



**SYSTEMS
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A Gradual Approach to Single Sourcing

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W e M a k e

I n f o r m a t i o n P e r f o r m

About John Hawkins



- ◆ **Project Manager and Senior Technical Writer**
- ◆ **Senior STC Member**
- ◆ **Experience in markup languages (SGML and XML)**
- ◆ **Experience with Single Sourcing**
- ◆ **Point person for AuthorIT**
- ◆ **Ask questions any time!**



About SDI



- ◆ **25+ years in business**
- ◆ **Offices in South Plainfield, NJ; Cary, NC; Nashua, NH; Ft. Smith, AR**
- ◆ **Traditional services: technical writing, graphics, editorial**
- ◆ **Focus on Making Information Perform**
- ◆ **Authorized Reseller and service provider for AuthorIT**



Single Sourcing



- ◆ **Hot topic in technical communications**
- ◆ **August 2003 issue of *Technical Communications***
- ◆ **Benefits:**
 - **Greater efficiency in authoring**
 - **Better consistency and control**
 - **Division of labor**
 - **Opportunities for learning and growth**
 - **Increased value of content across the organization**



Is Moving to Single Sourcing Too Hard?



- ◆ **Change can be costly and time consuming**
 - High priced content management systems
 - XML infrastructure
 - Change in culture and working methods
 - Long implementation time frame
- ◆ **Does not have to be a major capital investment**
- ◆ **You can take a gradual approach!**



Our Approach



- ◆ **Analysis is a really, really good idea**
- ◆ **Would you rather just wing it?**
- ◆ **AuthorIT can be used for a gradual approach**
 - **Use an application that promotes reuse**
 - **Start with low hanging fruit**
 - **Build reuse over time**
- ◆ **This talk illustrates general concepts for reuse with AuthorIT examples**



About AuthorIT



- ◆ **The Company**
 - **Based in New Zealand**
 - **In 6th year of production, Version 4**
- ◆ **The Philosophy**
 - **Make reuse easy!**
 - **Fit the way real writers work**
 - **Hide complexity/details of output formats**
- ◆ **The Technology**
 - **Object-oriented libraries**
 - **Jet or SQL Server database**



Why Some Analysis Is Wise



- ◆ **Making a business case (ROI)**
- ◆ **Who uses your content?**
 - End users
 - Customer support
 - Marketing
 - Training
- ◆ **What tasks are supported by your content?**
- ◆ **Costs of your current approach:**
 - Expense
 - Pain (how much time do writers spend on formatting?)



Key Issues

- ◆ **What information do you produce?**
- ◆ **What is your workflow process?**
- ◆ **What types of deliverables do you produce?**
 - Print
 - Web
 - Help
- ◆ **What content is reusable?**
- ◆ **Modeling reuse**



Why Not Just Do It?



- ◆ **There's money in your budget now!**
- ◆ **You have an immediate need**
- ◆ **Current methods are painful and costly**
- ◆ **You have (very little) time on your hands**
- ◆ **Analysis makes your head hurt**



Chunking



- ◆ **Reusable content is modular, with identifying labels for each “chunk”**
- ◆ **Word processor files can contain reusable chunks (but reusing them is awkward)**
- ◆ **Structure of chunks is also useful information**
- ◆ **Start by chunking existing content**



Multi-Channel Publishing



- ◆ **Publish to a standard print format**
- ◆ **Publish to the Web**
- ◆ **Publish to Help**



Reusing Content

- ◆ **Chunks**
- ◆ **Complete books**
- ◆ **Repeated text (boilerplate)**
- ◆ **Maintain content in only one place**



Low-Hanging Fruit

- ◆ **Copyright Statement**
- ◆ **Auto-generated Elements**
 - **Title Page**
 - **Table of Contents**
 - **Index**
- ◆ **Glossary**
- ◆ **Headers and Footers**



More Targets for Reuse

- ◆ **In general:**
 - **Content that is published to different media**
 - **Components used in multiple documents or systems**
 - **Information used by different departments**

- ◆ **Specifically:**
 - **Procedures**
 - **Policies**
 - **Content shared by documentation and training**
 - **Proposals**

- ◆ **Translation and Localization**



Variables

- ◆ **Placeholders for:**
 - **Text**
 - **Graphics**
 - **List of choices**

- ◆ **For example:**
 - **Product names**
 - **Logos**
 - **Product menu options**

- ◆ **Assign values at library, document, or topic level**

- ◆ **Appropriate values used when publishing**



Managing Content for Reuse



- ◆ **Make standard document elements available for reuse**
- ◆ **Share content within groups or across departments**
- ◆ **Provide authoring templates for predefined document and topic structures**
- ◆ **Provide standard publishing templates for print, web, and help outputs**



Metadata

- ◆ **Information *about* your information**
- ◆ **Can be used to search for and manage content**
- ◆ **Indexing is a form of metadata**
- ◆ **Variables can also be used to store metadata**



Content Relationships and History



- ◆ **When you reuse content, you need to know where a change will be applied**
- ◆ **Protect shared content from deletion**
- ◆ **Audit trail for changes**
- ◆ **Rollback capability**



Protecting Approved Content

- ◆ **Once you have approved content for reuse, protect it from unauthorized changes**
- ◆ **Flexible security for specifying who can access content:**
 - **Viewing**
 - **Modifying**
 - **Publishing**
 - **Applying release states**
- ◆ **Group and User security controls**
- ◆ **Also protect style definitions, authoring and publishing templates**



Modeling Standard Outputs



- ◆ **What are the standard elements of a particular type of document?**
- ◆ **Does standard text exist for a document element?**
- ◆ **Provide short, medium, and long versions of standard text**
- ◆ **Model reuse for different deliverables**



Modeling Workflow

- ◆ **Authoring**
- ◆ **Managing content**
- ◆ **Publishing to multiple outputs**
- ◆ **Review and approval cycles**
- ◆ **Project stages, tasks, and milestones**
- ◆ **Release states**



Sharing Content across the Organization



- ◆ **Different departments create content**
- ◆ **Similar (but not identical) content is often created by writers in different departments**
- ◆ **Different versions of the same information may exist, with inconsistencies and (often) errors**
- ◆ **Implementing an architecture for sharing content can:**
 - **Improve efficiency**
 - **Promote better communication and collaboration**
 - **Improve consistency and quality**



Building Expertise in Single Sourcing



- ◆ **Single sourcing builds marketable skills:**
 - **Analysis and planning**
 - **Task and audience analysis**
 - **Content modeling**
 - **Information architecture**
 - **Structured writing**
 - **Teamwork**



More Information

- ◆ Questions?
- ◆ Download a free evaluation version:
 - www.author-it.com/download.mv
 - All features and optional modules included
 - No time limit for evaluation
 - “Evaluation version” appears randomly in published output
 - *Getting Started* tutorial walks you through the major features



Contact Us



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- ◆ **Other resources:**
 - www.sdicorp.com
 - www.sdicorp.com/authorit
 - www.author-it.com

