Selecting the Right Technology to Support Your Content Reuse Strategy

ThirtySix Software
http://www.thirtysix.net
Many solutions...
What do we mean by content reuse?

Write once.
Approve once.
Use everywhere.
Why content reuse?

Headcount in tech pubs departments decreased by 6% over previous 12 months

Number of products company brings to market increases by 14% annually

Source: Aberdeen Group, March 2010
Identifying Reuse Opportunities

- Sales and Marketing
- Auditors
- Medical Writers
- Tech Pubs
- Trainers and Instructional Designers
- Human resources, legal, etc
Product 1

Technical Communications
- Datasheets
- Quick Ref
- Installation Guide
- User Guide

Training
- e-Learning
- Participant Guide
- Instructor Guide

Development
- GUI / Interface
- Software

Marketing / Sales
- Website
- Product Catalog
- Product Brochures
Successful content reuse consists of...

A well planned, well thought out content reuse strategy

+ Technology that effectively supports this strategy

+ Training and implementation
Content Strategy First

What content will be reused?

How is it going to be reused?

Where will it be reused?

Who will need to reuse it?
## Where is the reuse potential?

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<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Installation Guide</th>
<th>User Guide</th>
<th>Quick Start Guide</th>
<th>Documentation</th>
<th>Training Guide</th>
<th>Website Content</th>
<th>Data Sheet</th>
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*Product 1*
Do you have a well planned, well thought out content reuse strategy?
Structured vs. Unstructured

• This decision is driven by your overall content strategy
  – Where is your content going?
  – How is it going to be used?
• XML is not required for reuse
• XML does not equal reuse
Technology Selection

1. Prioritize your needs
2. Understand your budget
3. Understand your technology constraints
Every reuse solution excels in different ways

Use your reuse strategy to determine what characteristics are most important to you
Component Reuse

• The ability to reuse a chunk of content across many documents
• Text, formatted content, tables, graphics, etc
• Metadata and taxonomy
Notifications

• How does the solution notify you when reusable content you have used has changed?
• Critical for **living documents**
• Do not rely on people to communicate content updates
Where Used

- The ability to track where, when, and who reused content
- Critical for living documents
- Facilitates impact assessment and content updates
- Version control
Bulk Update

• The ability to update reusable content in many documents at one time

• Streamlines document creation and content updates
Conditional Content

• The ability to generate multiple variations of output from a single master source
• Tremendous ROI potential
• Reduces the amount of content you have to maintain
Document Assembly

- The ability to easily assemble new documents from existing content
- Critical for repetitive documents
- Makes finding reusable content intuitive and natural
- Lead writers to existing content
Support for Legacy Content

• How does the solution work with your existing content?
• Is an import and conversion process required?
• Be skeptical of claims that technology can automatically import your content
Support for Non-users

• Can people who don’t have access to the solution be able to review the content?
• Critical for review and approval
• Significant challenge for XML solutions
Support for Translation

• Does the solution support true translation reuse?
• Is it easy to save and reuse your translated content on a component level?
• How will it integrate with TM or MT tools?
Other Considerations

• Proprietary formats?
  – What happens if you want to move away from the solution or the vendor goes out of business?

• Small or remote teams

• Establishing metrics

• Identify what defines success
Make Reuse Easy!

“If there is one theme that stands out across the practices and technology leveraged by the Best-in-Class, it is this: make content easy to reuse.”

Source: Aberdeen Group, March 2010
Do it right.

Don’t neglect your technology investment ... **invest in training**!
Implementation

- Have a plan
- Start small and grow over time
- Demonstrate a quick success and quick ROI
- Some of the most successful implementations only reuse a small portion of their content
Successful content reuse consists of...

A well planned, well thought out content reuse strategy

Technology that effectively supports this strategy

Training and implementation
Start thinking now...

Two resource documents to help you get started:

- Questions to consider for your content reuse strategy
- Characteristics to look for in a content reuse solution
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