

Simply XML Newsletter:  
Competing in the Race to Enterprise Content Management  
Happy Halloween  
Simply XML Tips and Tricks!



October 2016

---

## Simply XML October 2016 Newsletter

This is the Simply XML Newsletter written by Doug Gorman, CEO of Simply XML, often under the counsel of his canine colleague, Frank. We welcome our new friends from Lavacon, STC, CIDM, and MIT. We hope you enjoy these newsletters, but if you want to opt out, please unsubscribe at the bottom of the page. We would love to hear your comments and you can email us at [hello@simplyxml.com](mailto:hello@simplyxml.com).

Have a great day!



## Competing in the Race to Enterprise Content

# Management

by Doug Gorman

## Finish Line

Let's see..... I believe we have a very good idea about where the Finish Line is. It is at the place where your content is structured, shared, reusable, publishable, managed, and cost-effective.

As I see it, the finish line is not up for debate. But there are at least two issues to consider:

Where is the Starting Line? And..... How do we get from the Starting Line to the Finish Line?

## Your Starting Line



Finding this is relatively easy because the good news is that your Starting Line is wherever you are right now. The bad news is that you may be looking to your left and to your right and you don't see a lot of other runners or you only see a couple of runners. But you know there are dozens in the race.

That's because the others are starting from a different place. The truth is that they are running a different race and they have a different finish line.

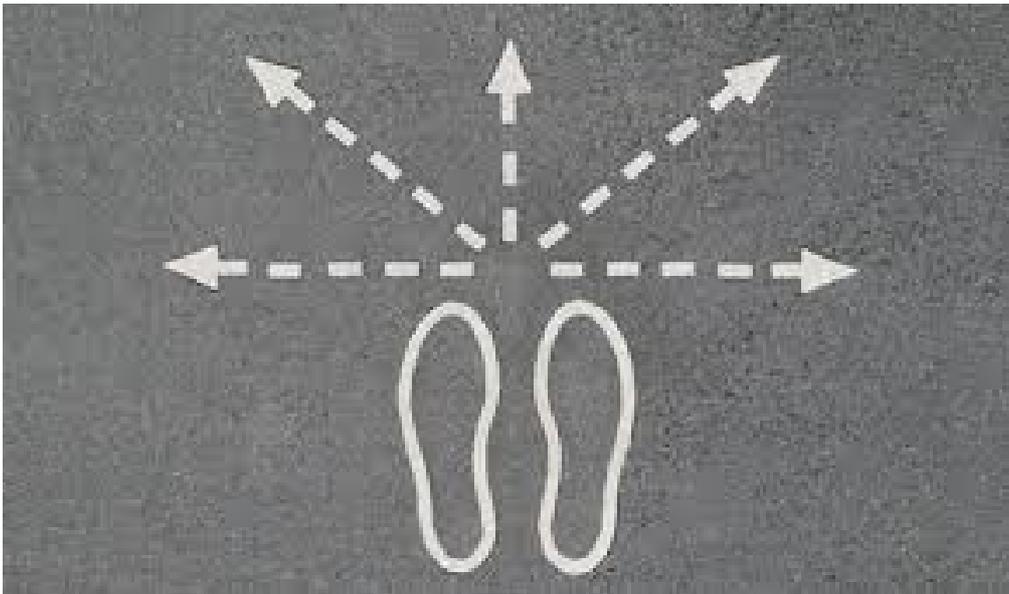
Some people are starting from the technical areas. They know what XML is. They are or will become comfortable with technical editors like XMetaL or Oxygen.

Others are in the training group, or product management. They see the advantages of consistency to improve the brand, structure to improve reuse, and an XML architecture. Of course that will facilitate giving information consumers just enough, just in time content on the device of their choice. You might be able to see some of these other Starting Lines because they are relatively close to yours. Like you, these racers have a

lot of priorities that are not technical and a lot of their performance, recognition, rewards, and satisfaction come from the business of the business and not from the business of the technical.

But then, way “over there” you see the runners in the technical group at their Starting Line. They have really nice uniforms and the best sneakers. They look like they are in shape. You wonder how you are going to make it through this race.

A voice calls to you that you have comfortable sneakers and a running outfit that is tried and true. You can make it work.



The reality is that there is no such thing as one Enterprise Content Management effort. Such initiatives are nice in theory, but impossible in practice.

## The Race Course

All you need to do is get from the Starting Line to the Finish Line. So the race begins. You hear some technical people screaming, “We have a \$500,000 component content management system.” “You need 47 fields of metadata.” “We spent \$250,000 last year on consultants.” This is why those runners are actually in a different race.

