To: Chris Lindgren

From: Cindy Croy

Subject: DITA topic model design rationale

Date: December 20, 2015

This memo should include the two main sections of content: 1) documents what is included, and 2) rationalizes the decisions behind its information architecture. Essentially, I want you to provide me with your overall topic model goal and how the particular topics and relationships of the topics support that goal. It should also include 3-4 particular design decisions that shaped how you wrote and structured your DITA topics. Delete this paragraph before you turn it into me.

What is included

The overall goal of my topic model is to get someone who is totally new to Reveal.js started with three basic types of slides needed for a presentation. These are a title slide, a bullet list slide, and a slide with an image. The first topic in my map is the concept topic because I believe giving the users an overview of the concepts involved will make it easier to understand the reason for doing certain tasks. The next topic is a task topic that describes what a user needs to do to get the demonstration HTML file ready for creating a three slide presentation. I chose the demonstration HTML file as a starting point because it provides the information for all the features provided by Reveal.js, and I believe it is easier to modify files than it is to create new ones. However, it needs to be simplified for a three slide presentation and the first task gives steps for doing this.

The next four topics are the basis for the three slide presentation. The first of the four describes ways the user can modify the CSS file so the user can make the format into what they want. The next three topics include the steps for making each of the particular types of slides. With an intro slide, a bullet list slide, and an image slide the user will have a template for making a full presentation. Additional features from the demonstration can be added later as the user gains experience. The first topic provides the reusable content because it contains options for overriding the defaults in the Reveal.js demonstration. Since the user may start with any of the three slides, instructions for resetting these defaults will be necessary with all three of the slide topics.

I could not find a good way to make the resetting defaults task reusable. Since I don’t want to reference specific steps, as I would with a conref, I think I want to use the “copy-to” attribute, but I couldn’t find a clear description of how to reference the destination in the other topics.

Design decisions

As I started to write this memo, it occurred to me that a user who is fairly naïve about HTML and CSS (like I was when I started using Reveal.js) might find it helpful to have a task describing where to find the relevant files and how to prepare the files for use in a presentation. For this reason, I added the “Getting started” topic.

Originally I had the concept topic at the bottom of the page. However, I believe it makes more sense at the beginning since it will give users an overview of the concepts involved which should make it easier to follow the reasoning for the tasks.

1. The “resetting the default” task is proving to be challenging. I want the task to look like this:

Task – reset Reveal defaults

* 1. Choice – delete resets
     1. Step
     2. Step
     3. Step
  2. Choice – revise CSS
     1. Step
     2. Step
     3. Step
  3. Choice – make new CSS
     1. Step
     2. Step
     3. Step

Using this model, the user could choose one or all of the methods for resetting the defaults. I got them to show up with each of the “create” slide tasks by making the “Remove/Reset” topic a child of each of these tasks. There are more elegant ways of doing this, but I have been unable to get any of them to work.

Since I don’t really like having the parent topic of the “reset” tasks being nothing more than a topic with the options just listed and the actual task instructions as separate links I added some more text to this describing when each of the options might be useful.

When I originally wrote the task topics I was using line numbers in the Reveal.js HTML file to refer users to places where I had made changes to override the Reveal.js defaults. Initially I was thinking it wouldn’t matter how others style their code because I was referring to a specific file that came with the download that wouldn’t change. Then I thought this file may change in later updates so maybe that wouldn’t work so well after all. Therefore, I modified all the task topics so they didn’t have line numbers.

Hmmmm – removing the task from the map didn’t change any of the child topics. Can I make task topics children of concept topics?