

Minimizing author disruption when implementing structured publishing

Our client is a department within state government that creates multiple maintenance manuals. The client's authoring process—based on Microsoft Word—required high levels of manual work to create PDF and HTML deliverables. We implemented a structured authoring workflow that automates the creation of PDF and HTML output but still allows content contributors to use Microsoft Word.

The department produces approximately 100 maintenance manuals, ranging from 50 to 300 pages each. The conversion of Word files to HTML and PDF required a series of complex production steps. Our client requested a solution that would enable the department to do the following:

- ❖ Automate the production of HTML and PDF deliverables
- ❖ Implement structured authoring and XML
- ❖ Enable searches across the entire document library on the web
- ❖ Allow authors to create content in FrameMaker and XML
- ❖ Allow authors to continue working in their existing Word-based environment
- ❖ Convert Word files for use in structured authoring

We developed a customized process to import Word files into FrameMaker. This included small modifications to the existing Word authoring template and extensive scripting.

It would be more efficient for authors to create content directly in FrameMaker or XML instead of working in Word. However, our client's short-

term priority was to implement a structured authoring environment without changing the authors' workflow.

The production team converted finished Word documents into structured documents. The authors retained the ability to publish directly from their Word files as needed.

Leveraging DocFrame structure

Our client had straightforward structure and formatting requirements. To reduce custom development costs, we used our DocFrame solution as a foundation. DocFrame provides a FrameMaker-based print solution, integration between FrameMaker and XML, and XSL transformation from XML to HTML, HTML Help, and JavaHelp.

Our modifications included the following:

- ❖ Changed the structure to accommodate client-specific requirements
- ❖ Modified the print template to match the client's formatting requirements
- ❖ Modified XSL transformations to match the appearance of the client's HTML output and to support changes made to the structure

Providing web-based searching

After reviewing the existing search utility (which is no longer supported), we recommended a solution based on Verity Ultraseek. None of the standard help systems (HTML Help, WebHelp, or WebWorks Help) scales well to provide search across hundreds of manuals. Instead, we delivered plain HTML output and added the Ultraseek search engine to index the pages and organize the manuals into collections. End users have a powerful, customizable search feature.



Documentation and knowledge transfer

The production team had expert knowledge of the existing publishing system, but they had little experience with components in the new workflow. We provided private on-site training to introduce the new applications. Training was based on documentation we developed during the project and included extensive discussion of the conversion systems.

Tools

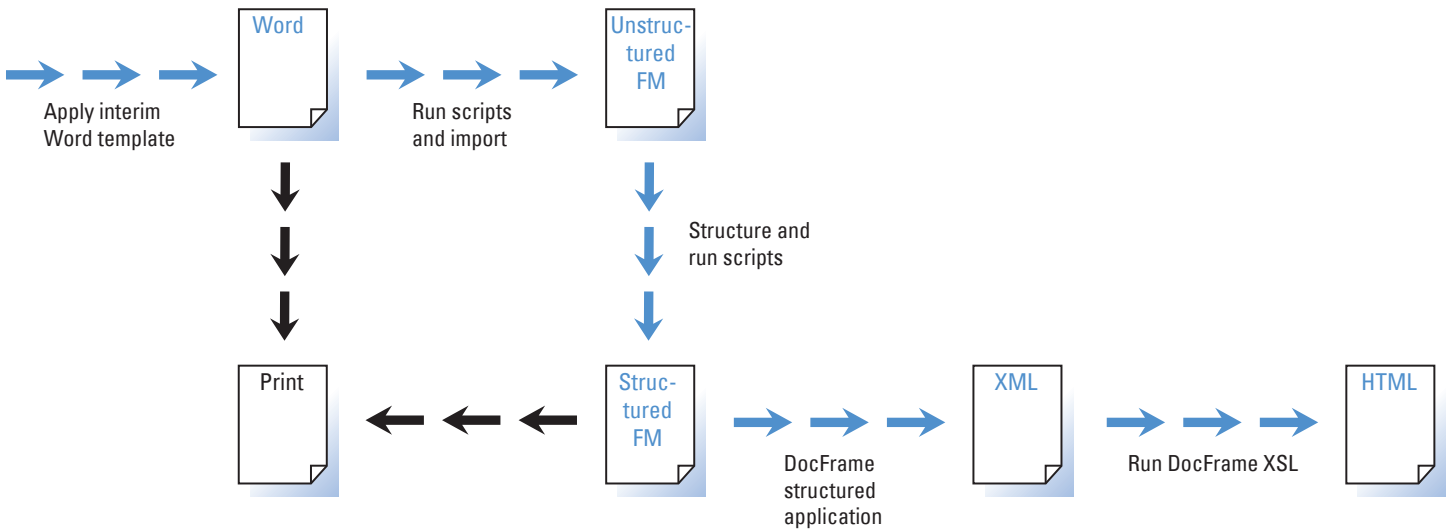
- ❖ Scriptorium DocFrame
- ❖ Microsoft Word
- ❖ Adobe FrameMaker 7
- ❖ Verity Ultraseek
- ❖ XSLT
- ❖ Saxon XSL processor

Future plans

Our client plans to move authors out of their current Word template and into a tool that supports structured authoring over the next few years. At this time, the structured authoring implementation is completely invisible to the authors. Despite the inefficiencies of the new process, it is far more streamlined than the process it replaced, and it gives the production team the ability to create XML.

Highlights

- ❖ Implement heterogeneous publishing and retrieval solution
- ❖ Minimize disruption to established workflow
- ❖ Leverage long-term knowledge assets with XML
- ❖ Integrate off-the-shelf solutions with minimal custom development
- ❖ Provide scalable component-based solution
- ❖ Enable self-sufficiency with thorough documentation and knowledge transfer



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