

Structured FrameMaker

What a Long, Strange Trip It's Been!

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Coming attractions

- Case study
- Whither Teradata?
- What about the industry?
- “And I care because why...?”

Initial project objectives

- Define, implement consistent content organization, print and online
- Reduce back-end processing for PDF, help
- Simplify infrastructure (fewer templates, fewer tags)
- Move toward *explicit* information modeling
- Exploit off-the shelf products and experienced consultants

Business case?

- Cost reduction from localization makes an easy justification
- Consistency, yes. But *whose* consistency?
- “*Exploit*”??



Timeline

Concept (Single-Sourcing)	Mar-02
Concept (Structured Frame)	Sep-02
Contract	Apr-03
Sample conversion	Aug-03
Training	Nov-03
Initial conversions	Nov-03
Final conversions	Jun-04
Deliveries from FM7	Nov-04
Contract end	Dec-04

Six months. Or more.

- Almost impossible to implement in less than six months
- Two years not at all uncommon, especially for government customers, where the funding is tied to fiscal years
- Consider a phased implementation



Results

- One size fits all EDD
 - Much use training required
- Successful deliverables beginning 11/04
- Continuing, but dwindling updates to EDD, templates
- Awareness of need and value of information and document modeling
- Partial understanding of semantic labeling instead of visual tagging

Challenges (1)

- Organizational culture
 - Distinct internal organizations; mistrust
 - Consensus-based management
- CHANGE!
- Project management changes
- Lack of local management buy-in
- CHANGE!

Challenges (2)

- Investor-beneficiary disconnect
- Lack of style guide and information models
- CHANGE!
- Limited technical expertise
- Not invented here
- “But presentation matters!”
- Conflicting visions on route to goal
 - Good enough
 - Match existing output
- It’s not Information Mapping!
- Legacy documentation problems

The challenge of legacy documentation

- Death with dignity?
- Migration cost can be easily more than cost of implementation itself
 - Tables inside tables...
- Rewriting cost can be easily...well, you get the idea
- Can you triage?



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



It's all about the people.

- Change resistance very common
- Competition between departments problematic
- How do you sell to your own organization?
- Strong leadership required; expect turnover



Post-mortem, bono (1)

- Hired contractor
 - Element definition document (EDD) and related infrastructure
 - Conversion of legacy documentation
 - Training
 - Consulting
- Developed in-house expertise
 - EDD/structured FrameMaker
 - WebWorks Publisher
 - FrameScript
 - Extensible Stylesheet Language (XSL)

Post-mortem, bono (2)

- Met deliverable commitments
- No loss of quality
- Awareness of semantic tagging
- Productivity gains from single-sourcing

Post-mortem, mal

- Reinforced internal distrust
- Avoided discipline issues
- Outstanding change requests

Post-mortem @ Scriptorium

- No clear authority figure (“Decider”) inside client organization.
- Not possible to develop consensus between hostile groups.
- Unwillingness to compromise.
- Lack of maturity in existing writing process.



Levels of authoring

1. Ad hoc writing. No resemblance between documents.
2. Similarities on paper, but implementation in files different.
3. Template-driven authoring with minimal overrides.
4. Structured authoring

Teradata was a 2+. Difficult to jump to 4.



Success Factors (1)

- Buy-in: why is this change
 - Necessary?
 - Valuable to the company?
 - Valuable to the individual?
- Well-defined templates
- Clear management structure, responsibilities
- Dedicated, authorized project manager

Success Factors (2)

- Programming expertise
- Focus on content; minimal interest in presentation
- Openness to mistakes
- Process-orientation
- Overcommunication
- Pilot project

Success factors

Buy-in



Failure factors

- No templates
- No information model
 - Book structure for user guides, reference manuals, language references, APIs
- No style guide
- No trust
- No decision-making process

Failure factors

- Open hostility among writing groups
- No bad cop. Not even a sheriff.
- Extreme change resistance
- Some writers threatened by elimination of formatting (“tweaking”)?
- No previous template-driven authoring; culture shock



Follow-on activities

- Root cause investigation
 - User difficulties with overly complex EDD
- Modeled information structure and needs
 - Designed for discovered use cases
- Created simplified EDD
- Created single-source PDF, HTML
- Mixed results
 - Better use of EDD
 - Learned information modeling
 - Met some user expectations
 - End products not compelling to use
 - Stale, unreliable source information
 - Need to model content
 - Need to define topic maps

What we're up to now

- Development driven by business needs
- Content management pilot
 - Astoria Software
 - AntennaHouse
- DITA
 - Externally defined DTD
 - Vendor-supported
 - “Specializable”

DITA

- Removes ownership issues from structure
- Does it fit your requirements?
- Out of the box, faster implementation. With specialization, maybe not.
- Vendors like it

