Profiling and conditional content

As part of the final project, you are supposed to take advantage of the “profiling” or conditional text features of DITA. Unfortunately, this is not available in Word, so we’re going to have to fake it.

In DITA, you can add attributes to paragraphs and inline formatting. Some of these attributes can be used for “profiling” or conditional text.

DITA has a few default categories:

* Audience
* Product
* Platform

DITA also includes the ubiquitous “otherprops” attribute as well, which you can use for any ‘other’ property you’d like. DITA can also be specialized so you could make special attributes just for your content.

Using these properties, you can define content that appears in specific scenarios, or doesn’t appear for other scenarios. You could also provide special processing for certain content.

For example, you could have the values “admin”, “poweruser”, and “novice” for the audience attribute. You can label entire procedures for “admin”, for all the special things an administrator needs to do. You could highlight shortcuts or advanced features with “poweruser”, and mark the very detailed, step-by-step instructions for your “novice” users.

With these attributes defined and applied correctly to your content, you could create an administrator’s guide or a new user’s guide from the same set of procedures by including or excluding content appropriately. You could also provide specialty formatting, such as generally collapsing detailed steps that can be expanded if you need to know how to do something that experienced users are very familiar with, but novice users won’t be.

These fantastic, useful features are not available in Word. That doesn’t mean you can’t tell me what you would do if you could.

Enter wDITA\_draftcomment.

This is a “Draft Comment”. In DITA, they can be easily excluded from output. Again, not possible in Word without crazy field codes and other shenanigans.

As you author your content, if you would mark a paragraph (or a whole topic) with a specific condition, explain in a “Draft Comment”, using the wDITA\_draftcomment style.

For example:

The next paragraph should be “admin”