

To: Tom Johnson, Technical Communication Project Manager
From: Elaine McNeil, Technical Writer
Date: November 24, 2014
Subject: Upgrading to MadCap Flare

Summary

We need to upgrade our authoring software and convert to single sourcing to decrease our project time and increase our output.

The Problem

Our current system of documenting content in Microsoft Word is problematic. With our current system, updating content takes quite a while. Many documents contain sections of the same content and when that section needs updating, we must update each document individually. Updating each document individually takes quite a lot of time to complete and sometimes documents are missed and therefore contain outdated and inaccurate information. Some documents are inconsistent with one another because of consistency errors caused by different authors writing the same information in different ways in different places. With our current system, writers must update documents individually and sometimes make errors that make our content inconsistent.

The Solution

Upgrading our system to MadCap Flare and single sourcing would reduce time spent updating content and reduce consistency errors. Single sourcing would allow us to update sections of many different documents all at once and thus significantly reduce the amount of time our team currently spends updating documentation. Single sourcing would also reduce or eliminate consistency errors by reusing content. If we upgrade to MadCap Flare and single sourcing, we would no longer spend so much time updating the same content across multiple documents and fixing consistency errors. Converting to single sourcing would significantly reduce the amount of time we spend on each project and thus reduce our team's project time.

If we reduce our project time, we could do more innovative and valuable work instead. Single sourcing our content would free us from the mundane and lengthy work of updating documents individually. With our new free time, we could work on more projects and work on projects that are more valuable to our organization. Single sourcing our content would not only increase our team's output, but also increase our team's value within our organization.

If we do not convert to single sourcing, updating content will only take longer as we create more documentation that recycles the same content. We will spend more time updating

content and less time working on new projects or projects that add value to the organization overall. Single sourcing will allow us to create more and more valuable work.

Why MadCap Flare

MadCap Flare was designed for single sourcing documentation. With MadCap Flare, we can output content in many different formats including HTML5, WebHelp, PDF, Word, XHTML, EPUB, DITA. Our current authoring system, Microsoft Word, severely limits what format we can output content. MadCap Flare's design makes it easy to reuse content. In Flare, content is divided into the smallest standalone pieces possible, called topics. Writers then use and reuse these topics to create documentation. Flare also makes updating content incredibly easy. To update content in Flare, all you have to do is update the original topic. Flare will update all documents that include that topic automatically so that the writer does not have to do it manually. MadCap also offers collaboration and project management functions through contributor. With Contributor, SMEs are able to quickly and easily review, edit, and create content. With MadCap Flare, we would be able to manage all our content within a single application.

Learning MadCap Flare and single sourcing should be fairly quick and easy. MadCap Flare offers three training options: onsite, offsite, and web-based training. I believe that the web-based training is the best option for our team. However, we can also schedule onsite or offsite training. Converting our documentation will take time but will save us significantly more time in the future. I believe we will see a quick return on invest because converting to single sourcing will significantly reduce our project time and increase our output.

If you would like, I can draft a plan for the complete process of switching to MadCap Flare and single sourcing. Please contact me at your earliest convenience to discuss the next step.