DITA Topic Map

Contents

Introduction

Reusing content is one of the key features of DITA and DITA provides several methods for reusing content. Oxygen XML Editor provides support for each of these methods.

Reusing Topics in DITA Maps

A DITA topic does not belong to any one publication. You add a DITA topic to a publication by referencing it in a map. You can *reference the same topic in multiple maps*.

Reusing DITA Topics in Multiple Maps

You can reuse an entire DITA topic simply by referencing it in multiple maps (or *multiple locations within the same map*) using one of the following procedures:

Reuse Topics Using the DITA Maps Manager

1. Make sure the *DITA map* is opened in the *DITA Maps Manager*.
2. Add a reference to an existing topic by using one of the following methods (depending on your particular situation):
    a. If the topic already exists in this DITA map, do one of the following:
        -   Simply drag the topic and press Ctrl (or Alt on OS X) at the new location within the map (or use the Copy and Paste contextual menu actions).
        -   If the topic is the currently open document in the main editor, determine the new location in the map (in the *DITA Maps Manager*), right-click a parent or sibling topic, and select Append Child > Reference to the currently edited file or Insert After > Reference to the currently edited file.
    b. If the topic already exists in another DITA map, do one of the following:
        -   Open the other map in the *DITA Maps Manager*, right-click the topic, select Copy, switch back to the original DITA map in the DITA Maps Manager, determine the new location in the map, right-click a parent or sibling topic, and use one of the Paste contextual menu actions (Paste, Paste Before, or Paste After).
        -   If the topic is the currently open document in the main editor, determine the new location in the map (in the *DITA Maps Manager*), right-click a parent or sibling topic, and select Append Child > Reference to the currently edited file or Insert After > Reference to the currently edited file.
    c. If the topic exists in the project, but has not yet been added to a DITA map, do one of the following:
        -   Right-click the topic in the *Project view* (or the file system), select Copy, switch to the *DITA Maps Manager* view, determine the new location in the map, right-click a parent or sibling topic, and use one of the Paste contextual menu actions (Paste, Paste Before, or Paste After).
        -   If the topic is the currently open document in the main editor, determine the new location in the map (in the *DITA Maps Manager*), right-click a parent or sibling topic, and select Append Child > Reference to the currently edited file or Insert After > Reference to the currently edited file.
3. If your topic uses a *key reference*, set up the appropriate *key definition in your map*.
4. If you want to define relationships between topics, other than those defined in the topics themselves, you can *add a relationship table to your map*.
5. When you have finished adding topics, check that your map is complete and that all topic links and keys resolve correctly. To do this *validation, click the Validate and Check for Completeness action* on the toolbar in the DITA Maps Manager.

Reuse Topics Using Author Mode Editor

1. *Open the DITA map* in the Author mode editor.
2. Add a reference to an existing topic by dragging it from the *Project view* (or the file system) and dropping it in the desired location in the DITA map opened in Author mode. You can also accomplish the same thing by using the Copy and Paste contextual menu actions.
3. If your topic uses a *key reference*, set up the appropriate *key definition in your map*.

4. If you want to define relationships between topics, other than those defined in the topics themselves, you can *add a relationship table to your map*.
5. When you have finished adding topics, check that your map is complete and that all topic links and keys resolve correctly. To do this *validation, click the Validate and Check for Completeness action* on the toolbar in the DITA Maps Manager.

Displaying Multiple References to the Same Topics

Whenever multiple references to the same topic are detected in the context of the current map in the *DITA Maps Manager*, an indicator will appear in the top-right corner of the Author mode editor that shows the number of times the current topic is referenced in the DITA map. It also includes navigation arrows that allow you to jump to the next or previous reference in the DITA Maps Manager.

Reusing Content with References and Keys

DITA allows you to reuse content by referencing it in another topic. DITA provides *several mechanisms for including content by reference* (*conref*, *conkeyref*, *coderef*).

• Conref -

A conref (content reference) creates a direct reference to a specific element of another topic.

• Conkey ref -

A conkeyref (content key reference) creates a reference to a key, which then points to a specific element in another topic. The advantage of using a *conkeyref* is that you can change the element that is included by changing the key reference.

