Simply XML

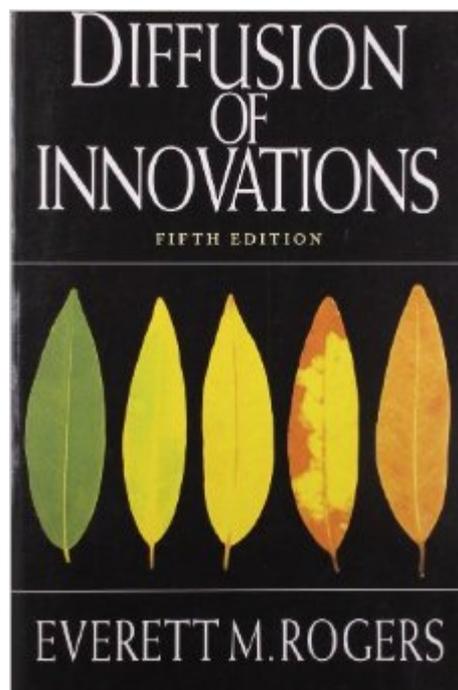*My canine muse, co-worker, and slave driver Frank told me I should get another newsletter out before the summer doldrums kick in, so here we go.*

Diffusion of Innovations
by Everett M. Rogers

Diffusion of Innovations

PG Bartlett has been around this industry for as long as I have. We met more than two decades ago when he was with Arbortext in Ann Arbor, Michigan. I was at Information Mapping and we were working together on a project involving Lucent and SGML. PG recently mentioned that one the most influential business books he has ever read is *Diffusion of Innovations* by Everett Rogers. It's not a quick read but there is a lot of wisdom inside and I agree that this book is important. Here are some comments and there will be more in future newsletters. (Quotes are in *Italics*.)

"The Internet has spread more rapidly than any other technological innovation in the history of humankind."

"We suggest that such interactive communication technologies may be changing the diffusion process in certain fundamental ways such as by removing, or at least greatly diminishing, the role of spatial distance in who talks to whom about a new idea."

The internet has allowed Simply XML to focus and solve a global problem with global customers and reach while supporting a regular presence with my family, friends, and Frank.

"How potential adopters view a change agent affects their willingness to adopt new ideas."

This may be obvious, but it relates to the formation and premises behind Content Mapper and Simply XML. At the turn of the century we were looking for a technology that would become an additional leg for our company to stand on and we focused and spent large sums of money at the intersection of structured writing and structured mark-up. The sale of Information Mapping allowed us to clear our liabilities and focus exclusively on this emerging and exciting market. Our vision of an enterprise XML architecture has taken longer to appear than we have imagined, but our fundamental premises remain the same:

- Customers want just in time, just enough information on their device of choice
- Content reuse improves efficiency
- Organizations need to implement content standards to leverage existing information
- XML will be the underlying architecture for content across the enterprise and, eventually across enterprises
- Billions of MS Word users need to generate valid XML and they won't use a technical XML editor
- To the extent possible technology and XML should do its work in the background
- Knowledge, utility, and value drive adoption.
- Keep It Simple Smart-person.

"A technology usually has two components: (1) a <u>hardware</u> aspect, consisting of the tool that embodies the technology as a material or physical object, and (2) a <u>software</u> aspect, consisting of the information base for the tool."

"Thus, the innovation-decision process is essentially an information seeking and information processing activity in which an individual is motivated to reduce uncertainty about the advantages and disadvantages of the innovation.

The main questions that an individual typically asks about a new idea include "What is the innovation?" "How does it work?" "Why does it work?" What are the innovation's consequences?" and "What will its advantages and disadvantages be in

my situation?" complexity is the degree to which an innovation is perceived as difficult to understand and use."

We see the need for technology as nuanced above. Our customer adoption process is actually driven by these and related questions. We have a demo to show Content Mapper but we always start with the customer's issues and environment. We talk about how Content Mapper works and why various features are included. We then discuss the impact Content Mapper will have on the customer's organization and the tradeoffs.

"The characteristics of innovations, as perceived by individuals, help to explain their different rates of adoption:

*1.**Relative advantage** is the degree to which an innovation is perceived as better than the idea it supersedes.*
*2.**Compatibility** is the degree to which an innovation is perceived as being consistent with existing values, past experiences and needs of potential adopters.*
*3.**Complexity** is the degree to which an innovation is perceived as difficult to understand and use.*
*4.**Trialability** is the degree to which an innovation may be experimented with on a limited basis.*
*5.**Observability** is the degree to which the results of an innovation are visible to others."*

What a great book! We are only in Chapter 1 here, but you can probably guess that the next step in our customer adoption process is experiential. No one buys Content Mapper without a free trial.

