

XSL:FO and ODT cover page plugin for YajHFC

Installation

These installation instructions apply to a manual installation using the ZIP archive. If you used the Windows setup application, you can skip this section.

1. Download the ZIP archive FOPPlugin_0_X_Y.zip (where X and Y designate the respective YajHFC version).
This archive not only contains the plugin but also the corresponding version of YajHFC for convenience (because YajHFC itself is relatively small compared to the required libraries) .
2. Start YajHFC by executing `yajhc-fop.sh` (UNIX) or `yajhfc-fop.cmd` (Windows).
3. Now you should be able to choose XSL:FO files and OpenDocument text files as cover page template.
Additionally there should be a sub menu "*Extras→XSL:FO and ODT utilities*" containing three menu items.

Usage

To design a cover page template, simply create a XSL:FO file or a OpenDocument text document (e.g. using OpenOffice).

When this file is used as a cover page the following strings are replaced (case insensitively) with the corresponding cover page fields (see `examples/cover.odt` for an example on how to do that):

String	Meaning
@@Name@@	The recipient's name
@@Location@@	The recipient's location
@@Company@@	The recipient's company
@@Faxnumber@@	The recipient's fax number
@@Voicenumber@@	The recipient's voice number
@@FromName@@	The sender's name
@@FromLocation@@	The sender's location
@@FromCompany@@	The sender's company
@@FromFaxnumber@@	The sender's fax number
@@FromVoicenumber@@	The sender's voice number
@@FromEMail@@	The sender's e-mail address
@@Subject@@	The fax's subject
@@Date@@	Today's date
@@PageCount@@	The number of pages excluding the cover page
@@Comments@@	The comments entered for this fax

Note that these "tags" are just normal text. You can format them any way you like and the

cover page text will have the same formatting.

If the formatting changes *inside* such a tag, however, (e.g. @@**Subject**@@) it probably will not be recognized.

Notes

General

- In general cover pages designed as XSL:FO files directly will work much better because ODT files are converted to XSL:FO first (also see section “ODT format”)
- To support XSL:FO the Apache FOP framework is used (<http://xmlgraphics.apache.org/fop/>), so this plugin shares that framework's limitations.
- You can also start YajHFC with this plugin manually by invoking it using a command line of the form `java -jar yajhfc.jar --loadplugin=FOPPlugin.jar`

Using `fop.sh` or `fop.cmd` is recommended, however, because these scripts make sure that a new version of the XSLT transformer (from apache.org) is used. The version included in current JDKs (as of 08/2008) has a bug which causes an Exception when trying to view ODT files.

ODT format

- To generate the cover page from a ODT document it is first converted to XSL:FO (using a XSL stylesheet). Because of that the formatting of the cover page will sometimes be not exactly the same as it looks in OpenOffice.
So you might need to experiment a bit to get the layout the way you want (you can use the *Extras*→*XSL:FO and ODT utilities*→*View ODT as XSL:FO...* menu item and of course the *Preview* button in the Send Dialog to do so).
- Tabulators won't work correctly, so use tables to align multiple lines of text
- Images are always displayed in their original size, so rescale the to the desired size before you insert them into OpenOffice.
- The position of images might be a bit off
- In general: Don't expect complex layouts to look right at the first try.

Editors

- For ODT files: Simply use OpenOffice (<http://www.openoffice.org/>) ;-)
- For XSL:FO files:
 - You can try mini-scribus (<http://code.google.com/p/fop-miniscribus/>). This editor produced suboptimal results for me, however.
 - There are numerous commercial XSL:FO editors out there. I haven't tested any of these, however.
 - XSL:FO is XML, so you can write those files using any XML or text editor if you are so inclined.
 - If you know of any (other) good free or Open Source WYSIWYG XSL:FO editor, please let me know.