

Coping with the XML Paradigm Shift

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Agenda

- About the presenter
- Paradigm shifts and why people hate them
- Who will resist?
- Why?
- How can you respond?



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About the presenter

- Consultant
- Author of several books
- Currently focused on XML and structured authoring
- Founder, Scriptorium Publishing



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Paradigm shift

- Originally from *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Thomas Kuhn, 1962)
- Change in basic assumptions
- Carries connotations of:
 - Difficult
 - Hard to assimilate
 - Cognitive dissonance



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The desktop publishing paradigm

- WYSIWYG
- Template compliance relies on author cooperation
- Template overrides (“tweaks”) often used to manage page breaks and other “special” items
- Authors are responsible for final appearance
- “Established in 1985...”



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The XML paradigm for authors

- WYSIOO (What You See Is One Option)
- Authors cannot avoid template compliance
- Authors have no control over final appearance
- XML authoring tools are...less than perfect
- The authoring experience is quite different from traditional publishing tools
- Complex metadata may be required
- New, different, and more challenging



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The XML paradigm for managers

- Better content storage
- Document production is a one-time development effort instead of an ongoing repeated effort
- Reduced costs because of more efficient production
- Starting point for content management
- More consistent information



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Managers like it

- More control
- Cheaper document production and localization
- What's not to like?



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Writers? Not so much...

- Less control over organization
- No control over formatting
- Tools aren't as good
- Often, the structure isn't an ideal fit
- Most of the benefits go to others



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Accentuate the positive

- Freedom from formatting foibles
- Content consistency
- Complex reuse scenarios (beyond conditional text, build tags) are feasible
- Learning new tools and technologies always a good idea
- New roles: information architect and XSL developer



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Professional writers

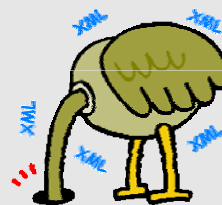
- Have at least a basic understanding of XML and its implications
- Are willing to consider XML (assuming it's appropriate for their environment)
- May or may not be particular about their authoring tools/environment



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Taxonomy of Problem Writers

- Suckups
- Ostriches
- Contrarians
- Technophiles
- Technosaurs
- Skeptics
- One-Trick Ponies



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Who will resist?

- Contrarians
- Technosaurs
- Skeptics
- One-Trick Ponies



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Viva la Resistance!



- If your implementation doesn't meet writers' real needs, resistance is an appropriate response.
- Don't implement garbage.
- Do pay attention to requirements for your particular workflow.
- Do not allow vendor marketing to drive your decision process.



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Contrarians

- They say "no" to everything.
- Why are they opposed? Because it wasn't their idea.



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Technosaurs

- Change is bad.
- We don't like change.
- Things are fine the way they are.



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One-Trick Ponies

- They know (sort of) how to work in the current system.
- They are afraid of having to learn something new.
- Exquisitely sensitive to change.
- Nothing to lose from resistance.



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Let's assume you are building something actually useful.

- How do you manage "unreasonable" resistance?



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Technophiles

- Will support change for the sake of change.
- May not look closely at the costs and benefits of a solution.
- Tend to be passionately for or against specific applications.



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Skeptics

- Will find every potential flaw in the implementation plan.
- They can be powerful allies and great testers.



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What's your ROR ratio?

➤ Risk of resistance

Type	Number	ROR factor	Score
Suckups	4	0	0
Ostriches	1	0.1	0.1
Contrarians	1	1	1
Technophiles	3	-1	-3
Technosaurs	3	3	9
Skeptics	4	0.5	2
One-Trick Ponies	1	5	5
Other		1	
TOTAL	17		14.1
ROR ratio	0.83		



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Your battle plan

- BATTLE PLAN?
- Isn't that a little overdramatic??
- Depends. Do you want to end up like this?



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Your battle plan

- Identify the Technophiles first
 - Use them as early adopters and testers.
- Find the Skeptics
 - If the plan is sound, you can win them over.
 - They are better testers than the Technophiles – a Skeptic won't gloss over problems because "it's so cool!"



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Your battle plan (continued)

- Keep Contrarians away from the project until you have something quite solid. The less they have to complain about, the better.
- Technosaurs go in two categories – those who will adapt and those who will not.
 - Provide lots of training. Ease them into the new way of working. Adapters will gradually figure it out.



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Your battle plan (continued)



- One-Trick Ponies are a huge problem.
 - They are incapable of learning a new way of doing things.
 - True One-Trick Ponies are quite rare.
 - Make sure that they are the last ones to move into the new system.
 - Consider a "maintenance team" assignment.



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Move the goalposts

- Make working in the new authoring environment a privilege, not a demand.
- Provide tools that eliminate currently tedious tasks in the new environment.
- Identify current pain points and address them.
- Carrots, not sticks.
- *(for our international audience)*



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Summary

- Resistance can make or break your implementation.
- Rate your risk and determine your strategy.
- Do you have a compelling reason to move to XML?



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Q & A



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Resources

- XML white papers:
www.scriptorium.com/papers.html



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Contact information

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