Apache Forrest: documentation framework

Apache Forrest (forrest.apache.org) is a publishing framework that transforms input from various sources into a unified presentation in one or more output formats. The modular and extensible plugin architecture is based on Apache Cocoon and relevant standards, which separates presentation from content. Forrest can generate static documents, or be used as a dynamic server, or be deployed by its automated facility.

By **separating content from presentation**, providing **content templates** and **pre-written skins**, Forrest is unequalled at enabling content producers to get their message out fast. This separation of concerns makes Forrest excellent to publish **project documentation** (notably software projects), **intranets**, and **home pages**.

Forrest is built on one of the world's leading XML application frameworks, Apache Cocoon, which provides advanced users with extremely powerful publishing capabilities.

- Multiple task-specific source XML formats can be used (How-To, FAQ, changelogs and todo lists supported natively). Source formats include: Apache xdocs xml format, plain html documents, some Wiki formats, a subset of DocBook, ...
- Multiple output formats supported, for example HTML and PDF (using Apache FOP).
- SVG to PNG rendering (using Apache Batik). Simply drop the SVG in the appropriate directory and it will be rendered as PNG.
- Transparent inclusion and aggregation of external content, like RSS feeds.
- Anything else possible with the Cocoon sitemap. Using database queries, charting, web services integration; the possibilities are constantly growing as Cocoon grows. See the Cocoon Features list for the full suite of capabilities.
- Based on Java, Forrest is platform-independent, making for a documentation system that is just as portable as the XML data it processes.
- Your development team does not need Java experience, or even XML skills, to use Forrest. The framework lets you concentrate on content and design.

Unique amongst comparable documentation tools, Forrest generates sites that can run both **interactively** as a dynamic web application, or as statically rendered pages. Running as a webapp has a major advantage during development: content can be written, and then the rendered output viewed almost instantly in a web browser. This webapp technique enables the edit/review cycle to be faster than command-line transformation tools.