So please remember that **you are running your own race**. You can and probably should start by getting your content structured. You can even save it on a local file system in your computer, on SharePoint, or on SQL server. Nothing too fancy, or expensive is required to get started. Your non-technical authors can stay in their comfort zones with MS Word which is a familiar and widely used authoring tool. Content Mapper lets the author see MS Word while the repository sees the ugly but useful XML. The reason it works for the enterprise is that different groups can have a different level of granularity under the same XML structure. With Content Mapper each group can constrain its document architecture to what is appropriate for that group.

If you already have a high end CCMS and everyone can use it, that’s great. Use it. But otherwise you can start your race by getting your content in order so that it has consistency and meaning. You probably want to start with limited reuse and flexible publishing in your group. Pace yourself and don’t let the runners who go out quick

entice you out of your comfort zone. There are various ways to structure your content and it is relatively easy to do this. Technology helps, but the good race is often run with structured writing in the forefront. And as you bring more people into the fold you might want the facilities of a CCMS. There are some great systems that can meet your needs within your budget constraints.

## What is winning?

You have won the race when you see improvements from a modern approach to Enterprise Content Management **in your group**. It starts at the enterprise level by winning the race from your Starting Line and then sharing your success with like-minded colleagues.

Winning big is when your organization gets the advantages of Enterprise Content Management at the right level for each and every department's needs.

## One last perspective to remember.....

For you, this effort should be long walk and possibly a 10K, but it is definitely not a sprint or a marathon.

---

# Happy Halloween

By Doug Gorman



Halloween is a fun holiday. It happens once a year. While there has often been historical discussion around evil and the banishing of evil spirits, Halloween is mostly a fun time for people of all ages. I do not want to minimize that there are scary things that happen on many levels to many people all year round. But Halloween is broadly a fun holiday late in the fall in the Northern Hemisphere. In an acknowledgement of the need for marital bliss, I have some interesting “things” that I only display around my house during the Halloween season.

## There is a Skeleton in Frank’s Closet

Many of you know my Dachshund, Frank, who works as VP of Security and as my occasional Muse. He loves Halloween. Over the years, he has been an actual hot dog in a roll, a mummy, a professional football player, and more. This year he has a friend who has joined him to make some fun. Here is his new Halloween friend.

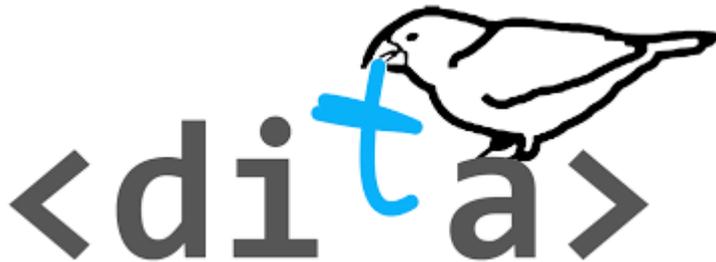


## Are You Afraid of DITA?

There’s actually something that’s a lot scarier than Halloween. It can happen all year round when organizations try to move the use of DITA beyond TechPubs. It has to do with well-intentioned technical staff or consultants who attempt to move DITA to the enterprise at the same level and on the same basis that they implemented DITA in TechPubs. They make the mistake of trying to add elements and functions of DITA that go far beyond the realistic needs of ROTO, the “Rest Of The Organization.”

## A Perspective from the Technical Publications Group.

To TechPubs, DITA may be powerful, simple, and useful. It is relatively easy and even rewarding for technical staff to learn how to use a hundred or more elements and the nuances of implementation. They are usually comfortable with technical editors. These editors are powerful and can even be called easy to use, once you take the time to learn them and have a job function where you use them every day. To technical people, DITA is simple and the DITA logo is a great picture of this.

