# DITA Topic Overview

This section introduces DITA topics and its types.

- As stated previously a topic is "A unit of information with a title and content, short enough to be specific to a single subject or answer to a single question, but long enough to make sense on its own and be authored as a unit".
- A topic generally has just enough content to make sense by itself but not so much content that it covers more than one procedure, one concept or one type of reference information.
- Although a narrative book model (like DocBook) works well for novels and some non-fiction books it is not well suited for technical information that's delivered within a product. When its time to adjust the valves in a motorcycle, users do not want to read a novel. A topic typically answers one of the following questions:
  - How do I do it?
  - What is it?
  - What is the process?
  - How do I fix it?
- Although a topic should be self-contained it shouldn't live alone. For information delivered with most technical products, services or technologies a topic needs a home in a larger organised collection of topics.
- That collection can then be packaged and delivered in an output format such as HTML Web pages, online help or a PDF manual.
- DITA is specifically designed to support topic based writing. With its modular architecture, semantic XML elements and powerful linking features, DITA can help you create and maintain topic based or componentized technical information.
- Separating information into discrete topics helps you to:
  - Design new information more easily and consistently.
  - Eliminate unimportant or redundant information.
  - Identify common or reusable topics or pieces of content in topics
- All topics regardless of their purpose, have the following characteristics:
  - Meaningful titles.
  - Ability to stand alone from other content.
  - Logical Organisation.
  - Links to other topics that contain related information.