

WebWorks Publisher

The Single-Sourcing Solution

Scriptorium Publishing Services, Inc.

PO Box 12761, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

919-481-2701 or sales@scriptorium.com

<http://www.scriptorium.com>



So little time

Most technical writers work against tight (and sometimes unrealistic) deadlines. They must deliver a manual and online help in time for the product's ship date, which is constantly changing. This means that writers have to include last-minute changes in both the manual and separate online help files. Because writers often don't have time to correct both the hard copy and online files, changes may be appended to release notes or ignored. The result is confused users and increased phone calls to the technical support hotline, not to mention incomplete documentation.

The answer: single sourcing

Imagine updating a single set of files and using them to create hard copy and online documentation. Quadralay's WebWorks Publisher makes this process possible. Publisher converts FrameMaker files to HTML, HTML Help, WinHelp, and WebWorks Help, which is a combination of JavaScript and HTML. Users can also customize Publisher to output information in a variety of ways. JavaScript applets and online forms can even be embedded in FrameMaker files and converted intact.

How it works

The first step is configuring FrameMaker files for conversion. This involves restructuring information for online viewing (see "Designating print and online text" on page 3). You also must verify that the FrameMaker template was used correctly. Styles should be used consistently and not overridden.

The next step is converting the FrameMaker files to the desired output. Publisher's wizard guides you through the process of selecting a template that corresponds to your output and mapping FrameMaker styles to Publisher styles. The project can be generated in a few minutes, depending on the size of the FrameMaker documents.

The last step is adjusting the Publisher code to customize styles, page layout, graphics, and other elements that may not have converted properly.

Modifying content for dual delivery

When you convert a FrameMaker document to an online format, certain printed documentation conventions don't work well online. For example, chapters need to be split into several files to decrease

online scrolling. Conceptual information needs to be edited or deleted. Graphics can be optimized for online viewing. Basically, online help and printed documentation are structured differently, so you need to take time to modify the FrameMaker content for dual delivery.

Designating print and online text

Printed documentation is often structured so that Heading 1 is followed by introductory text and several Heading 2s. In online documents, however, Heading 2s usually start on a new page to decrease scrolling. Users also can't scan the entire page for the Heading 2s. They must go to the next page instead. As a result, you need to provide users with visual cues for the related Heading 2s; otherwise, they have to browse to find information.

The best way to do this is to create a list of cross-references to the Heading 2s. Place the list below the Heading 1 introductory text. When the document is converted to an online format, the cross-references become hyperlinks that provide users with both visual and navigational cues. Instead of using the Browse button to scroll through each page, users can select the appropriate heading.

Because you don't want the cross-reference list to appear in the printed documentation, create a conditional tag called "Online" and apply it to the list. When you hide text flagged with the Online tag, the list won't print. You can then configure Publisher to show text with the Online conditional tag.

In addition, you may want to hide conceptual information in the printed documentation because online help should primarily be task-oriented. You can create a conditional tag called "Print" and set it to show in the FrameMaker file, but you set it to hide in Publisher.

Creating hypertext commands

Printed documentation often contains URLs or email addresses that you can easily convert to hypertext. Users can then select the URL to go to the web site or select the email address to launch the email program and send an email.

To convert URLs to hypertext, create a new marker in FrameMaker called "URL." The marker definition should be `message client URL http://www.websiteaddress.com`. Publisher will automatically map this marker to the GoToLink&Open marker. When the user selects the URL, the web site will display in the default browser.

To convert email addresses to hypertext, create a new marker in FrameMaker called "Email." The marker definition should be the email address. In Publisher, create a marker called "Email" that contains the definition ` $DATA;`. The first \$DATA macro returns the marker definition. The second \$DATA macro returns the paragraph text. In Publisher, you then need to map the FrameMaker Email marker style to the Publisher Email marker style. Publisher converts the email address to hypertext.

Creating image maps

An image map is a graphic containing hyperlinks to other HTML pages. In FrameMaker, you can create image maps using markers for the hyperlinks, or hotspots. Choose the text to which the hotspot should link and insert a marker with the definition `newlink link name`. To designate the hotspot, create a new marker called "Target," draw a text box over the area of the graphic you want to make active, then insert the Target marker in the text box. The marker definition should be `gotolink file name: link name`. Publisher automatically maps this marker to the GoToFile&Open marker, converting it to a hotspot. When the user selects the hotspot, the referenced HTML page is displayed.

Creating index entries

Publisher automatically maps index markers in FrameMaker to create index entries. Index markers are especially important if you're creating WebWorks Help, which contains an Index tab. If your documentation contains no index markers, the tab will not have links to index entries.

Selecting the online format

WebWorks Publisher comes with several templates that produce different online formats. The templates are as follows:

- Portable HTML (Figure 1)

The Portable HTML template produces basic HTML files suitable for publishing on the Internet or your company's intranet. Cross-reference formats and other links in your FrameMaker file are automatically converted to hyperlinks. You can also customize navigation bars, which are inserted during conversion, and create image maps, as discussed earlier.