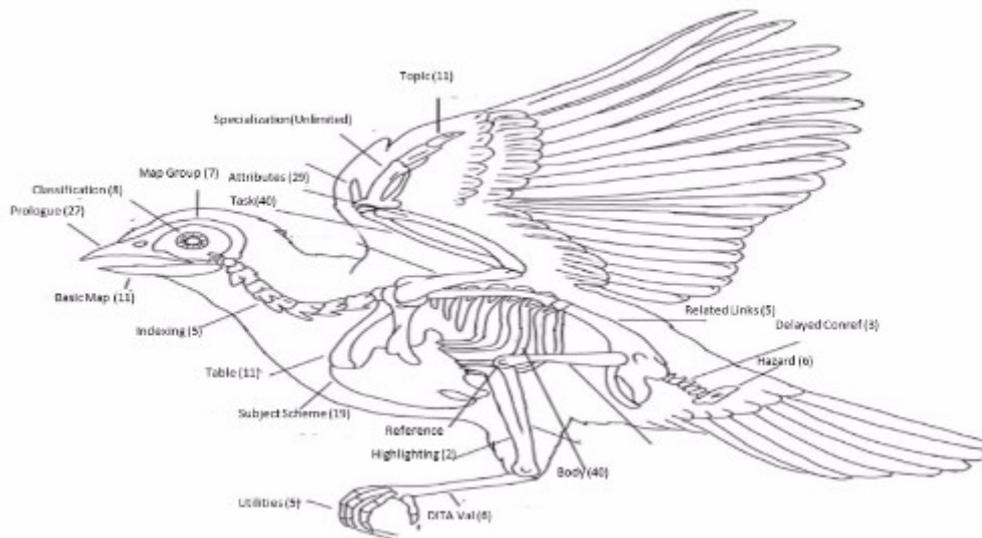


## The Perspective from ROTO (Rest Of The Organization)

To ROTO, DITA seems very complex, expensive, and almost impossible to implement. The DITA 1.13 Specification is 455 pages long. There are 176 pages of explanation and almost 300 pages of descriptions. This can be scary stuff.

## The Skeleton in DITA's Closet - FrankenDITA

When you look below the surface, this one is really scary and it might come out at any time of the year. The following graphic shows most of the element categories and approximately how many elements are within each.



Our friends at Arconics in Europe have a name for this monster bird. They call it “FrankenDITA.” FrankenDITA tries to come to life when technical people are put solely in charge of implementing writing standards, content reuse, and multichannel publishing across an enterprise using DITA. They may fail to see the ease of use and simplicity required by other groups. And it is our observation that, in the absence of unlimited time and unlimited funds, this effort just doesn’t fly.



FrankenDITA is not a Halloween treat!

## Implementation of XML by Simply XML

At Simply XML we offer two standard document structures, Simply DITA and Simply Structured. Non-technical organizations who don’t know XML look at Simply DITA and Simply Structure and almost universally choose to evaluate our Simply Structured document type. Among the last organizations that have approached us half have started with the blanket requirement, “We don’t want DITA.” Most often, we let them see a simplified version of DITA and it is just what they need.

While Simply DITA includes five basic structures, many of our customers can get the job done with DITA Topic and DITA Map only. We applaud the movement to Lightweight DITA, but our guard goes up with talk of specializations and authoring facilities like Markdown.

Our advice this Halloween and throughout the year is that, if you decide to use DITA

ultimately as an enterprise content standard, schedule implementation in smaller chunks and Keep IT Simple, Smart-Person.

---

## 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 October focuses on our upcoming Webinar with Intuillion.

### **In Life:**

Break away from the news, your book, your television, or the U.S. Presidential Race and try a new activity.

### **With Simply XML:**

**Why not take an hour and attend a joint Webinar hosted between Simply XML and Intuillion.**

Join us at 2:00 PM (EST) on Tuesday, November 22 and you'll see how it's possible.

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

**You can register here!**

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5794782898097434115>

**MS Word and DITA Can Be Friends: Authoring, Managing, Automating, and Publishing DITA from MS Word**

DITA can bring substantial benefits to your content process thanks to powerful content reuse, content personalization, and publishing capabilities. However, moving to DITA forces you to move to new authoring tools. Too often, the need to learn DITA elements and get used to the whole new paradigm becomes an obstacle that may bury the whole initiative of moving to DITA.

Join Doug Gorman of Simply XML, the makers of Content Mapper, and Alex Masycheff of Intuillion the makers of DITAoo DITA CMS at a free webinar to find out how you can author, manage, and publish DITA while staying in MS Word. We are going to show how you can get the best of two worlds: on one hand, you'll get all amazing possibilities available to you when you use DITA. On the other hand, you won't be forced to leave the MS Word's environment that you got used to. And you might not even know that you are using DITA because the ugly but useful DITA XML is "under the covers."

That's not all! You'll also see the whole new world of automation opportunities that structured content opens to you. In addition to authoring, managing, and publishing capabilities, we'll show you how content can be automatically assembled and generated all without leaving MS Word. Just think about it: wouldn't it be great if you could write a troubleshooting procedure in MS Word and then just with a couple of clicks get an automatically generated flowchart representing the troubleshooting process visually?



**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](http://www.simplyxml.com).

**Request a Free Trial of Content Mapper**

**Simply XML, LLC.**  
**Tel: +1 (781) 801-9255**  
**Email: [hello@simplyxml.com](mailto:hello@simplyxml.com)**  
**[www.simplyxml.com](http://www.simplyxml.com)**

*Copyright © 2016 Simply XML, LLC. All rights reserved.*  
Simply XML, LLC. 47 Village Ave., Unit 212, Dedham, MA 02026