



Calculating Return on Investment (ROI) for AuthorIT

Calculating return on investment (ROI) is more of an art than a science. Few organizations collect and maintain the detailed metrics needed to compare new tools and processes with current solutions. In addition, some of the benefits of implementing a single sourcing solution are difficult to quantify. Nevertheless, it is possible to provide some guidelines about the savings and opportunities that are provided by implementing single sourcing. This document provides a summary of considerations that can be used to calculate ROI for AuthorIT.

ROI can be calculated by comparing the investment for AuthorIT licenses and startup costs to the savings gained by using AuthorIT relative to your current authoring and publishing system.

About AuthorIT

AuthorIT is an integrated application for creating, managing, and publishing reusable content. It provides reuse of content at various levels, from entire documents down to individual topics and commonly used sentences or phrases. Designed for collaborative authoring, AuthorIT enables organizations to maintain a single authoritative version of each content object, eliminating the need to create and update multiple versions of the same information for different documents or output types.

AuthorIT provides secure access control for content, preventing unauthorized modification of information assets. It also provides powerful content management features and automated publishing to print, web, and help outputs of various types.

The savings that an organization can gain by implementing AuthorIT as the centerpiece of a strategy for reuse range from direct savings in time and labor to secondary benefits that provide increased opportunity for new income streams.



The Investment

The investment required to implement AuthorIT can include the following items. Not all are required; but you would do well to consider each of them in your implementation plan.

- Analysis of content and workflow
- Cost of software licenses and support
- Installation and configuration
- Importing legacy content
- Creating custom publishing templates for print and electronic deliverables
- Learning curve for writers to use new tools
- Training

As an Authorized Reseller for AuthorIT, Systems Documentation, Inc. (SDI) can provide estimates as needed for each of these items.

Return on Investment

The ROI for AuthorIT stems from its support for reuse of content. In an ideal implementation, each unit of content exists in only one place. When a change is needed, it affects every document that includes that content, for all of the different output media to which it is published. (AuthorIT also provides methods for customizing standard content as needed.)

Direct Savings

AuthorIT provides direct savings in the following areas:

- **Reduced labor costs.** The need to maintain multiple versions of the same content is eliminated.
- **No reformatting.** Because content is stored independently of formatting, the same content can easily be published to print, web, and help outputs. There is no need to create content in one format (for example, print documents) and then convert to

different formats (such as HTML or help outputs). Publishing to different media is automated and fast.

- **Faster review and approval cycle.** AuthorIT makes it easy to keep track of what content has been reviewed and approved. The need for content experts and managers to review previously accepted content when it is reused in new documents is greatly reduced.
- **Reduced translation costs.** Organizations that implement the AuthorIT Localization Manager can dramatically reduce translation and localization costs. The Localization Manager reduces the cost of new translations significantly and can completely eliminate the need for retranslation of content that has already been through the translation and review process. Content is only translated once.

In addition, the Localization Manager provides key management tools that include:

- Precise word counts
- XML packaging of content for use with translation memory applications
- Context documents that show content to be translated in the context of complete documents
- Facilities for managing ongoing updates from the source library to the translation library.

In addition, because translated content resides in an AuthorIT library, you can publish translated content to all desired media (print, web, and help). This approach eliminates the need to translate the same content for different deliverables (print and electronic).

Secondary Savings

In addition to the direct savings in creating, maintaining, and publishing content, AuthorIT provides significant secondary benefits that increase your ROI:

- **Faster retrieval of source content.** When content is stored in one place, it is easier and faster to locate the authoritative version of that content. The need to search through multiple versions of content for the “best” one is eliminated.
- **Greater consistency and accuracy of content.** When multiple versions of a document exist, they inevitably begin to diverge from each other, creating differences in



wording and, in many cases, significant differences in content. This situation can lead to confusion among content developers as well as customers. Having different versions of the same content can also have costly legal implications (especially in the area of product liability). AuthorIT makes it possible to maintain a single source for all content.

- **Secure access control.** User access to content is strictly controlled through flexible permissions. You can specify the content that different groups and users are allowed to view, modify, or publish, and you can protect approved content from unauthorized modifications that might entail a new review and approval process.
- **Improved formatting consistency and branding.** By automating the formatting of content for different deliverables, AuthorIT helps to ensure consistency in your published content. This consistency enhances the ability of your organization to provide a consistent message and a uniform “look and feel” for your content.
- **Faster time to market.** By reducing the need to create and maintain duplicate content for different publications, AuthorIT can reduce the time needed to develop new documents, making it possible to deliver content more rapidly. AuthorIT also provides numerous opportunities for increasing automation in content management and publishing.
- **Project management aids.** AuthorIT and the optional Project Manager module provide the ability to track the progress of content development through release states and through task and milestone definitions. You can monitor the status of individual content objects as well as complete documents, and generate reports that show various criteria to improve your ability to manage content.



Organizational Benefits

Implementing AuthorIT throughout your organization can improve the flow of content across departmental boundaries and can provide additional benefits for your customers and business partners:

- Better communication and collaboration among departments
- Consistent information for customers, reducing operational issues and requirements for customer support
- Opportunities to deliver more customized deliverables for specific customers and partners
- Enhanced opportunities for innovation and new information products

Project Experience

Our data on estimated savings for specific projects is somewhat anecdotal, but the following summaries provide insight into how specific AuthorIT customers have estimated their savings:

- At a communications company, a comparison among three projects over a twelve month period showed that using AuthorIT saved an average of 2.16 hours per page in production time. This study compared using AuthorIT to a workflow that used RoboHelp and MS Word to produce print and help deliverables (with a conversion between help and print formats). Overall, the AuthorIT projects saved an average 138.5 hours (the projects were relatively small, 76 to 98 pages of documentation per project). Using an estimate of \$43.50 per hour for a mid-level technical writer, the use of AuthorIT provided savings of about \$6000 on these projects.
- A major computer manufacturer reported savings of 40% in personnel costs, 3 weeks in their production cycle, and 40-60% reduction in review time over a 2-3 year period. A training group within the same company went from 17 writers/editors to 5 and are now producing more output; they quoted overall savings of \$2.5 million after one year. (These savings were the result of a number of changes in tools and workflow; but they attribute the bulk of their savings to the use of AuthorIT as a single sourcing platform.) This training group was able to phase out the use of outside contractors in the first year. They also experienced savings through reuse of



content, reduced review time, quick assembly of new documents, and automated publishing.

- At a major software company that was 30% down on headcount, using AuthorIT enabled them to maintain their workload without adding staff. Prior to using AuthorIT, they estimated that writers spent 50% of their time on formatting content. With AuthorIT, they reduced the time spent on formatting to 5%.