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Subject: DITA topic model design rationale

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My overall topic model goal is to show individuals how to create GIFs through a variety of methods. The three methods I chose are through Adobe Photoshop and through two websites, imgur.com and gifmaker.me, which help turn images or video files into animated GIF formats.

**1. What is included?**

My historicizing project focused specifically on practices of GIF use and its popularity in social media. I decided that I wanted to create a topic model that shows how to create animated GIFs. This would be a conceptually related topic model. To do this, I looked into a variety of websites that convert images and videos to GIF. My topic model consists of three tasks and two concepts topics. The five topics consist of the following information, listed according to ditamap structure:

* Concept topic 1: What is a GIF?
  + Task topic 1: Turning images to GIF using gifmaker.me
  + Task topic 2: Creating an animated GIF from video files on imgur.com
  + Task topic 3: Creating an animated GIF from video file on Adobe Photoshop CC
* Concept topic 2: Suggestions on finding content and use in social media
* Reference 1: Specifications of GIF

**How do the chosen topics support the topic model goal?**

The chosen tasks provide three different ways of creating animated GIFs. The first and second one show how to create GIFs through websites. The third one shows to create GIFs using Adobe Photoshop. I chose three ways but there are many other ways of creating GIFs, aside from the ones I mentioned. Even using Adobe, there are other more complex ways of creating GIFs. These user goals are intended for beginners or users with little to no experience, so I chose methods that would be easy to use. To end my topic model, I placed my reference topic, which includes some information on some of the things GIF can do, such as animation and interlacing. This is for users to be able to reference the more technical aspect of using and learning about GIFs.

I think overall, my chosen topics support the goals of my topic model. Each topic provides additional support drawing from one another. The sole purpose of all the topics are to help the user to be successful in creating an animated GIF, providing informational topics on other aspects of creating GIFs, and because GIFs are widely used in social media, to understand how GIFs are used in social media.

**2. Rationalization behind information structure**

Before this project, I had little understandings of how GIFs were created. So I took this sort of approach with drafting, creating, and designing my topic model. From the perspective of someone who would like to create GIFs but has little to no experience, understanding a little of what GIFs are and what can be created with GIFs (animation) would provide a nice solid and short background information on the topic of GIFs. The topic model then jumps to creating animated GIFs using three different methods. It ends with another concept topic providing suggestions on what sorts of inspiration can be taken to creating GIFs and to using it in social media.

Pertaining to the structure, I chose to place the Adobe task topic at the end of the tasks, before the last concept topic, because it is probably the most difficult task out of the two other tasks (gifmaker.me and imgur.com). It is still simple for a novice user to follow but definitely more difficult compared to the other two. Also, because Adobe Photoshop is not as widely accessible compared to free and more easily accessible websites, which provides the necessary functions to creating an animated GIF.

I used the other two task topics to include how to created animated GIFs through websites because it is an easier method and less complicated compared to Adobe Photoshop. I chose to create one about gifmaker.me because it has many options when formatting and some editing options. While the task topic about imgur.com provides less options but it allows the option of adding text to the GIF. Both of these tasks were placed closer to the top because I thought that users would be more interested in options that were more widely accessible and easy to use.

**3. Design decisions**

One of the major design decisions that changed how I wrote and structured my content would be the task topic about using Abode. I did not realize how much more content I would have to put into this task topic. I also spent more time drafting this one than I did the others. Originally, this task would have been linked to another task, which would go over how to add text to the GIF. An example of how it would have looked like would be:

* + Task topic 3: Creating an animated GIF from video file on Adobe Photoshop CC
    - Task topic 3.1: Adding text to GIF via Adobe Photoshop (subtask of task topic 3)

However, I wasn’t sure about how that would look and I didn’t favor the idea of having tasks structured like so since it didn’t seem very fitting with the overall structure. So while going over the *DITA Best Practices* book, I realized that I could change the ‘subtask’ to ‘substeps’ instead. Once I changed that, I thought the overall structure looked more organized and less complicated than it really needed to be.

This topic was also originally at the top, rather than at the bottom. While combining the ‘subtask’ with the task, I also realized that it would make more sense for the user to first see simpler and easier methods of creating animated GIFs, rather than a long one consisting of ‘substeps.’

The second was adding hierarchy links to the ditamap. Once I added links, I started to think more about how I wanted each topic to be related to one another through linking. The hierarchy links provided a nice structure between **What is GIF?** and the three task topics. I was going to put everything under **What is GIF?** but I thought the task topics should be separated from the second concept and reference. This decision also was the other reason why I decided to merge two tasks about Adobe together, rather than making it separate. This resulted in restructuring and reexamining how I wanted my topics to be structured.

When I added the links, I also thought about what sort of reference materials I could write. I debated what type of information I wanted to include for a reference topic: writing about specifications, writing about different types of technology that would enable creating videos (this became a concept instead), or writing something specifically for Adobe. I ended up not writing a reference topic for Adobe because I didn’t have too much experience with it. I also downloaded only a trial version, which expired before I could get more familiar with the programs. I had only learned the very basics, enough to know how to create a simple GIF derived from a video.

The last design decision is adding images to my topics. I figured with a topic model that describes three ways of creating GIF, concept topics discussing what GIF is, and inspiration on finding content for GIFs and GIF use in social media, it would only be fitting to also include animated GIFs to help provide examples. I also added screenshot images from some of the GIF converter websites to provide the user with an idea of how each site would look like. By including this, I think I ended up making the steps more concise because some steps were unnecessary.

This is an overview explaining the decisions behind my topic model. It also provides an explanation of how all the topics relate to one another.