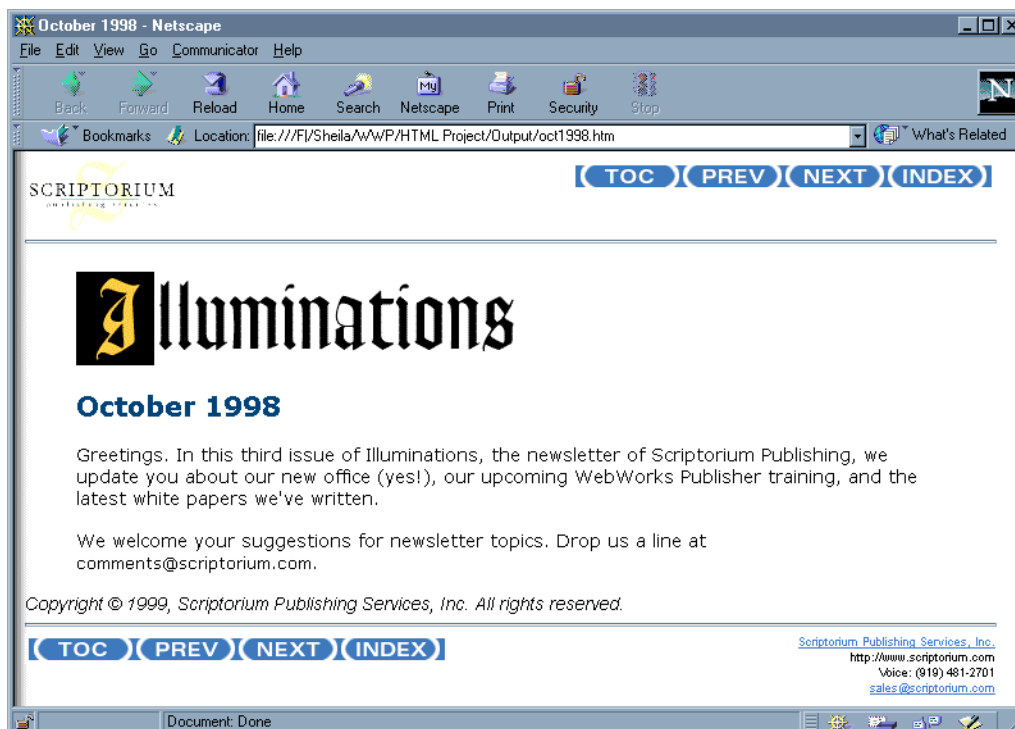


Figure 1. HTML output

- Dynamic HTML

If you want more control over formatting, such as using special graphic effects or specific fonts, use the DHTML template to convert FrameMaker files to dynamic HTML. The output looks similar to Portable HTML, but the template allows you to use cascading style sheets in your HTML files.

- Microsoft HTML Help (Figure 2)

This template allows you to create HTML Help, Microsoft's newest online help format. To complete the conversion to HTML Help, you must compile the files in the Microsoft HTML Help Workshop and create the final CHM file.



Figure 2. HTML Help output

- Microsoft WinHelp (Figure 3)

If you still prefer the traditional online help window with the Contents tab, you can use the Microsoft WinHelp template. WebWorks Publisher produces the RTF, HPJ, H, and other files that you use as input for the Microsoft Help Compiler Workshop to create the final HLP file. You need to know Rich Text Format (RTF) tags to customize the template.

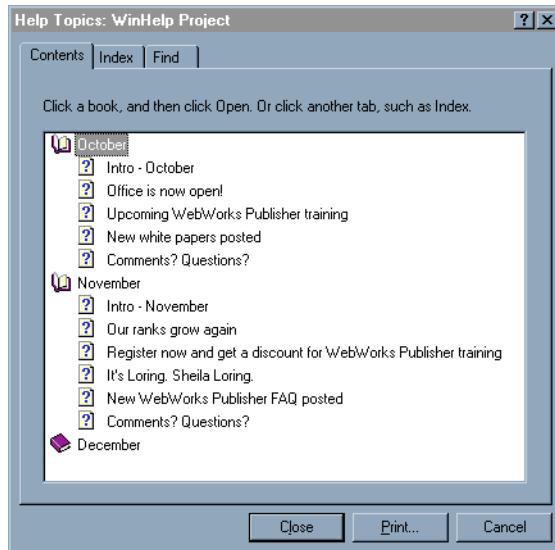


Figure 3. WinHelp output

- WebWorks Help (Figure 4)

This format uses an HTML frameset and JavaScript files to create a cross-platform, browser-independent online help system. The left frame contains navigation tabs for the table of contents, index, search, and favorite bookmarks. The right frame contains the content. WebWorks Help runs in Netscape Navigator 4.x and Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.x.

