

When DITA meets Markdown

Alex Jitianu

alex_jitianu@oxygenxml.com

@AlexJitianu

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Agenda

- Content and markup
- Structured authoring
- Markdown
- DITA
- Markdown and DITA inside a documentation project

It all starts with the content

Create a Google account

How to create or set up your Google Account on your mobile phone.

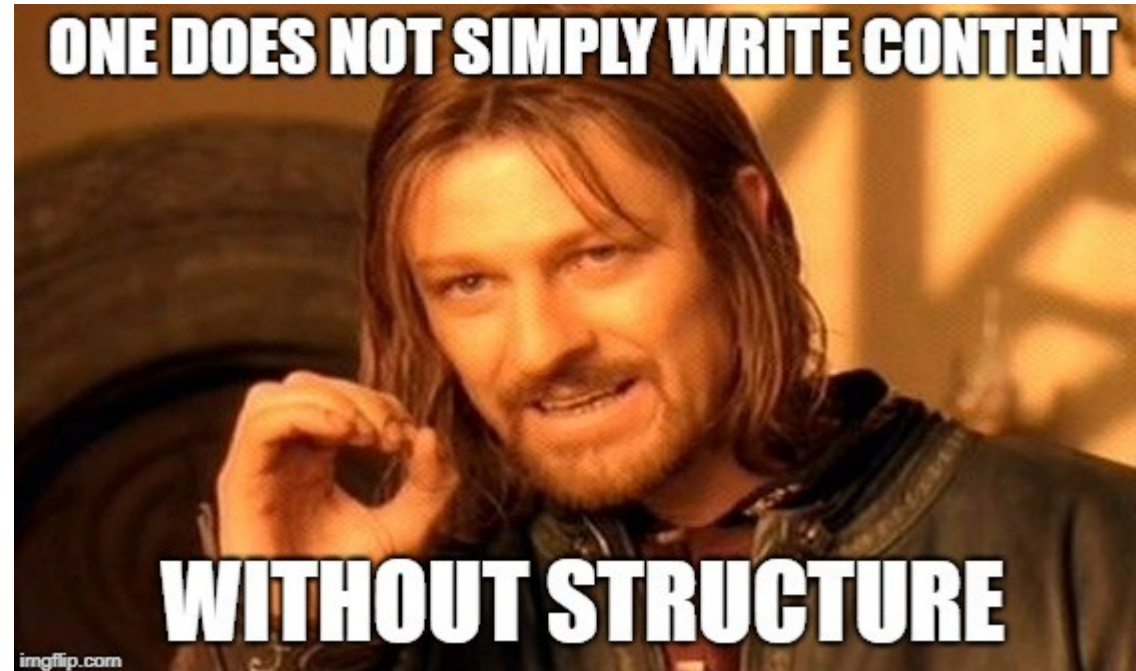
From a Home screen, swipe up to access Apps.

Tap Settings > Accounts

Tap Add account > Google.

A typical task

Content alone is not enough



Why do we need structure?

- Defines the organization/model of content
- Helps us enforce the defined model
- Increases consistency
- Automatic processing
- Faster publishing workflows

What Meaning Lies Beneath

Create a Google account

Title

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Short description

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Procedure

Encode it with a Markup Language

Create a Google account

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Procedure

Markdown

- Easy to learn
- Minimalistic
- Many authoring tools available
- Publishing tools

Create a Google account
=====

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- * From a Home screen, swipe up to access Apps.
- * Tap **Settings** > **Accounts**
- * Tap **Add account** > **Google**.

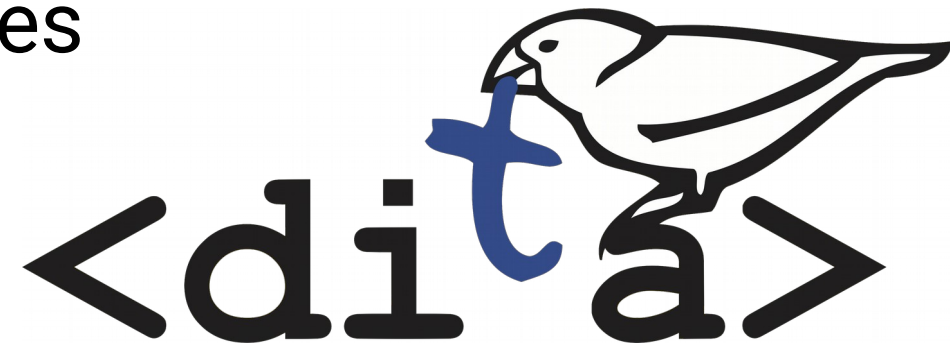


XML

- e(**X**)tensible (**M**)arkup (**L**)anguage
- Define your own tags/markup
- Powerful mechanisms to enforce valid content structure (DTD/Schema/Schematron)

