

**To:** Charissa Abraham, VP for Software Development  
**From:** Elaine McNeil, Technical Writer  
**Date:** November 24, 2014  
**Subject:** Upgrading MadCap Flare

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## **Summary**

The technical writing team needs to upgrade our authoring software and convert to single sourcing to decrease our project time and increase our output.

## **How Single Sourcing Affects Project Time**

Converting to single sourcing will significantly reduce the technical writing team's project time. In our current system, it takes us quite a while to update content. Currently, we store content in many different, independent files. When we must update content, we must update each document individually. The process of updating each document individually costs quite a lot of time. Instead of storing content in independent files, we could single source our content. By single sourcing our content, we would pull chunks of content from a library and place them into documents. These chunks of content can be reused in any number of documents and are linked to the original source, so any changes made to the original will be applied wherever the content is reused. Because the chunks of information are linked, we only have to update the original source of the content rather than updating each document individually. Single sourcing will significantly reduce the technical writing team's project time because updating content will be much quicker and easier.

## **How Single Sourcing Affects Output**

Converting to single sourcing and upgrading to MadCap Flare will also increase our team's output. Single sourcing would reduce the amount of time we spend on each project, thus enabling us to work on more projects. MadCap Flare also enables batch output, meaning that we can output content in several formats simultaneously. This ability will help increase our output as well. Converting to single sourcing would free us from the mundane task of updating documentation and would allow us to dedicate more time to innovative projects that add value to the organization.

If the technical writing team does not convert to single sourcing and upgrade to MadCap Flare, updating documentation will continue cost us more time as our documentation grows because we will continue to update documents individually. Updating will then take longer to complete as we add more documents to our total documentation. But if we convert to single sourcing, we will decrease the amount of time we spend updating documentation rather than increase it.

**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 estimate that upgrading to MadCap Flare will cost \$1,500 per user, but 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.