

Getting productive with AsciiDoc

Bjoern Steffens

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Table of Contents

1. What is AsciiDoc	1
2. How do you edit and preview asciidoc files?.....	2
3. What is the asciidoc toolchain?.....	3
4. Toolchain installation hints	5
5. Installing the pdf and epub converters.....	6
6. Example Shell Commands to convert the file	7

Chapter 1. What is AsciiDoc

AsciiDoc can more than Markdown and lends itself to write better technical documentation and collaboration faster across tools like Github. The syntax is more comprehensive vs Markdown but investing in the learning curve pays off swiftly as soon as your documentation gets more complex and intertwined.

AsciiDoc is OpenSource but has been around since many years and is getting good traction. There are standardization and communities working the tool contagiously hence it is something worthwhile to look into.



See the `asciidoc_sample_formatting.adoc` file in the root directory for a comprehensive set of syntax examples. Load it up in Visual Studio Code and get familiar with the syntax and you will see how it looks like immediate with the preview extension. This was how I quickly learned the syntax and features.

Chapter 2. How do you edit and preview asciidoc files?

There are extension to a few IDEs and I would recommend Visual Studio Code, where you can edit and live-preview the content. This is the only extension where both the raw adoc file and the preview scrolls in synch with almost perfect alignment.

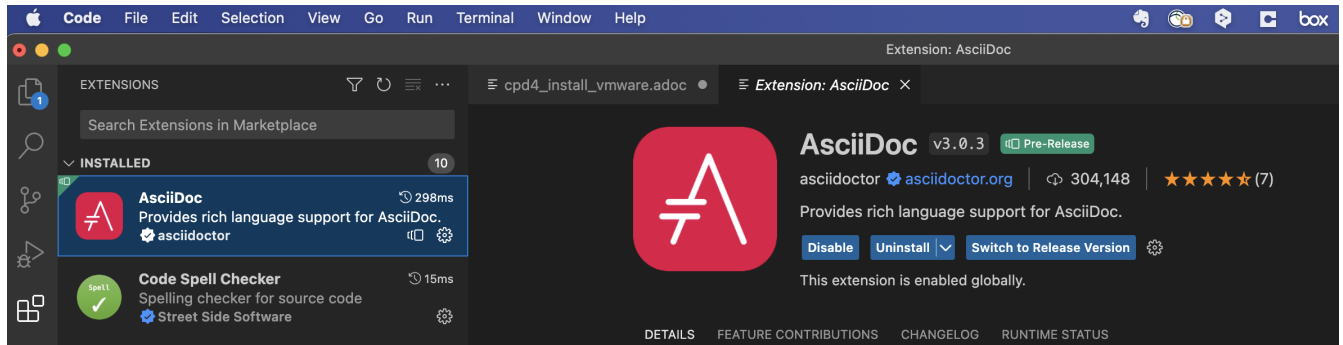


Figure 1. AsciiDoc plugin for visual studio code

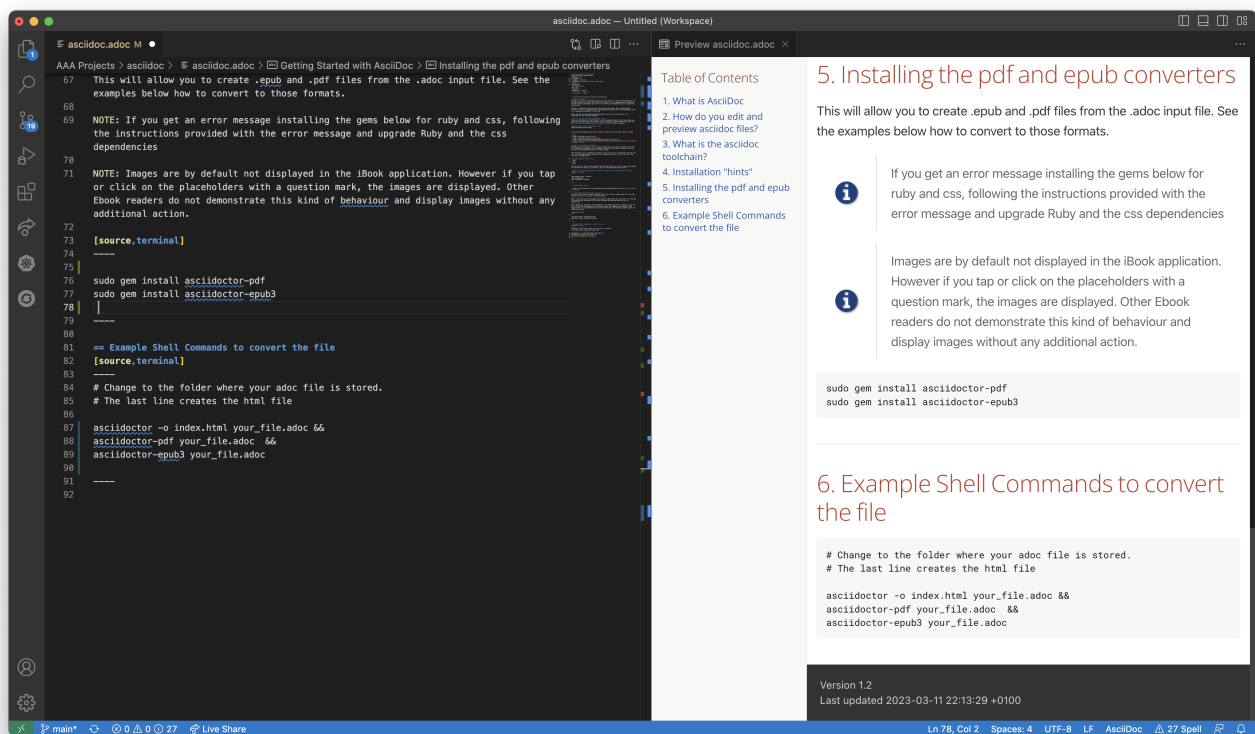


Figure 2. Visual studio code with asciidoc preview extension

See AsciiDoc toolchain below how to convert an adoc file into other various formats.

Links

- [AsciiDoc](#)
- [Asciidoctor](#)
- [Documentation](#)
- [Comprehensive Cheat-Sheet and Sample file](#)

Chapter 3. What is the asciidoc toolchain?

Editing an asciidoc (adoc) file in Visual Studio Code, you need to transform the file into something consumable. You can however preview the file while editing it so that you have a good understanding of the actual output.