DITA

- DITA is an XML-based open **standard** for structuring, developing, managing, and publishing content.
- Semantic markup (separates formatting from content)
- Strong content reuse concepts
- Restrictions and specializations
- Huge ecosystem of publishing choices



Side by side

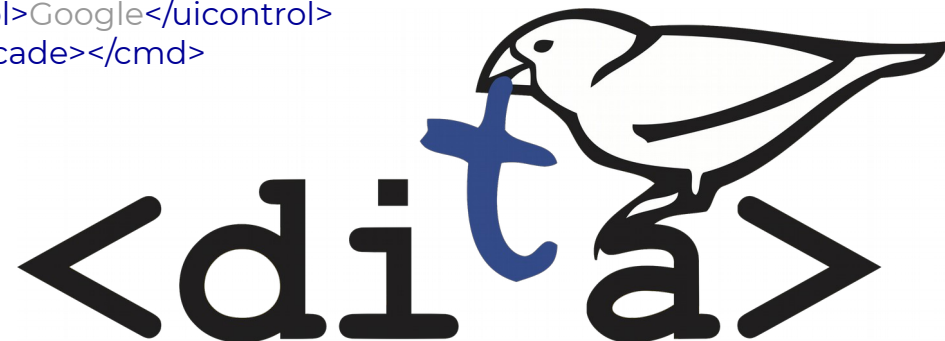
Create a Google account

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How to create or set up your **Google Account** on your mobile phone.

1. From a Home screen, swipe up to access Apps.
1. Tap **Settings** > **Accounts**
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```
<task id="create_google_account">
  <title>Create a Google account</title>
  <shortdesc>How to create or set up your <term>Google Account</term>
on your mobile phone.</shortdesc>
  <taskbody>
    <steps>
      <step>
        <cmd>From a Home screen, swipe up to access Apps.</cmd>
      </step>
      <step>
        <cmd>Tap <menucascade>
          <uicontrol>Settings</uicontrol>
          <uicontrol>Accounts</uicontrol>
        </menucascade></cmd>
      </step>
      <step>
        <cmd>Tap <menucascade>
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Side by side – visual mode

Create a Google account

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Create a Google account

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Scenario

- Main documentation project written in DITA
- Contributors (devs) sending content in Markdown

[1] Convert MD to DITA

- MD => HTML => DITA
 - <https://pandoc.org/>
 - <http://dita-ot.sourceforge.net/1.5.2/readme/DITA-h2d-ant.html#h2d-ant>
- MD => DITA
 - DITA-OT plugin developed by Jarno Elovirta
<https://github.com/jelovirt/dita-ot-markdown>
 - Oxygen Batch Converter plugin
<https://github.com/oxygenxml/oxygen-resources-converter>

[2] Keep MD and use it in DITA

- Dynamic conversion (custom URL)

- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/URL>

↑
Scheme

↑
Domain name

↑
Path

- `<topicref href="md2dita:/topic.md" format="dita"/>`

- <https://github.com/oxygenxml/dita-glass>

[2] Keep MD and use it in DITA

- Dynamic conversion (custom URL)
 - `<topicref href="md2dita:/topic.md" format="dita"/>`
 - <https://github.com/oxygenxml/dita-glass>
- Refer MD files directly in your map
 - `<topicref href="tasks/changingtheoil.md" format="markdown"/>`
- Seamless publishing

Using specific DITA concepts in MD

- Metadata
- Specialization types
- Titles and document structure
- Image and Key references

<https://github.com/jelovirt/dita-ot-markdown/wiki/Syntax-reference>

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What is Lightweight DITA?

- LwDITA is a proposed standard for expressing *simplified DITA documents* in *XML, HTML5, and Markdown*.
- The core goals of LwDITA:
 - Provide a simpler DITA experience
 - Provide mappings between *XML, HTML5, and Markdown* that enable individuals to:
 - Author content in the format of their choice
 - Easily exchange and publish content whose source exists in these different markup languages

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Advantages

- Single sourcing across DITA and Markdown
- Collaboration on Markdown source
- Use DITA features and publishing options with Markdown
- Use Markdown publishing options
 - <https://github.com/jelovirt/dita-ot-markdown#generating-markdown-output>
 - Make use of publishing platforms like Jekyll, Vuepress, Mkdocs etc.
 - <https://nostalgic-hamilton-b6dae0.netlify.com/>

Disadvantages

- Markdown lacks semantics
- Consistency challenges (not a standard, can receive different flavors)
- Markdown language restrictions
- No reuse mechanisms
- Review/Collaboration tracking challenges
 - When done on the Markdown source
 - No support for tracking changes
 - Difficult to visualize changes (diffs needed)
 - When done on converted content, like PDF
 - Writer Generate PDF => Devs review on PDF => Writer incorporates Review.
 - Extra overhead to incorporate review into source

Why do Devs tend to use Markdown?

