

The Business Case for Single Sourcing



Sarah O'Keefe
President
Scriptorium Publishing
www.scriptorium.com

Alexia Prendergast
Mgr., Information Development
VERITAS Software
www.veritas.com

Agenda

- About us...
- What is single sourcing?
- When does it make sense?
- What are the costs and benefits?
- Does it make sense for me?
- How do I analyze the ROI?
- How do I sell single sourcing in my organization?

About the presenters

Sarah O'Keefe

- President of Scriptorium Publishing (www.scriptorium.com)
- FrameMaker Adobe Certified Expert, WebWorks Publisher certified trainer
- Has developed custom single-sourcing solutions using FrameMaker and WebWorks Publisher

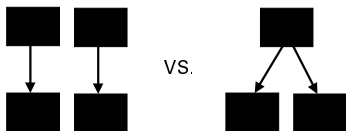
About the presenters

Alexia Prendergast

- Manager, Information Development, VERITAS Software
- Producing multiple online formats as well as paper documentation from a single source
- Has been working with several VERITAS sites to implement single sourcing

What is single sourcing?

- One set of source files
- Many forms of output



Perceptions about single sourcing

- Writing for print and writing for online are totally different.
- Help content and book content are too different.
- The help will look like a book.
- Too much customization is required to use each medium effectively.
- Tools are too complicated.

When does single sourcing make sense?

- **Content of help and books overlap**
 - 50% or more is the same
- **Time and money are limited**
 - Not enough money to develop in parallel
 - Not enough time to develop one after the other

What are the costs of single sourcing?

- **Initial efforts not always successful**
- **Requires planning and discipline—you'll need to train people to think before they write (hey, wait, that's not a cost...)**
- **You'll need a tools person to set up and support the conversion process**

What are the costs of *not* single sourcing?

- **Maintaining information duplicated across books and help (writing, updating, reviewing, localizing, etc.) is time consuming and error prone**
- **Maintaining multiple development processes with different tools, learning curves, etc., is pricey**

What are the benefits of single sourcing?

- **Your users get information that is:**
 - Accurate
 - Up-to-date
 - Usable
 - Effective
- **You get an efficient writing process that saves time and money**

What are my options? Is it right for me?

- ***Duplicate information* across docs and help.**
- ***Don't duplicate information.* Use cross-references to redirect users. Maintain separate development processes for docs and help.**
- ***Single source.***

How do I analyze the ROI of single sourcing?

- **Look at the amount of documentation**
- **Look at your process**
- **Estimate the costs**
- **Compare to the costs of single sourcing**
- **Also, consider less tangible benefits (reduced tech support costs, increased customer satisfaction)**
- **The result is hard to argue with!**

Not all single sourcing is the same

- There's single sourcing... and there's single sourcing
- Implementation can be all the difference

Analyzing the ROI

Implementation makes a difference: a concrete example

- 6,000 pages of documentation
- 10 books and online help
- Translated into eight languages

Analyzing the ROI

Original process

- Develop books in FrameMaker
- Save FrameMaker to RTF
- Import RTF into RoboHelp
- Clean up RoboHelp files (3 weeks per book)
- Deliver books and online help

Analyzing the ROI

Original cost of conversion

- 3 weeks per book; 10 books = 30 man-weeks @ \$30/hour = \$36,000
- Translation into eight languages and clean up again = $8 * \$36,000 = \$288,000$ (only looking at clean-up costs, not translation costs)
- Process repeated for each release

Analyzing the ROI

New process

- Develop books in FrameMaker
- Convert to WinHelp via WebWorks Publisher
- Deliver books and online help

Analyzing the ROI

New cost of conversion

- One-time costs
 - Template development: \$6,000
 - Training: \$5,000
 - Software: \$2,000
- Recurring costs
 - Conversion time: 1 hour per book; 10 books @ \$120/hour = \$1200
 - Conversion time for translated materials = $8 * \$1200 = \9600

Analyzing the ROI

Total cost of first deliverable

- **One-time total costs: \$13,000**
- **Recurring costs: \$10,800**
- **Total: \$23,800**
- *Cost of first release, which includes development of single-sourcing template, is less than one-tenth of the cost of the original process!*

How do I sell single sourcing in my organization?

- **Quality**
- **Time to market**
- **Maintenance**
- **Cost and ROI**

How do I sell single sourcing?

Quality

- **Customizing presentation for each medium to take advantage of strengths**
- **More time available to concentrate on quality of content and/or additional deliverables**

How do I sell single sourcing?

Time to market

- **Automated generation of multiple output reduces production time**
- **Single sourcing is often the only way to meet deadlines for multiple deliverables (print, PDF, help, etc.)**

How do I sell single sourcing?

Maintenance

- **Maintaining multiple sets of similar information is time consuming and error prone**
- **Work is less tedious; more time available for creativity and thoroughness**

How do I sell single sourcing?

Cost and ROI

- **Setting it up is a one-time expense (rather than an expense that's repeated—for every language)**
- **Maintaining one set of information is more efficient**
- **Emphasizing consistent tagging means less cleanup at production time**

Summary

- **This isn't your mother's single sourcing**
- **It's often (not always) the best answer**
- **The benefits are quantifiable**
- **Planning is absolutely essential**
- **Questions? Anyone?... Anyone?...**

For more information

- **Sarah: okeefe@scriptorium.com**
- **Alexia: alexia@veritas.com
(we're hiring, hint hint)**
- **This presentation:
www.scriptorium.com/stc2000.pdf**
- **Other white papers and
information on single sourcing:
www.scriptorium.com/resources.html**