**March 2016**

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# Simply XML March 2016 Newsletter

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Have a great day!



# Common Goals, Split Thinking

## by Doug Gorman

# A Push from my Best Friend and Muse, Frank:

**Frank:**  *Hey Doug, isn't it about time for you to write some insightful and interesting stuff about Content Mapper and enterprise content?*

**Doug:** *Good idea, Frank. It's Easter, so maybe I should I should discuss religion and the resurrection of content standards?*

**Frank:** *Don't!*

**Doug:** *OK, maybe I can write about the US Presidential race. We could call it "the XML Circus."*

**Frank:** *That's even worse.*

**Doug:** *How about dealing with the immigration of content and the wall of discontent, everyone should be interested in that.*

**Frank:** *Stop messing around.*

**Doug:** *At the upcoming LavaCon Conference in Dublin, I'm going to be talking about "Creating Content Peace in a Multi-Silo Environment"*

**Frank:** *Please don't give that one away, yet.*

**Doug:** *OK, Perhaps I can cover this by talking about how staff in different departments have common goals, but also biases that often constrain the broader achievement of those goals.*

**Frank:** *Get to work!*

# Common Goals

It's quite simple. (I love that word!) I think most of us want various types of content to work together for the greater good of the people who want and need to use that content. I think we also agree that time and money are resources that need to be managed and controlled.

# Entrenched Beliefs

An executive I worked with at two different companies managed conflict particularly well. He used to not just tolerate disagreement, but encouraged differences of opinion to advantage by observing that, "Where you sit is where you stand." This has become one of my favorite thoughts when I try to deal with a thorny issue. We all have opinions, prejudices, biases, and in fact, something positive to contribute based on the sum total of our experiences with family, education, work, hobbies, friends, and more. These experiences impact our beliefs and actions, whether strategic, tactical, or operational.

**Frank:** *So far, so good, Doug.*

# Entrenched Technical Beliefs

Technical staff, including consultants, know a lot. In fact they know more than a lot about XML, DocBook, DITA, CMSs, and more. That's just fine and they have applied that knowledge in amazing ways to technical documentation and training materials through content reuse and multi-channel publishing of content to PDF, HTML, ePub, and mobile-enabled devices. To reach the pinnacle of success they had to convert content, implement an authoring and XML standard, add a ton of metadata and publish everywhere. Congratulations, it worked.

This effort consumed a lot of resources (time and money), but there was a clear return on that investment with the right information provided at the right time on the

right device to information consumers. There were meaningful savings and advantages through reuse, elimination of desktop publishing efforts, and increased flexibility. They implemented a lot of complicated technical tools, XML editors, CMSs, translation systems, and more.  Of course, in many of the industries where these systems are implemented – aerospace, medical devices, pharma product labeling, heavy equipment and reference publishing – the regulatory and compliance requirements and costs associated with inaccurate information were a significant component in the ROI calculation. It's only now, that corporations are waking up to the need to value a much broader set of enterprise content as the asset and lifeblood of the organization that it truly is.

This is where the technical staff sits and stands.

# Entrenched ROTO Beliefs

So what about the non-technical staff in the Rest Of The Organization (ROTO)? They also need the get the right information at the right time on the right device to their information consumers.  They know a lot about their world, the various departments, functions, financials, people, and more.  Similar to the technical staff, their careers have advanced because they are motivated, knowledgeable, and appropriately communicative.  Their communication is more varied and often less complex; including simple hierarchical structures, paragraphs and tables, and graphics highlighting things like facts, concepts, policies, procedures, processes, and plans. And there are a billion or so of them who use Microsoft products as their primary tools: MS Word, PowerPoint, and various repositories.   I believe that most of them, and their bosses, see the complexities of the technical implementations as too costly and unnecessary for practical implementation across the enterprise.

This is where ROTO sits and stands.

# Common Ground in Divergent Departments

The reality is that technical staff could benefit from content available in ROTO.  Similarly, ROTO staff could benefit from content available in the technical areas.  So, for this to work, there needs to be a common approach to content at the level of thinking and creation, but also at the level of structure.  Simply XML is convinced that XML will be the underlying technical structure for content across the enterprise. However:

1. Technical staff needs to acknowledge that authors at the enterprise level will use different editors and tools.  And the majority by numbers will keep using Microsoft Word. They won't convert their authoring tool to an XML editor or FrameMaker.
2. ROTO needs to acknowledge that XML will be the technical architecture underneath most corporate content.  And it is not enough to just stick PDF's or other media into containers with metadata.