For example, since keys are defined in maps, if you include a topic in multiple maps, you can use a different key reference in each map.

• Coderef -

A *coderef* references an external file that contains literal code.

Oxygen XML Editor provides support for all of these mechanisms.

📝 **Note:**

While the *conref* and *conkeyref* mechanisms can be used to reference any content element, it is considered best practice to only *conref* or *conkeyref* content that is specifically set and managed as reusable content. This practice helps reduce expensive errors, such as an author accidentally deleting the source element that other topics are including by the reference. Oxygen XML Editor can help you create a reusable component from your current content.

Reusing Content with Reusable Components

DITA allows you to select content in a topic, create a *reusable component* from it and reference that component in other locations. Each reusable component is created as a separate file. Anytime the content needs to be edited, you only need to update it in the component file and all the locations in your topics that reference it will also be updated. This can help you to maintain continuity and accuracy throughout your documents.

Reusing Content with Variables

DITA allows you to replace the content of certain elements with a value that is pointed to by a key. This mechanism effectively means that you can *create variables in your content*, which you can then create multiple outputs by changing the value that the key points to. This is done by profiling the definition of the key value, or by substituting another map with a different key value.

DITA Reusable Components View

If you use a large amount of keys or reusable components in your DITA project, the *DITA Reusable Components view* can be quite helpful. It collects all of the keys and reusable components that are defined in the *root map* and presents them in a dynamic table where you can easily locate and insert references to them.

Reuse Actions in Oxygen XML Editor

Oxygen XML Editor includes some actions that are specifically designed for DITA reusable content. These actions are available in the contextual menu, the DITA menu, and some are available on the toolbar.

Reuse Content

This action provides a mechanism for reusing content fragments.

It opens the *Reuse Content dialog box* that allows you to insert several types of references to reusable content at the cursor position. The types of references that you can insert using this dialog box include content references (@conref), content key references (@conkeyref), or key references to metadata (@keyref)

Push Current Element

Opens the *Push current element dialog box* that allows content from a source topic to be inserted into another topic without any special coding in the topic where the content will be re-used.

Edit Content Reference

This action is available for elements with a @conref or @conkeyref attribute. It opens the Edit Content Reference dialog box that allows you to edit the source location (or key) and source element of a content reference (or content key reference), and the reference details (@conref/@conkeyref and @conrefend attributes). For more information, see Reuse Content Dialog Box.

Replace Reference with Content

Replaces the referenced fragment (@conref or @conkeyref) at the cursor position with its content from it source. This action is useful if you want to make changes to the content in the currently edited document without changing the referenced fragment in its source location. If the source content includes references to other topics/resources (*hrefs*), the operation also resolves those references relative to the new location. Attributes are preserved according to the following priority:

1. Attributes from the elements in the current document that reference other content are preserved except for attributes with a -dita-use-conref-target value.
2. Attributes from the referenced content are brought into the replaced elements in the current document except for @id attributes.

Replace All References with Content

Replaces all referenced fragments (@keyref, @conref, or @conkeyref) in the current document with the content. Attributes are preserved according to the following priority:Attributes from the elements in the current document that reference other content are preserved except for attributes with a -dita-use-conref-target value.Attributes from the referenced content are brought into the replaced elements in the current document except for @id attributes.For keyrefs inside <xref> or <link> elements, the @keyref attribute is changed to an @href attribute, while the rest of the content for the keyref is replaced with its source content.If the source content includes references to other topics/resources (hrefs), the operation also resolves those references relative to the new location.

Remove Content Reference

Removes the content reference (@conref or @conkeyref) inside the element at the cursor position.

Create Reusable Component

Opens a dialog box that helps you to create a reusable component from the current element or selection of elements. If the Replace selection with content reference option is selected in the dialog box, the selection will be replaced with a content reference (@conref). If multiple elements are selected (for example, multiple steps or list items), the selection will be replaced with a content reference range (@conref and @conrefend). For more information, see *Creating a Reusable Content Component*.

Insert Reusable Component

Inserts a reusable component at cursor location. For more information, see *Inserting a Reusable Content Component*.