
DITA AT BUSINESS OBJECTS: A PHASED ADOPTION

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AGENDA

1. About Business Objects, an SAP company
2. Why we had to change our documentation
3. Why we chose DITA
4. How we migrated
5. What hurt
6. What we gained
7. Where we are going
8. Your questions

ABOUT BUSINESS OBJECTS

- ▶ World's leading Business Intelligence software company
- ▶ Headquarters in San Jose, CA and Paris, France
- ▶ Acquired Crystal Decisions in 2003
- ▶ Acquired by SAP in 2008
- ▶ Our first major platform release in DITA: Q1 2008



WHY WE CHOSE DITA

- ▶ DITA is:
 - ▶ Open, capable of evolving
 - ▶ Documentation-focused
 - ▶ XML
 - ▶ Topic-based
- ▶ Topic-based structure supports:
 - ▶ Consistent topic types
 - ▶ Reuse
- ▶ International, multi-functional, specializable standard

HOW WE MIGRATED

- ▶ **Timeline:**
 - ▶ 2005: Buy-in from executives
 - ▶ 2006: First tests, start of migration and minor deliveries
 - ▶ 2007: BETA delivery of our platform, with documentation
 - ▶ 2008: Release delivery of our platform, new doc library

HOW WE MIGRATED

▶ From planning to delivery

Publishing team	Technical writers/Trainers
Set up CMS	Train on topic-based authoring
Roll out XML editor	Analyze content for reuse
Train writers on CMS and editor	Train on CMS and XML editor
Write conversion scripts	
Document conversion procedures	
	Prepare material for conversion
Run automatic conversions	
	Clean up converted material
	Add new content
	Delivery

HOW WE MIGRATED

1. Publishing team provided a step-by-step migration guide
2. Authors used guide to prepare content for migration
3. Authors uploaded content to specific directory and notified publishing team
4. Publishing team ran migration, checked results, and notified authors of output
5. Authors examined migration logs, cleaned input files, and requested second migration
6. After second run, authors examined output in detail
7. Authors and publishing team cleaned output manually and using scripts

HOW WE MIGRATED

- ▶ Content from migration was:
 - ▶ Guaranteed to be valid
 - ▶ 80% structurally correct
 - ▶ 20-80% topic-based
- ▶ 10% of content needed re-writing

WHAT HURT

- ▶ What hurt
 - ▶ Migration required more manual work than expected
 - ▶ Topic-based training arrived too early for non-migrated projects
 - ▶ Adjustments for authors
 - ▶ How do we find content to “re-use?”
- ▶ The medicine
 - ▶ Hired new DITA architect
 - ▶ Hired full-time XSLT developer
 - ▶ Launched ongoing training and discussions
 - ▶ Created the Content Architect position

WHAT WE GAINED

- ▶ Localization
- ▶ Semantics
- ▶ Speed of change
- ▶ Fully integrated SDK documentation
- ▶ Automated quality assurance
- ▶ Automated error message documentation
- ▶ Experience in migration

WHAT WE GAINED

▶ Semantics

- ▶ Can now consistently mark up complex text like
C:\Documents***name-of-your-directory***
- ▶ “Are keywords supposed to be bold or capitalized?”
 - ▶ Now they are just <keyword>s
- ▶ “Do I put the example of a function before the description, or after?”
 - ▶ Now it’s just <function><example><description>

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WHAT WE GAINED

- ▶ Measured improvements
 - ▶ Increased consistency and accuracy in reused content
 - ▶ Decreased duplication of work from reuse and automation
 - ▶ Decreased volume
 - ▶ Increased customer satisfaction
 - ▶ Increased flexibility in look and feel updates
 - ▶ Publishing process for online help is 75% faster

WHERE WE ARE GOING

- ▶ Content architecture for reuse
- ▶ Integration with source code
- ▶ Documentation library
- ▶ Specializations

CONCLUSION

- ▶ DITA at Business Objects: Three years from idea to reality
- ▶ Cost savings in localization
- ▶ A measured “Jump right in” philosophy
- ▶ A solid, successful platform upon which new ideas are now sprouting

YOUR QUESTIONS