Markdown to Presentation

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Introduction

Goal Convert `md` (Markdown) files to a presentation

For that we are using `pandoc`

Pandoc is very powerful and can convert almost any format to another format.

For all options run `pandc --help`

Setup

On Debian/Ubuntu based distributions install following software

```
sudo apt-get install pandoc
sudo apt-get install texlive-latex-base
```

If there should be missing software search in google for it.

Basic

To simply convert an `md` file run:

```
pandoc README.md -t beamer -o presentation.pdf
```

Advanced

To generate a more beautiful presentation add metadata.

This can be done in the `md` file itself with a yaml block at the beginning

```
---
title:
- Mardown to Presentation
author:
- DigitalizeIT GmbH
theme:
- Copenhagen
---
```

```
pandoc howto.md -t beamer -o presentation.pdf
```

List with all themes

Using a template file

Modify the `md` with specific pandoc metadata is not always what you want. We can put all these metadata to a template file. E.g. `template.yaml`.

```
pandoc README.md -t beamer -o presentation.pdf \
    --metadata-file=template.yaml
```

Code block highlighting

There are several code highlighting styles available:

```
pandoc --list-highlight-styles
```

An example by using the `zenbrun` style

```
pandoc README.md -t beamer -o presentation.pdf \
    --metadata-file=template.yaml \
    --highlight-style=zenburn
```

Generate other document types

There are almost 50 output formats available. To list them:

```
pandoc --list-output-formats
```

Be aware that every generator has it's own options. For example the `theme` option in the `template.yaml` is only available in the `beamer` generator.

Generate a PDF document

```
pandoc README.md -t latex -o presentation.pdf \
    --metadata-file=template.yaml \
    --highlight-style=zenburn -V geometry:a4paper
```

Generate HTML

```
pandoc README.md -t html5 -o presentation.html \
    --metadata-file=template.yaml \
    --highlight-style=zenburn
```

If you analyze the generated HTML code all HTML tags have specific `class` attributes. So it's straight forward to generate a custom `css`.

Generate Microsoft Office documents

Unfortunately `docx` and `pptx` have no templates available.

Generate a PowerPoint

```
pandoc README.md -t pptx -o presentation.pptx \
    --metadata-file=template.yaml \
    --highlight-style=zenburn
```

Generate a word document

```
pandoc README.md -t docx -o presentation.docx \
    --metadata-file=template.yaml \
    --highlight-style=zenburn
```

Conclusion

Cons

Pandoc is in my opinion not a replacement for professional PowerPoint presentation or word documents.

Pro

Pandoc is a powerful tool to generate documents based out of Markdown files. Especial to document a software project. It can be easily integrated into a CI/CD pipeline and the documentation will be released at the same time as the software.

Hints

If you want to transform the Markdown be aware of it when writing. Especial the code snippets will not have a word wrap in the most cases. When generating a presentation (e.g. beamer). Be aware of the size of each slide...