A Technical Writer's Perspective on Using DITA in oXygen

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syncro soft

®
XML Editor

About the Author

Background:

- 15+ years experience writing documentation.

- 2+ years experience with XML.

- 2+ years experience with DITA.

- 2+ years experience using oXygen

Current occupation:

- Technical Writer for Syncro Soft

Agenda

- Briefly discuss my experience with learning DITA after coming from a background of "unstructured writing".

- Explore the full documentation workflow for a software company (Syncro Soft).

- Present various features that I use in oXygen that maximize the benefits of "structured authoring and DITA.

Learning DITA

- "Unstructured writing" background

- My first experiences with "structured authoring"

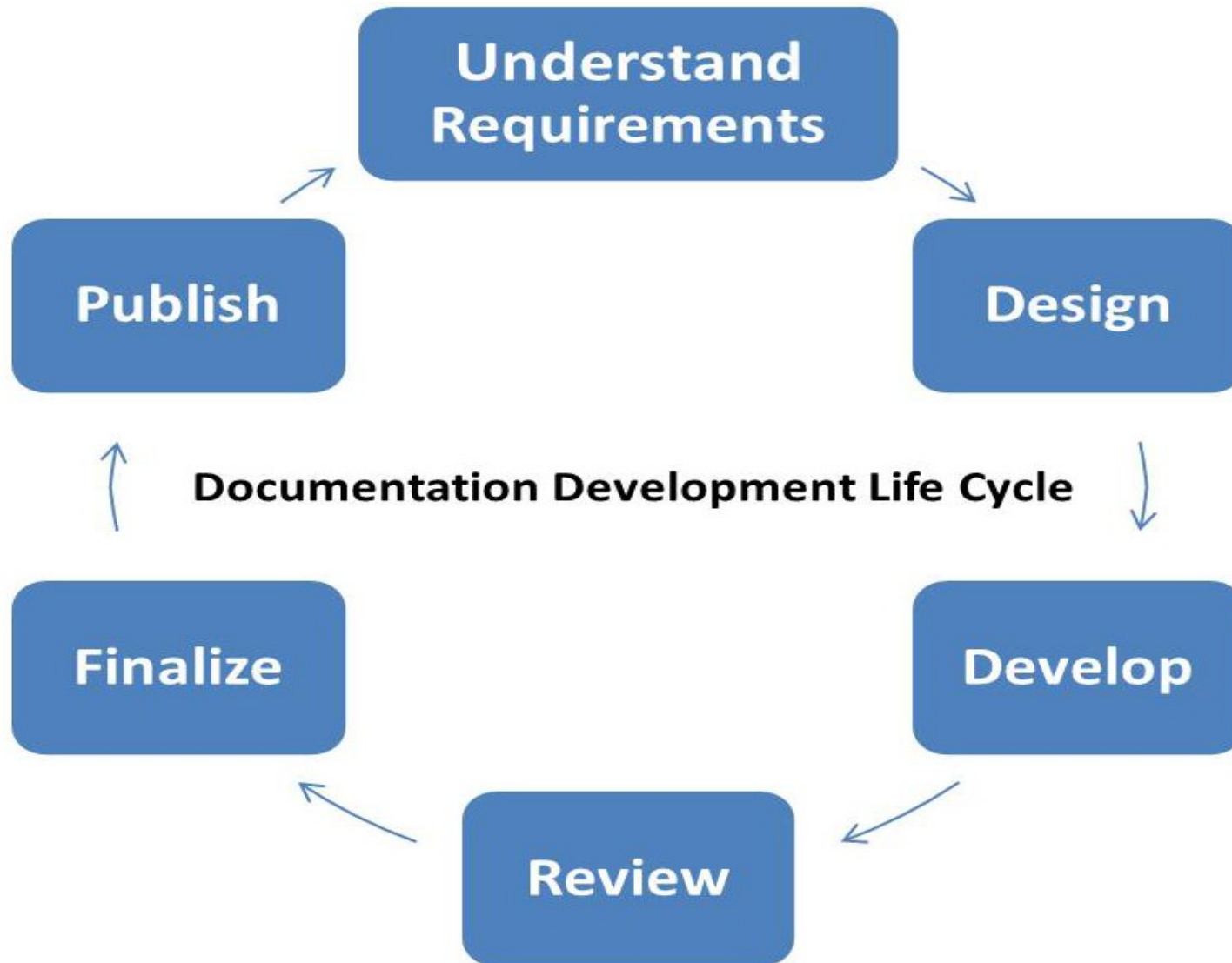- My experiences with learning DITA

Impressions of DITA

- Ability to reuse/re-purpose content quickly and easily reduces mistakes and saves a lot of time.

- Very easy to manage the TOC structure.

- Web-oriented manner of presenting content.

- Modular approach helps organizing large projects.

