



## **Astoria Software Support for the DITA Standard Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

### **1. Can Astoria support the DITA standard today?**

Yes, Astoria's XML content management solutions support DITA, including:

- All the document types specified by DITA, including Topic, Task, Reference, Concept, and Database;
- DITA's table models (simpletable, choicetable) and also support for custom or semantic tables;
- DITA's reuse model where content can be referenced and reused from any other file along with full referential integrity.
- Astoria provides a mechanism to accomplish the same content reuse objective of DITA rather than the Conref and Href methodologies outlined in DITA by using Astoria's powerful single-source & differencing technologies.

### **2. What is DITA?**

The Darwin Information Typing Architecture (DITA) is an XML-based, end-to-end architecture for authoring, producing, and delivering readable information as discrete, typed topics. DITA was originally sponsored by IBM, has recently been accepted by the standard setting body OASIS, and has been implemented by a number of organizations. These organizations benefit from the topic-based approach to information, which saves time and money in content creation and publication. Additional information on the DITA standard is available through the OASIS website [<http://www.oasis-open.org/committees/dita/>]

### **3. What is DITA helpful for?**

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- Managing readable information through consistent modeling
- Reusing information in many different combinations and deliverables
- Promoting information specialization, extensibility and customizability
- Providing universal information exchangeability
- Creating online information systems such as User Assistance (help) or web resource
- Promoting common metadata models
- Creating minimalist books simplifying authoring and use

#### **4. What technical authoring need does DITA fill that hasn't already been addressed?**

DITA has been designed for topics or applications that require both extensibility and interoperability with other systems. DocBook was originally designed for a single, continuous technical narrative and discourages local extensions because of the potential for unknown new elements to break tool support and interoperability.

By contrast, DITA was designed for discrete technical topics. DITA collects topics into information sets, potentially using filtering criteria. Through generalization, DITA provides for tool reuse and interoperability. While each approach has its strengths, DITA would be the likely choice

#### **5. Who is adopting DITA? Early adopters? Standards bodies?**

OASIS, the leading standard setting body for Web services, has implemented OASIS DITA 1.0 standard for DITA DTDs and Schemas. Over a dozen organizations of the Fortune 500, including IBM, have successful DITA implementations running today.

#### **6. Why are organizations adopting DITA?**

DITA's topic-based, modular approach to creating information, organizations can achieve significant improvement in productivity and content accuracy. For example, DITA's structure promotes the reuse of individual topics and topic collections. The standard can also reduce an organization's content exchange costs where information is shared outside the organization. Finally, the standard promotes content repurposing across web, help file, and printed materials with minimal intervention.

#### **7. These terms keep coming up in DITA conversations; what do they mean?**

##### **Topic-oriented authoring**

Creating a unit of information for a single subject. The topics can then be assembled into help systems or books that require a particular selection and organization of subjects.

##### **Information typing**

Identifying the type of topic, such as task, concept, reference, example, and so on. The type of the topic may determine its structure, such as a task having steps. In DITA, an XML DTD or Schema guides the writer to author information with the correct structure for the topic type.

##### **Specialization**

Extensibility with inheritance, which allows the creation of new types that inherit processing rules from existing types. For example, API documentation is a particular kind of reference information and requires more specific rules and descriptive markup than a generic reference type. DITA lets you define a new type and reuse the processing of the base type (providing new processing only for different requirements of the new type). As a result, topics from different domains with different markup and markup rules can be built together into one help file, Web site, or book

#### **8. How can I get more information on DITA?**

Visit: [www-128.ibm.com/developerworks/xml/library/x-dita1/](http://www-128.ibm.com/developerworks/xml/library/x-dita1/)

#### **9. Where can I discuss DITA?**

- o [DITA forum](#)
- o - [www.ibm.software.developerworks.xml.dita](http://www.ibm.software.developerworks.xml.dita)
- o [XML doc forum](#)
- o - <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/xml-doc/>
- o [TECHWR-L forum](#)
- o -[www.raycomm.com/techwhirl/](http://www.raycomm.com/techwhirl/)
- o [URL to blogs](#)
- o -<http://www.astoriablogs.com/>

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