3. Technical staff needs to understand that the XML, whether DITA, or DocBook, or NLM, or something else needs to be largely hidden from ROTO. It should probably be largely hidden from the technical staff, as well.
4. ROTO needs to constrain document structures and elements from Microsoft Word to get control enabling reuse and flexible publishing.  This will be accomplished with a common approach to structured writing with XML underneath.
5. Consultants and systems integrators need to understand that the resources necessary to do this cannot be extrapolated in a straight line from what was just spent on the technical side of the house  implementing content conversion, XML Authoring, CMS storage, and metadata.  They should also understand that the simpler nature of content in ROTO does not demand that, either.

# Conclusions:

1. Information consumers of all types want better content (the right information at the right time on the right device).
2. At the enterprise level organizations need a common structured writing standard with authoring tools that put XML underneath.
3. The least change model is often the best change model.
4. This can work in a cost-effective way if you KISS the enterprise (Keep It Simple, Smart-person.)
5. Where we sit is where we stand!

**Frank:**  *Good job Doug, here's a gold star.*

**Doug:** *Thanks for the help, Frank, here's a cookie!*

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# Simply XML at 2016 Conferences

## By Doug Gorman

# Overview of Conferences

We will be at a number of important conferences this spring.  We've mostly "been there, done that" with these conferences as the technical side of the market is somewhat small and focused. We can see the emerging commitment to XML as a standard for marketing, compliance, research reports, books, and other content beyond tech pubs and expect to be at some new and different conferences later this year and in 2017.  I would like to highlight a new conference for us that I'm particularly excited about.

# MIT Information and Communications Technology Conference

The annual **MIT Information & Communication Technologies Conference(ICT)** (http://ilp.mit.edu/conference.jsp?confid=135&tabname=overview) explores the latest ICT research from across the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and its potential impact across industries. This year's conference includes sessions on **Artificial Intelligence**, **Cybersecurity**, and the **Future of Work**. The program will feature presentations by MIT faculty, technology demonstrations by MIT-connected startups, and opportunities for networking with MIT researchers and top executives.

As an MIT graduate with a leading edge new company, I was invited to submit a proposal for a sponsored exhibit at this conference.  The attendees are from large global organizations and are members of MIT's Industrial Liaison Program. There were 12 spots for companies that were relevant and cutting edge in the area of information technology and started by an MIT graduate. Almost as a lark, I applied and pitched that there is a need for structured XML content and that with a billion people using Microsoft Word, we had gotten control of Microsoft Word and would be advancing the use of XML beyond the technical people to those authors.  Along with presumably some gene splicing, nano-something, cutting edge companies, we were accepted into the select group of sponsored exhibitors.

Simply XML's lead technologist Mathias has created a fantastic product. I've spent most of my career working with business needs and technology.  For more decades than I care to admit, structured writing and structured mark-up have been front and center. Maybe we will change the world after all! It is about time and I can't wait because we are "the Future of Work!"

# Upcoming 2016 Conferences for Simply XML and Content Mapper

Simply XML will be participating in these conferences in 2016.

| Date | Conference | Location |
|---|---|---|
| April 3-6 | DITA North America | Reston, VA |
| April 20-21 | MIT Information and Communications Technology Conference | Cambridge, MA |
| May 15-18 | STC Summit 2016 | Anaheim, CA |
| June 6-7 | LavaCon Dublin | Dublin, Ireland |
| October 26-28 | LavaCon Las Vegas | Las Vegas, NV |
| November 14-15 | DITA Europe | Munich, Germany |

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## Simply Tips and Tricks

All of our newsletters provide quick tips and tricks to help you simplify the XML world and beyond. Our tip for March focuses on March Madness.



## In Life:

I don't watch a lot of basketball normally during the year. However, I have a bracket and I'm fully engaged in the College March Madness scene.  It is interesting and fun on a number of levels with athleticism, teamwork, excellence, and plenty of surprises along the way. I enjoy the ride.

## In XML:

It takes technology, structured content, and teamwork to .... "make your content great again".(Sorry Frank.)......... I mean it takes technology, structured content, and teamwork to win the content game in the Madness of March, April, May,

June, and beyond.  I hope you enjoy
the ride.

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# There's a reason we call it Simply XML.

Simply XML provides simple, easy to use solutions for creating and publishing XML content. Creating, managing, and publishing content with our XML editor, Content Mapper, minimizes costs and ensures efficiency across your organization. Learn more at www.simplyxml.com.

**Request a Free Trial of Content Mapper**

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