
Introduction to DITA References

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Abstract

DITA is quickly becoming the dominant XML schema for topic-oriented authoring. DITA is a highly practical way of moving to XML authoring in general and granular content reuse in particular. DITA distinguishes itself from predecessor standards by explicitly rejecting the book paradigm in favour of a topic-oriented model. A topic is a single continuous narrative that should be written to be independently usable and understandable. Topics tend to be medium-sized objects with independent titles and metadata: more analogous to web pages or chapters than paragraphs or lists. Topic orientation has advantages for the reader and also for content creators. Readers prefer topic-oriented information because it can be read in bits. Furthermore, readers can choose their own paths through the content. Content creators like topic-oriented authoring because it can drastically reduce the amount of information they need to write across a complex modern product line consisting of compound products (like operating systems, product suites or automobiles) and subset products (like "light versions"). Instead of rewriting or copying and pasting content, authors can mix and match topics to meet the needs of a particular product or audience.

This bibliography will discuss various references that will help you learn more about DITA.

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1. DITA Overviews and FAQ Documents

DITA Frequently Asked Questions by the DITA Technical Committee: <http://www.oasis-open.org/committees/dita/faq.php>

Introduction to the Darwin Information Typing Architecture by Day, Priestley, Schell: <http://www-128.ibm.com/developerworks/xml/library/x-dita1/>

Introduction to DITA from the *DITA Specification* by the DITA Technical Committee: <http://docs.oasis-open.org/dita/v1.0/archspec/ditaintro.html>

Blast Radius Frequently Asked DITA Questions: http://www.xmetal.com/en_us/products/xmetal_author_dita/general_faqs.x - Blast Radius XMetaL

2. Detailed Specifications

DITA 1.0 is an OASIS standard, described in two documents. *The DITA Architectural Specification* describes how DITA works. *The DITA Language Reference* describes the syntax and guidelines for use of each DITA element and attribute. Official versions of both documents are available in PDF and HTML format at: <http://docs.oasis-open.org/dita/v1.0/>.

Note that the OASIS web site also has older, draft versions of these documents. The above link has the final approved versions.

3. Starter Software

The *DITA Open Toolkit* is an open source DITA processor that can generate HTML and PDF from DITA content: <http://sourceforge.net/projects/dita-ot/>

XMetaL Author DITA Edition includes the DITA Open Toolkit to make a complete authoring and publishing platform. The free trial of DITA Edition is a good way to experiment with the creation and publishing of DITA software: http://www.xmetal.com/en_us/support/trial_software/index.x

4. Case Studies

DITA - The mechanics of a single sourcing project by France Baril at Ixiasoft: <http://www.mulberrytech.com/Extreme/Proceedings/html/2004/Baril01/EML2004Baril01.html>

Migrating from HTML to DITA: A Case Study by Amber Swope and Hadar Hawk at IBM: <http://www.stc.org/52nd-Conf/session.materials.asp>

5. User Groups and Forums

Yahoo! DITA Users Group: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/dita-users/>

OASIS DITA community focus area: <http://dita.xml.org/>

6. Media Reports

I Column Like I CM: Lovely DITA, Meta Maid, Ready-made Metadata by Bob Doyle, EContent Magazine: <http://www.econtentmag.com/Articles/ArticleReader.aspx?ArticleID=14278>
[<http://www.econtentmag.com/Articles/ArticleReader.aspx?ArticleID=14278>]

7. Recorded Events

Recorded Blast Radius DITA Web Events: <https://blastradiusevents.webex.com/blastradiusevents/onstage/tool/record/archives.php?Rnd=296015985>

Biography

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Paul Prescod is an implementor of XML-based systems, co-author of the XML Handbook, author of numerous articles on XML and contributor to open source XML tools.