium Publishing  
www.scriptorium.com  
NC State University

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## Agenda

- Who are you?
- What is structured authoring?
- Why should *my* college or university program address structured authoring?
- How can I add structured authoring to my existing curricula?
- What learning and support resources are available?



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## About the presenter

- Technical consultant and trainer for Scriptorium Publishing
- Engineering communication instructor and curriculum designer at NC State University



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## Structured authoring

- A publishing workflow that defines and enforces consistent format and organization of information in documents
- An authoring environment that allows (and requires) authors to label content with metadata



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## Structured authoring

- Enforces consistent presentation and content organization
- Facilitates information exchange and reuse

The diagram illustrates the structured authoring process for a recipe. On the left, an XML code block defines the recipe structure. In the center, a tree diagram shows the hierarchical organization of the content. On the right, the rendered HTML output is shown, including the recipe title, ingredients list, and directions.

```
<recipe>
<title>Marinara Sauce</title>
<inglist>
<ing>2 tbsp. olive oil</ing>
<ing>2 cloves garlic, minced</ing>
<ing>1/2 tsp. hot red pepper</ing>
<ing>28 oz. canned tomatoes</ing>
<ing>2 tbsp. parsley, chopped</ing>
</inglist>
<directions>...</directions>
</recipe>
```

**Marinara Sauce**

2 tbsp. olive oil  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1/2 tsp. hot red pepper  
28 oz. canned tomatoes  
2 tbsp. parsley, chopped

Heat olive oil in a large saucepan on medium. Add garlic and hot red pepper and sweat until fragrant. Add tomatoes, breaking up into smaller pieces. Simmer on medium-low heat for at least 20 minutes. Add parsley, simmer for another five minutes. Serve over long pasta.

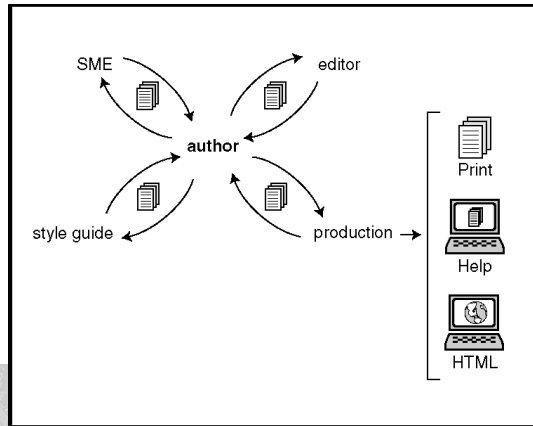
## Structured authoring

- Implemented with software that verifies whether units of content follow a predetermined structure definition template
- Used most effectively in combination with single sourcing content and output
- Quickly becoming popular due to the maturation of technologies such as XML



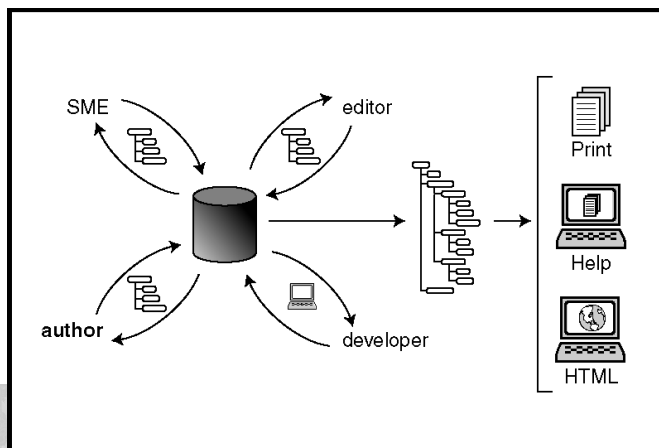
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## Typical authoring workflow



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## Structured authoring workflow



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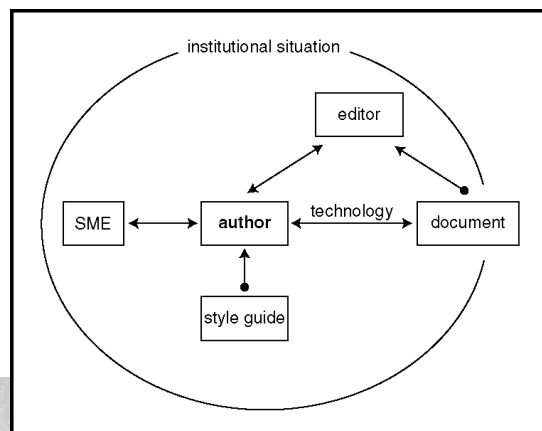
## Workplace implications

- Workplace roles and relationships
- Content knowledge expectations
- Technological skill set
- Writing skill set



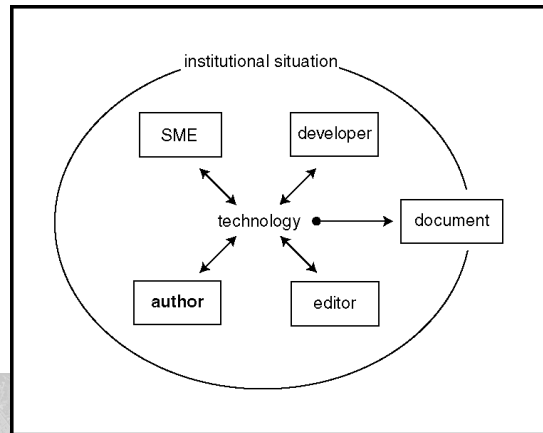
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## Typical authoring workflow



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## Structured authoring workflow



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## Rhetorical implications

- Invention intervention
- Genre freezing
- Power restructuring
  - rule-enforcing agency
  - diffusion
  - technocracy
- Minimized authorial mystique

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## Positioning lessons on structured authoring

- Professional development (training)
- Technical college
- Undergraduate program
- Graduate program



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## Adding modular units

- Skill/tool classes
- Practice classes
- Management classes
- Theory classes



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## Adding an elective



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## Resources

- 3 white papers on managing and implementing structured authoring:  
[www.scriptorium.com/papers.html](http://www.scriptorium.com/papers.html)
- XML, content management, and single sourcing books and articles
- *Technical Writing 101* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)  
ISBN 0-9704733-2-X



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## Contact information

.....  
Dave Kmiec  
Scriptorium Publishing

dkmiec@scriptorium.com

www.scriptorium.com



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The DocFRAME logo, consisting of the word "Doc" in a bold, sans-serif font followed by "FRAME" in a bold, serif font, all contained within a rectangular border. The background of the logo is a light gray with a subtle pattern of small squares.  
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