- Fewer tags and they are easy to understand.

- Conditional profiling and controlling values also helps to reduce mistakes and save time.

- Allows you deliver multiple formats and customize the output in numerous ways.

My Ultimate Benefits of DITA

- Helps to increase the quality of my content.

- I can easily reuse and re-purpose content.

- Makes the content creation process far more efficient and intuitive than any writing standard that I've used.

- Tag structure makes more sense to me than other XML standards, such as DocBook or TEI.

Documentation Life Cycle

Documentation Requirements

- Oxygen XML Editing Suite Products
    - Author
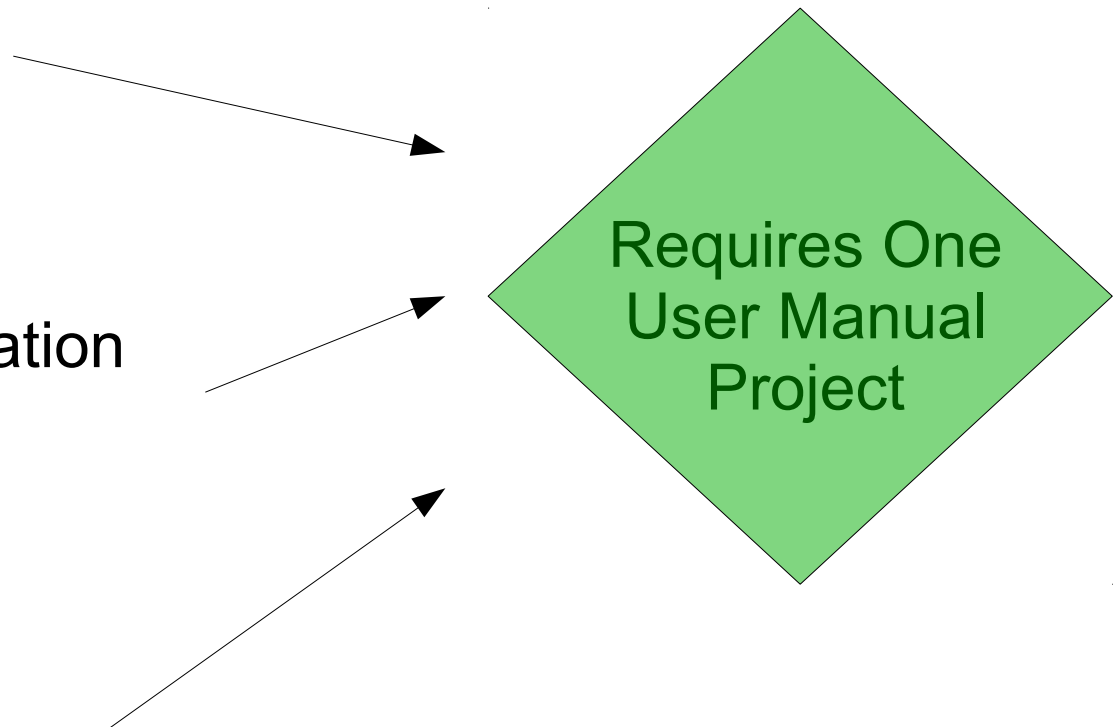   - Developer
    - Editor

- Two Distributions
    - Standalone application
    - Eclipse plugin

- Multiple Platforms
    - Windows
    - Mac OS X
    - Linux

Requires One User Manual Project

Documentation Requirements

- New Products
  - oXygen XML Web Author
  - oXygen Content Fusion

- Website
  - oXygen Website

- Other Documentation Tasks
  - UI Message Review
  - Announcements, Press Releases, Emails, etc.

