

## **XML Client Documentation**

ArtBlok 2010 E. Hennepin

WRIT 5662: Writing with Digital Technologies

Tesia Kosmalski

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### **Introducing XML and Structured Authoring to the Steering Committee**

It was initially difficult to communicate the idea and importance of XML to my client. It was a stretch in their minds to go from the site only recently being published to being as sophisticated as reaching the needs of various audiences in various contexts.

I then revisited a few key goals that were established in our last session. The top business goal is to encourage the public to enter the building. Our assumed user goals were to find points of entry into the building and to research an artist that met or knew about in the building. I then proposed that we keep ourselves accountable to the idea of 'ethos' as a rhetorical approach (Emanuel and Martins, 2014). Structured authoring can give us the freedom to build a topic-based approach (Andersen, year) that pulls from all site information to sculpt our building as an ethos-driven character. Structured authoring can also help whoever is managing the site to keep information organized.

It wasn't clear to them though until I played Karen McGrane's interview from the 2018 LavaCon Conference podcast series. McGrane says people claim some technologies, platforms, or devices are irrelevant to their content. In response, McGrane declares with certainty that a technology will exist in the future that you will need to accommodate even if you don't see it right now.

## First XML Tree

Since we all had agreed that structured authoring was our opportunity for ethos, I went about trying to come up with an XML tree to accommodate all relevant information. Below is my first attempt at surveying the possibilities. I posted this image to our shared Google doc, which is how we do most of our communication, and asked for feedback. Not surprisingly, I did not receive a response for a long time about this puzzling and overwhelming document.

2010 ArtBlok Website - XML Structure

Tesia Kosmalski - 10.16.19



I went ahead and tried to pursue XML without speaking with them. I soon realized a plan resembling the above was too ambitious. I had spent far too long on pondering a feeble classification system, my XML skills were not this extensive, and we had practically no building history information organized on file. I had to come up with a better short term plan.

## **Scaling Back**

It was difficult to get a hold of my clients. Artists usually have 2-3 jobs, make their own work, and sometimes even have families. I was happy to just get their time for Google doc discussions. But, I decided to scale back without consulting them and focus on the “Events” and the “Residents” sections. Those are the two large categories of information that change most frequently. Refining a structure for those sections could at least address the needs of the content manager user profile.

Last Friday night, my clients and I were actually able to find some time to video chat and go over the work I’d done. I told them my initial structure was too complicated so I wasn’t interested in discussing the tree diagram. I instead wanted to discuss the tree structures for “Residents” and “Events” related information. They agreed that the initial diagram was slightly confusing. They also said the amount of XML I was proposing was also too much. If the “Residents” and “Events” sections were Phase I of the structured authoring roll out, these soon-to-be content managers wanted it simplified. I thought of Rebekka Andersen’s section on changing consumer expectations of content. “These consumers are solutions oriented and impatient. They want to be able to access just the content they need—anywhere, anytime, and on any device” (Andersen, p. 126). My clients were indeed a user profile with needs like any other.

## **Second XML Tree and Next Steps**

This weekend I put together a second tree to visualize where the XML ended up. I scaled it back to a level digestible enough for both me and my clients. We are currently working through the “Resident” and “Events” information to make sure its updated and ready to go for a productive and effective Module 4.



## References

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Emanuel, Barbara & Martins, Marcos. (2014). Towards a Rhetoric of Interaction: three case studies.

LavaCon Conference Podcast Series. (2018). LavaCon Keynote Karen McGrane on Content in a Zombie Apocalypse [Podcast]. Retrieved from <https://soundcloud.com/user-10737889/lavacon-keynote-karen-mcgrane-on-content-in-a-zombie-apocalypse/>