



XML: The Next Step for Help Authors



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HTML Writers Guild



- non-profit educational organization for Web authors
- over 120,000 members
- in more than 150 nations worldwide

Introduction

- Overview of XML
 - wrt the Help Authoring process
- Single sourcing
 - the first step is the biggest
- Examples



XML

- Plenty of publicity
- Plenty of introductory articles
- Plenty of tutorials
- Plenty of motivation
- Lack of starting points



Different technology users

- Webmasters
 - XHTML
- E-commerce, B2B, EDI
 - Data Stores
- Help Authoring
 - Project management



XML for Help Authors

- Enhancements to text based systems
- Help systems utilising new services
- **Single sourcing**
 - Separating structure from content



XML Help Process

Document
Templates

Content
Generation

Transformation



Picture IT - Microsoft

- 30 developers
- 1 XSLT programmer
- numerous languages
- multiple software manuals
 - SKU tag



The First Step is the Biggest

Document
Templates

- Separating structure from content

Content
Generation

Transformation

Creating templates

- Separating structure is not always easy
 - ingrained print-based habits
 - all caps (readability)
 - fonts
 - white space
 - jargon
 - terminology barriers



Dealing with the overlap

- *Structure* and *Content* not always different
- Overlap = *functionality*
- Extent of functionality?
 - experience of writer
 - requirements of project
 - understanding of XSL



Functionality - HTML

- WAI has been adding functionality for disabled users
 - alt
 - lang
 - longdesc
 - col and colgroup



Functionality

- XML allows the creation of new commands for specific needs
 - for different audiences
 - for different formats
 - for different devices
 - for different languages
 -



Templates

- Functionality documented
 - DTD: SGML construct
 - Schema: XML construct
- Pre-existing templates
 - Organisation for the Advancement of Structured Information
<http://www.oasis-open.org/>



DocBooks

- <http://docbook.org/>
- structures correspond to the general notion of what constitutes a "book,"
- adopted by a large and growing community of authors
- supported "out of the box" by a number of commercial tools



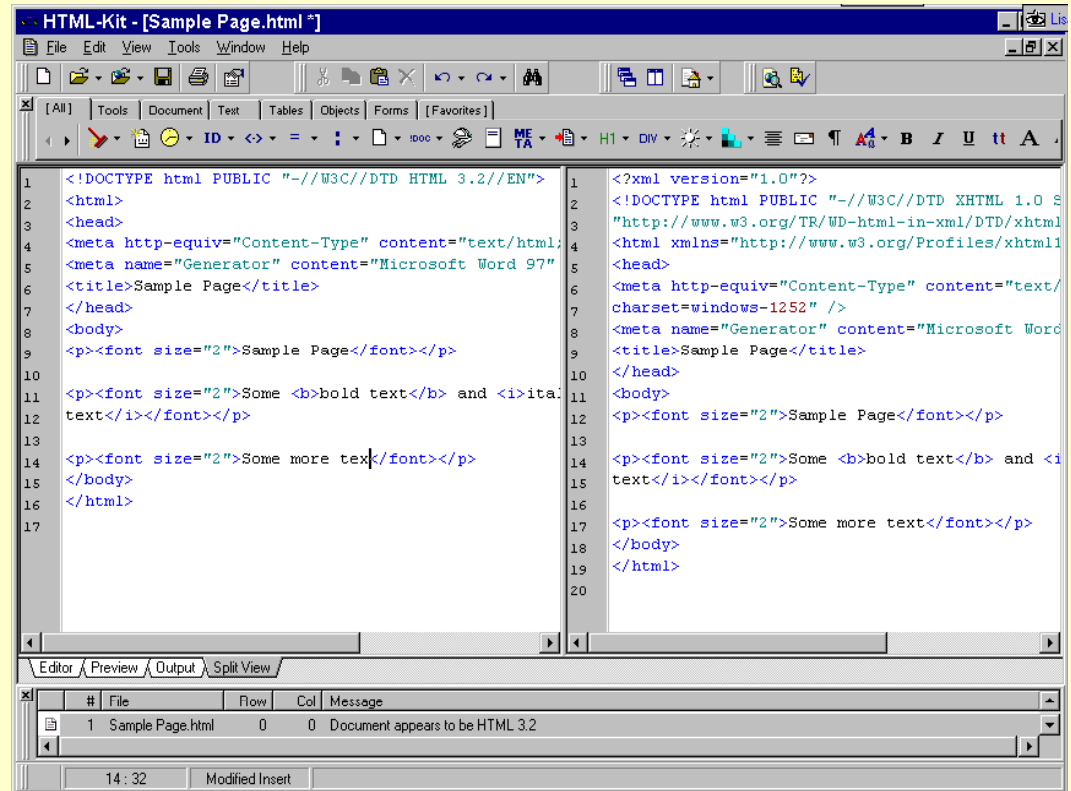
Project Management

- Validation
 - compliance with templates
 - Essential for transformations
- Ideal for group work
 - common structure
 - common styles



Authoring Tools

- Notepad ??
- Hot Metal
- SGML tools
- HTML Kit
- MS Word



The screenshot shows the HTML-Kit application window titled "HTML-Kit - [Sample Page.html *]". The interface includes a menu bar (File, Edit, View, Tools, Window, Help), a toolbar, and a multi-tabbed editor area. The left editor shows HTML code for a document with a DOCTYPE of HTML 3.2, a title "Sample Page", and a body containing three paragraphs of text with bold and italic formatting. The right editor shows the same code but with a DOCTYPE of XHTML 1.0 and an XML namespace declaration. A status bar at the bottom indicates the current file is "Sample Page.html" and the document appears to be HTML 3.2.



XSL Transformations

- Extensible Stylesheet Language
- change one page structure into another
- templates
 - rule-based
 - pattern matching



```
<xsl:stylesheet>
  <xsl:template match="/">
    <HTML><HEAD><TITLE>Simple
    transformation</TITLE></HEAD><BODY>
    <xsl:apply-templates/>
    </BODY></HTML>
  </xsl:template>
  <xsl:template match="...">
    <H3>
    <xsl:apply-templates />
    </H3>
  </xsl:template>
</xsl:stylesheet>
```

XSLT Processors

- [XML::XSL](#)
- [Xport](#)
- [XSL:P](#)
- [XSL Processor](#)
- [XSLScript](#)
- [XT](#)
- [Unicorn XSLT Processor](#)
- [4XSLT](#)
- [iXSLT](#)
- [Saxon](#)
- [LotusXSL](#)
- [Xalan](#)
- [XSLT-process 1.1](#)



[Processor](#)

The University of Melbourne



The HTML Writers Guild

What does the future hold?

- Uses of XML
 - single sourcing
 - improved project management
- New presentation formats
 - smaller devices
 - integration of voice





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