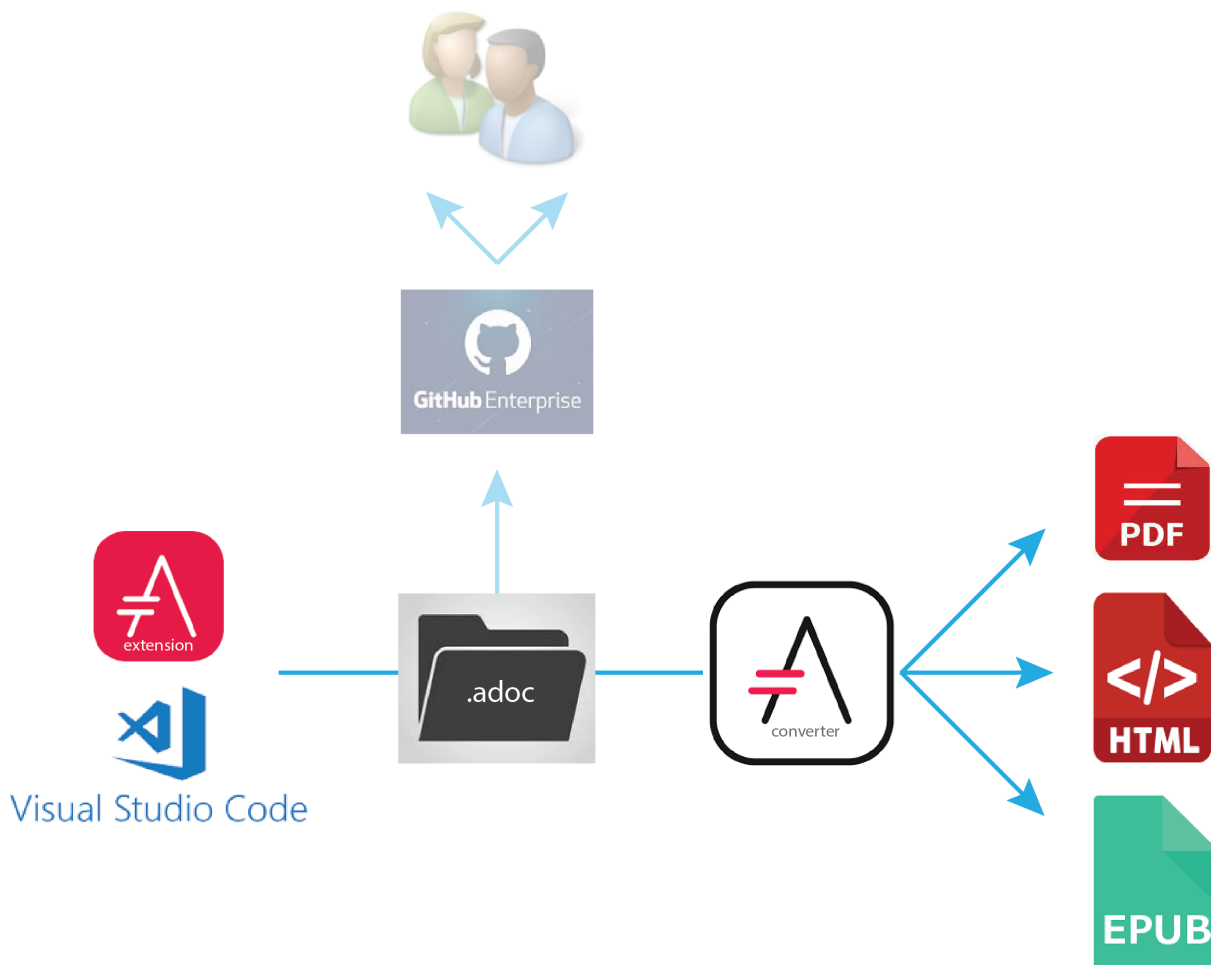


Figure 3. AsciiDoc high level process overview



The adoc file is rendered by Github so you can point to it and share the link and it can be consumed without having to install an IDE. Just like the file you are reading now.

The most popular formats are:

- html
- pdf
- epub

You will need to install the command line toolchain and use a very few but easy command to transform the adoc file into one or more of the mentioned formats above.

Before you install asciidoctor you need to install and activate xcode on your mac.

```
sudo xcode-select --install
sudo xcode-select -r
```

```
sudo xcodebuild -license
```

Chapter 4. Toolchain installation hints

- [Getting the toolchain installed](#)

Chapter 5. Installing the pdf and epub converters

This will allow you to create .epub and .pdf files from the .adoc input file. See the examples below how to convert to those formats.



If you get an error message installing the gems below for ruby and css, following the instructions provided with the error message and upgrade Ruby and the css dependencies



Images are by default not displayed in the Apple iBook application. However if you tap or click on the placeholders with a question mark, the images are displayed. Other Ebook readers do not demonstrate this kind of behavior and display images without any additional action.

```
sudo gem install asciidoctor-pdf
sudo gem install asciidoctor-epub3
```


Chapter 6. Example Shell Commands to convert the file

```
# Change to the folder where your adoc file is stored.  
# The last line creates the you_file.html file if  
# you need that. The index.html will be for a  
# publishing to a webserver like Github pages
```

```
#!/bin/sh  
asciidoctor -o index.html your_file.adoc &&  
asciidoctor-pdf your_file.adoc &&  
asciidoctor-epub3 your_file.adoc &&  
asciidoctor your_file.adoc
```