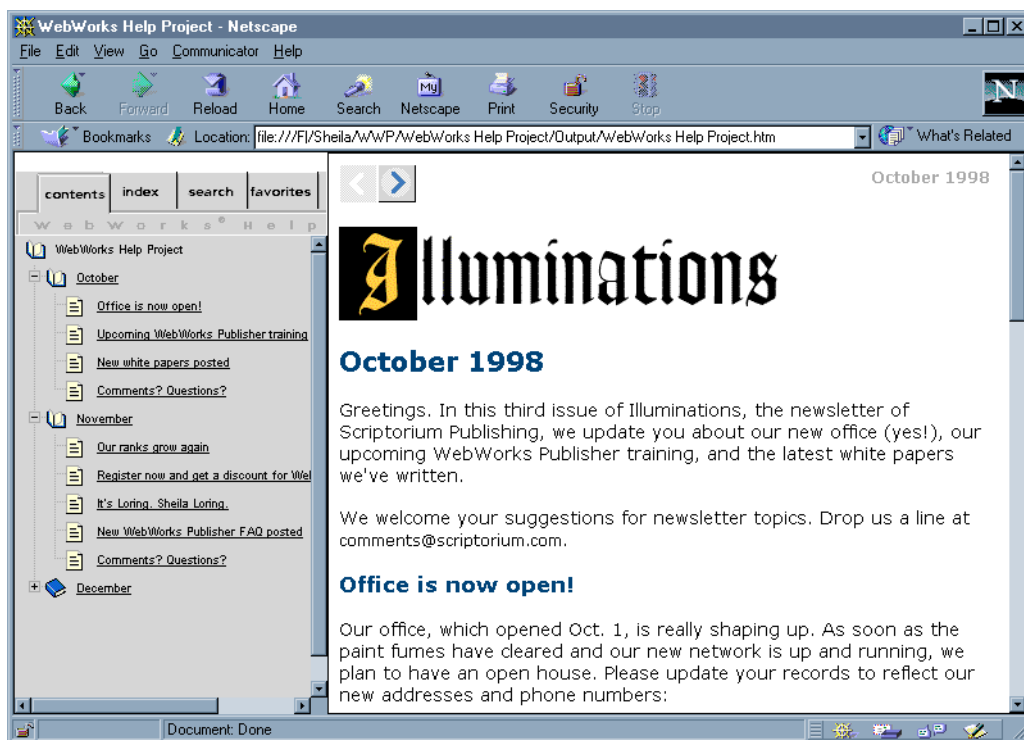
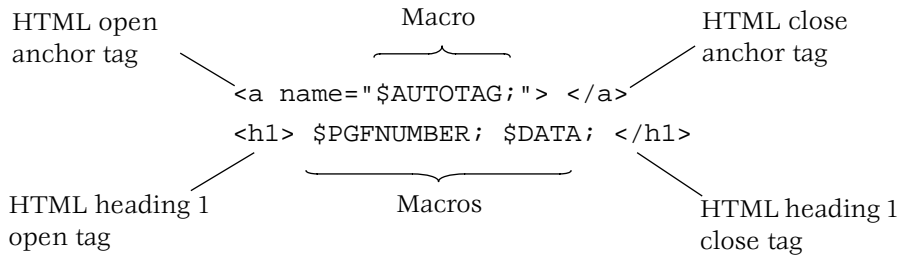


Figure 4. WebWorks Help output

Adjusting the code

Once you view the output, you may want to modify a particular style that is used, change the page layout, or correct a FrameMaker element that didn't convert properly. When you make these changes, you'll need to understand simple programming. Publisher converts FrameMaker styles to Publisher styles using macros, regu-

lar expressions, and RTF or HTML tags, depending on the output. For example, Publisher uses the following code to convert a Heading 1 in FrameMaker:



In the example, the words preceded by dollar signs are macros. The macro `$AUTOTAG;` assigns a numerical value to the paragraph, which is then used to create cross-references and hyperlinks. `$PGFNUMBER;` returns the number in Heading 1, and `$DATA;` returns the text in Heading 1. These macros are wrapped in HTML code. This example is one of the simpler Publisher styles, but once you understand the basics, you can adjust styles that use the more complex regular expressions.

Conclusion

Single-sourcing is a viable option for technical writers. Above all, it saves time by allowing writers to use one source file to create dual outputs—printed and online. The only tool created specifically to work with FrameMaker files and to use their inherent structure, WebWorks Publisher also provides the user with several robust templates that may be customized.

For more information, you can read more about WebWorks Publisher or download an evaluation copy at <http://www.quadrally.com>. You can also download reviews and white papers at <http://www.scriptorium.com>.

About Us

Scriptorium Publishing Services, Inc. excels at transforming complex technical ideas into clear, concise documents. Our clients, who range from start-ups to Fortune 500 companies, rely on us for the full spectrum of technical publishing services—everything from turnkey documentation to specialized technical editing and consulting. Our expert, talented staff thrives on working with challenging new technology in a deadline-driven environment.

If you have any questions about Scriptorium Publishing Services, Inc., contact:

Scriptorium Publishing Services, Inc.
P.O. Box 12761
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709
919-481-2701
sales@scriptorium.com
<http://www.scriptorium.com>