- It has a low learning curve
- You do things fast
- Don't have time to learn another language
- They don't need any additional tool installed on their system

[3] Could Devs write DITA?

- Learn it as you use it through Markdown2DITA controlled conversions. Like a *“Learning assistant”*.
 - Powered by Schematron Quick Fixes
 - <https://github.com/oxygenxml/ditaMark>
- Give Devs specialized editing environments (cloud based):
 - Specialized UI (e.g. HTML form) that generates consistent DITA
 - Specialized Web based DITA editors
 - Oxygen XML Web Author
 - Oxygen Content Fusion

Could Devs write DITA?

Task template

Title

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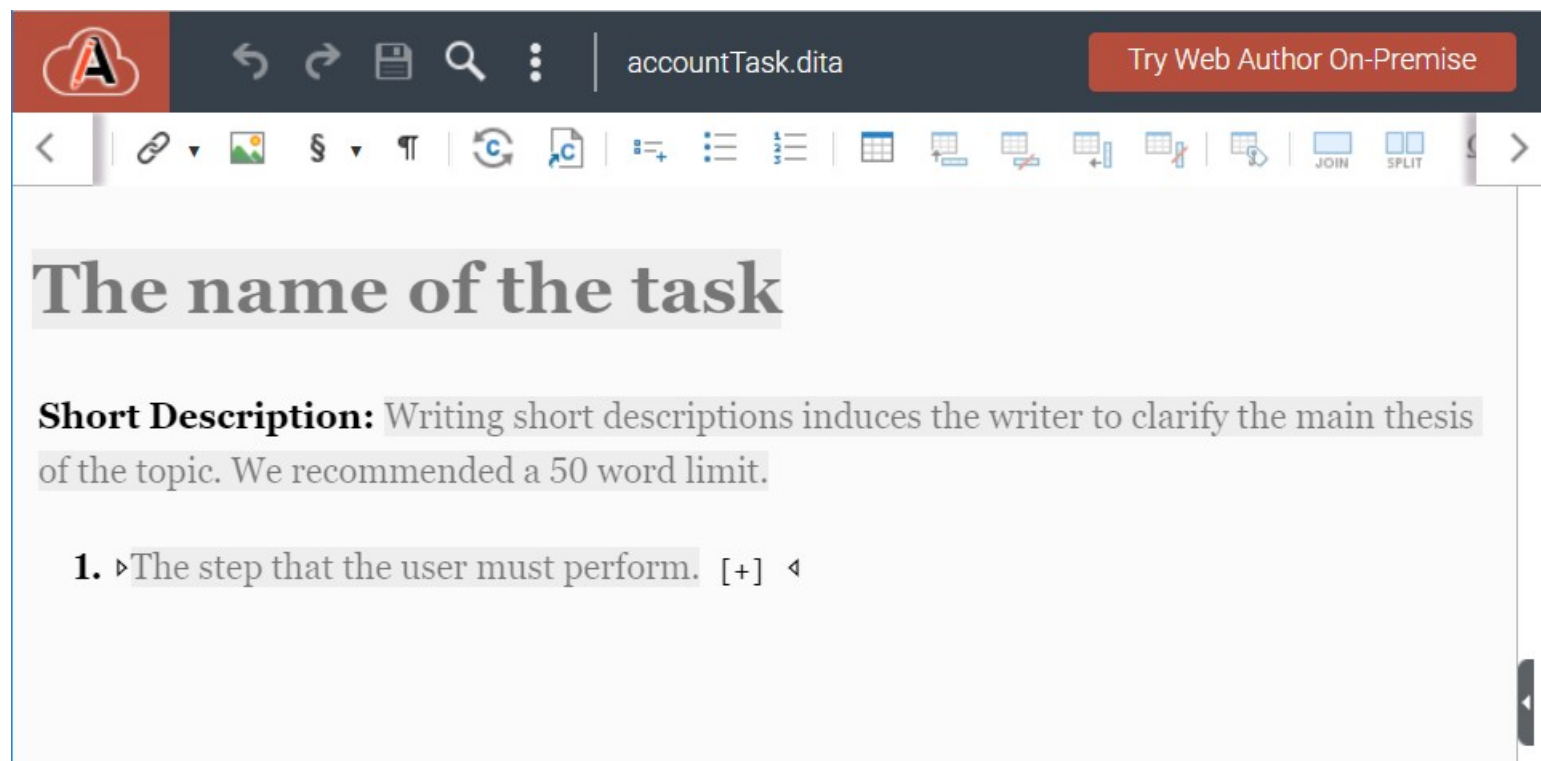
Step

From a Home screen, swipe up to access Apps.

+

Submit

Could Devs write DITA?



Conclusion

- There is no one-size-fits-all solution
- Convert if it's a one time thing
- Keep them together and achieve single sourcing
- Consistency/Collaboration might require a switch to DITA

THANK YOU!

Any questions?

Alex Jitianu

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