Integrated into User Manual Project

Requires One Project

Requires One Website Project

Documentation Requirements

Output

- 8 versions of online WebHelp
- 8 versions of online PDF
- 3 versions of offline Windows Compiled Help
- 3 versions of offline Eclipse Help
- 3 versions of offline Java Help (Linux)
- 1 Website

Other Help to be Considered

- oXygen Dynamic Help

Documentation Requirements

Versioning Repository System

- GitHub via SourceTree (All User Manual Projects)
- SVN Client (Website)

Project Management

- JIRA project tracking software

Documentation Tools

- oXygen XML Editor
- oXygen XML Author

Design Phase

Content/Project Collection Tools

1. JIRA ⭐

2. Email

3. Face to Face Collaboration with Developers

- Content/Project Collection Sources

  - Technical Support tickets

  - Client feedback

  - Internal feedback

  - Management & Developer planning

Creation/Development Phase

Content Creation Solutions

- oXygen XML Editor
- oXygen XML Author
- DITA (All User Manuals)
    - Reusable components
    - Conditional profiling, variables, controlled values
    - TOC, Index, Glossary management
- Customized XML Framework (Website)
- Image editing tool (Screenshots, Images)
- Error prevention/correction

Error Prevention & Correction

- Validate and Check for Completeness.

- Styleguide.

- Schematron rules.

- Quick Fixes.

- Spell Checking and AutoCorrect.

- Grammar tools.

Review/Proofreading Phase

Proofreading

- Author proofreads documentation
- Developer reviews documentation
- QA department reviews documentation

