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Plain Text Publishing User Guide

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Disclaimer

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Chapter 1
Welcome to Plain Text Publishing

The PTP package combines a plain text markup translator with a industry-standard open-source publishing toolset that generates PDF, XHTML, and ePub editions of the source plaintext. Pre-publication transformation and publication layout and style are fully customizable, supporting both a corporate standard style and customizations of that style for each document.

The PTP toolset comprises:

- ASCIIDoc, a plain text markup processing system.
- Docbook XML and the Stayton XSL:FO transformations.
- Apache FOP, an XSL:FO to PDF rendering engine.
- ptp-tools/mksupport-common, a set of Bash and Windows scripts guiding the transformation pipeline.
- xsltproc, an XSLT interpreter (needed by Windows platforms).
- XMLSh, a POSIX-flavoured "Bash plus XML" scripting interpreter.

The PTP toolset requires installation of:

- Python.
- Java.

Chapter 2
Publication Structure

Each publication is maintained in a separate directory containing the source text, source images, configuration and transformation customizations, and a publication script.

The publication script (`mk_bash.sh` or `mk_win.bat`) attempts to find the publication tools in either a sibling directory or subdirectory of the publication directory.

The tools are expected to be in a directory named `ptp-tools`. If you cloned to a different directory, you will need to set the DOCTOOLS environment variable or modify your `mk_bash.sh` or `mk_win.bat` file.

2.1. LIBRARY STRUCTURE

Library content consists of prose and "chunks". Using inclusion, prose is intermixed with topical "chunks" to ultimately create a book or wiki. Books tend to take a linear approach to a topic, adding extra information to core units of information: exposition surrounding a "chunk" identified as a List, Task, Figure, Function, etc.

Documention source directories and filenames are structured for human use:

- `_filename`
  - root document name is prefixed with an underscore.
  - assists in command line autocompletion.
  - file list placement tends to be consistently at the top or bottom
  - content mainly comprises top-level inclusions, ie. articles and chapters.
  - transformed to the ultimate deliverable: a PDF, HTML, EPub, etc.
- `filename`
  - no prefixed underscore.
  - not publishable from commandline.
  - content mainly comprises limited prose introducing mid-level inclusions, ie. chapters and sections.
  - may need to use macros to adjust inclusion title levels
- `directoryname`
  - contains fine-grained "chunks".
  - for inclusion in mid-level content, ie. chapters and sections.
  - named to indicate content/relevance.

- `directoryname/filename`
  - topical “chunks”
  - content comprises prose and lower-level inclusions, ie. sections, lists, tables, etc.
  - content comprises lowest-level chunks, ie. List, Task, Figure, etc.
  - filenames to indicate content; avoid redundancy w/directory “chunk” category