Frank needs a walk now so we'll continue this discussion in the next newsletter. He says, "Good job, Doug, you may have a cookie."

STC Summit 2015

www.simplyxml.com

STC- Not Your Grandfather's STC

Columbus Summit Overview

The annual Summit was held at the end of last month in Columbus Ohio. I've been participating in STC conferences and seminars for many years, while I was CEO of Information Mapping and now as CEO of Simply XML. I am impressed with the new leadership of STC and more importantly, three trends that were prevalent.

First, STC has further embraced technology in support of better authoring and content management. This was apparent from the number of sessions that took XML and even DITA for granted as a standard, and also from the new exhibitors representing CMS and other technology companies.

Second, STC is expanding its focus beyond strict technical writing to communication that is broader, but also somewhat technical in nature, including content like SOP's and compliance documents.

Third, there was evidence of a new spirit beginning to embrace the contract and millennial workforce.

All of these will change the focus, but enhance the value of STC membership and participation.

When Pigs Fly at STC

I gave a presentation at STC showing that pigs can now fly. Yes, technical staff can get XML they need, eliminating intermediate editing, improving reuse, and giving information consumers the content they need in the appropriate publishing format. And the billions of MS Word-based authors can retain their familiar tool and simply contribute content to the enterprise content supply chain. With apologies to my convoluted stars, the Simpsons and some of George Orwell's Animal Farm characters, this presentation will (soon?) become a webinar and/or video on our web site.

Unabashed Company Impressions

From my obviously prejudiced market view, here are some comments and I hope you will find interesting and useful:

Adobe has some new tools to easily convert MS Word-based content to Structured FrameMaker. If you are committed to an exclusively Adobe platform, this could work, but we are aware that most organizations want to find a way for their MS Word-based authors to stay in Word. However, they want to get control of that content and implement a standard with an underlying XML architecture

RoboHelp and **Flare** are used to help implement content standards and take advantage of multi-channel publishing. Many of their customers are considering a broader XML architecture.

easyDITA is moving its focus beyond TechPubs to the enterprise level. Content

Mapper is nicely integrated with easyDITA, providing an easy to use authoring tool with modern Content Management facilities.

Euroscript is a professional IT services company of 1300 professional and they are increasing their presence throughout North America. They "get it." We are working with **Euroscript** and **Componize** in a number of opportunities and the combined solution of our three companies is powerful and cost-effective.

Information Mapping customers were everywhere at STC. Many are looking for a way to retain the "software for the brain" while moving to modern authoring and publishing tools and techniques. We've got just the answer with Content Mapper and either Simply Structured or Simply DITA.

Precision Content, with deep roots in content development and management, is also helping organizations to modernize their technology, architecture, and processes in back of users of Information Mapping and other structured writing methods.

Conclusion: It is finally happening and I'll say it again. Structured writing and structured mark-up are moving outside of TechPubs and organizations are demanding ease of use, simplicity (love that word), and transparency to achieve the promises of content development and management in this exciting and important time. Reality demands that organizations adopt and support an XML standard that makes content smart, accessible, and interchangeable.

Open Issues:

I always try to leave these conferences with some new pens and maybe a toy or two for Frank, but also with some action items and things to think about. It would be great to have your comments on the following:

Document Orientation: It's complicated! DITA is very well suited for topic-based writing and the construction of larger documents called DITA Maps. We have found that some organizations have trouble with this approach and want to construct content at the document level and this led us to develop our Simply Structured document type. But it seems that some early adopters of DITA want to think in terms of documents using **Composite Documents** which are essentially strings of various DITA structures. The advantage of these composite documents is familiarity for newcomers, but there is a serious tradeoff with limited reuse potential. We would appreciate comments regarding Composite DITA Documents from any of our customers that have used both Simply DITA and Simply Structured, but also from organizations moving to DITA with composite documents.

Back to the Dog Park: I'm more convinced than ever that there will never be a single vendor solution for the cost-effective modernization of the content supply chain. There are too many entrenched products out there, so innovative vendors

need to focus on playing well together. Toward that end, watch for Simply XML announcements regarding integration with IBM's FileNet CMS.

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 July involves relaxation.

In Life:

Summer (with apologies to our Australian and New Zealand friends) offers a chance to relax, slow down, and just "be." Recent surveys have show that workers who take vacation are more successful and more productive than those who don't. So give into it. Go with the flow. Relax. And let that next great innovation percolate in the back of your mind. Ask your subconscious to work while you vacation.

In XML:

The Beatles said it best.......*When I find myself in times of trouble......Speaking words of wisdom.....Let it be.* Don't rush change. Put one foot in front of the other. You will be more efficient and effective in your change effort. And you'll sleep a lot better at night!

We hope you enjoy the rest of the summer!

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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