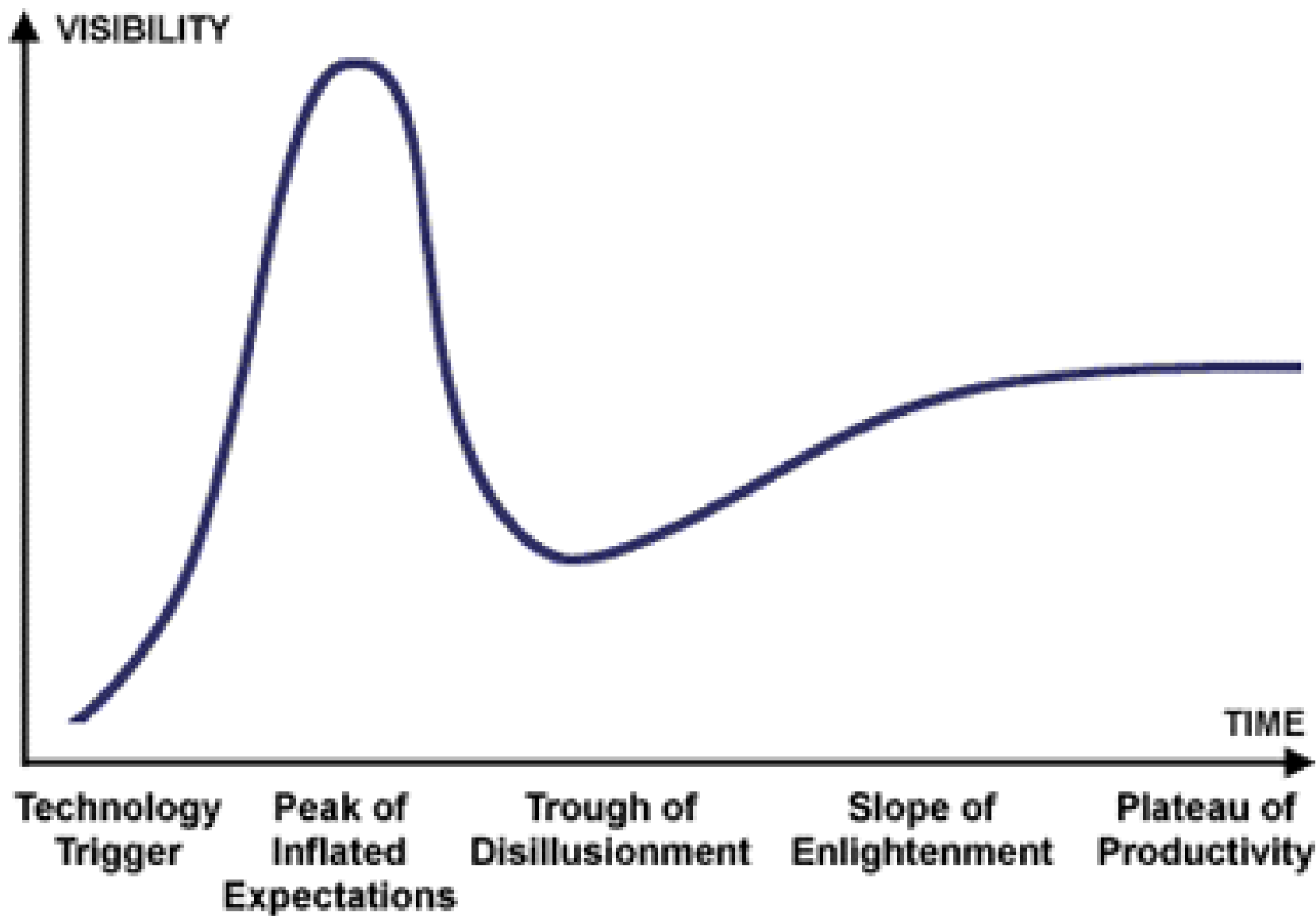


Industry trends

- Shift away from print/PDF as primary deliverable
- No really excellent XML solution (Big Three contenders: Arbortext, FrameMaker, XMetaL)
- Localization cost driving XML adoption
- Craftsmanship versus object-oriented writing
- Lots of excitement about DITA



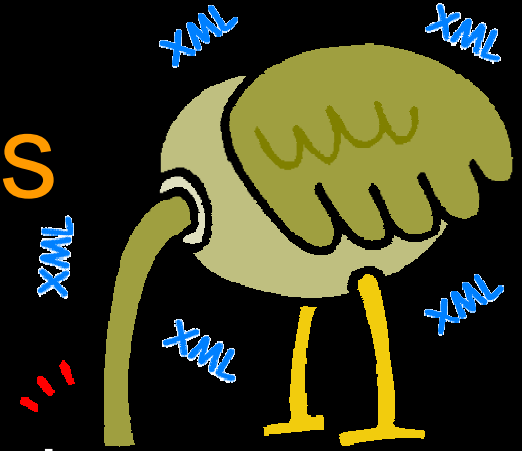
Hype Cycle of Emerging Technology



Source: GartnerGroup

Some inconvenient truths

- You are not your audience.
- Your readers don't care as much as you do.
- Money matters.
- Resistance is futile.
- You are not as cute as a panda.
- Being a writer ain't enough.
- You have to become a different writer.



New job opportunities

- Information architect
- CMS administrator
- XSL programmer

XML and your career future

- XML is the Next Big Thing.
- Adapt or...ugh.
- XML/XSL provide options outside tech pubs. (Can you say “programmer salary”?)
- Learn about the concepts behind “structured authoring”
- Requires better writers to create context-neutral, topic-oriented content

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White papers

www.scriptorium.com/papers.html

(free with registration)

Q & A