Collaboration

- Review tools (Change Tracking, Comments)
- JIRA comments or email feedback
- Face to face collaboration
- Other collaboration tools
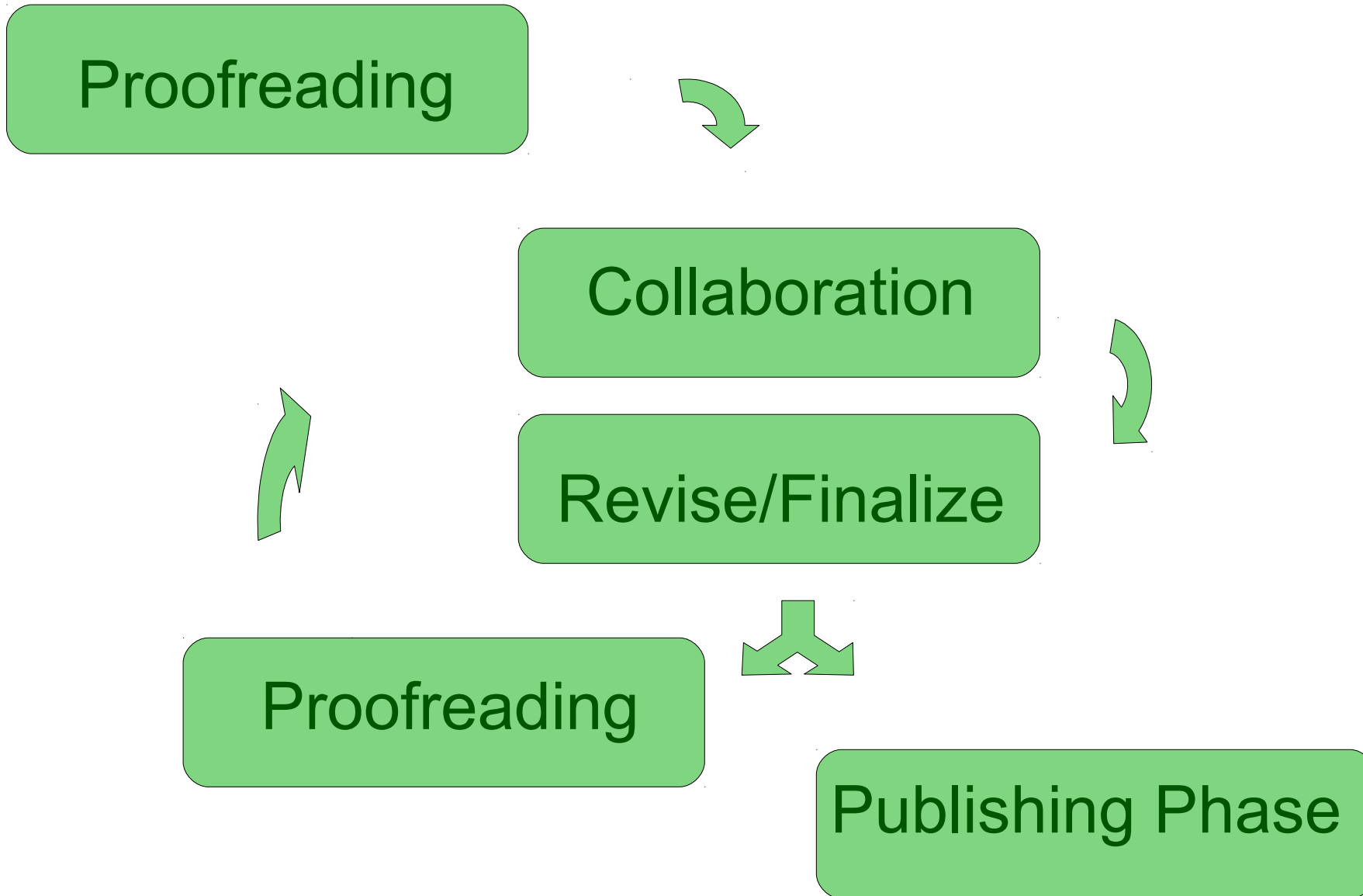
Finalizing Phase

User Manual Project

- Commit changes (GitHub)
- Comment issue (JIRA)

Website Project

- Commit changes (SVN Client)
- Collaborate with Web Master to merge changes
- Comment issue (JIRA)

Review ⟷ Finalize Phases

Proofreading

Collaboration

Revise/Finalize

Proofreading

Publishing Phase

Publishing Phase

User Manuals

- Automated publishing process
  - Online Versions: Generated at the time of each release and as needed (delivered online in WebHelp and PDF).
    - Online versions also generated nightly for testing & review.
  - Offline Versions: At the time of release only (delivered with installation kits).

- Other Automation
  - Automated validation tests
  - Continuous integration (Jenkins)

Website

- Web Master manually generates output as needed

Validate and Check for Completeness

- Validate all topics according to DITA standard.

- Check for broken links, key references, and content references.

- Check for missing images or referenced resources.

- Check for broken links to remote web sites.

- Check for broken links in the context of profiling filters.

- Find unreferenced resources.

Schematron Rules

- Report invalid pattern for topic IDs.

- Report web links with redundant text content.

- Report codeblocks without outputclass attribute.

- Report empty paragraphs and list items.

- Report consecutive ordered/unordered lists.

- Report tables with more cells per row that specified column number.

Schematron Quick Fixes

- Inserting index terms in topic.

- Set the proper ID to a topic.

- Remove redundant text from links.

- Insert title and ID for new sections.

- Insert linklist element for related links.

Profiling Condition Sets

Product Filter for Main User Manual

- Author
- Developer
- Editor
- Author Eclipse plugin
- Developer Eclipse plugin
- Editor Eclipse plugin
- Web Author

Thank You!

Questions?

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