ACM SIGDOC Committee on Structured Authoring and Content Management

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Created by members of the ACM SIGDOC Committee on Structured Authoring and Content Management



Agenda

- 1. Who are we?
 - Mission
 - Roadmap
- 2. 2025 activities:
 - Curriculum resource development
 - XML curriculum learning paths
 - No-frills, industry-flavored style guide
 - Curriculum pilot projects
 - XML/Docs-as-code hybrid resources
- 3. Closing thoughts



Mission

This SIGDOC committee promotes collaboration between academic programs in technical communication (professors, students, researchers) and industry professionals (writers, architects, trainers, managers). We've narrowed the scope of our committee work to "structured authoring" and "content management."

Steering Committee members include both academic and industry practitioners:

Academic	Industry	
Rebekka Andersen, Ph.D. (UC Davis)	Stan Doherty, Ph.D. (Google LLC, OASIS)	
Carlos Evia, Ph.D. (Virginia Tech)	Oliver Fischer (Red Hat - Germany)	
Emily Gresbrink, Ph.D. (Minn. St., Mankato)	Ashley Hardin (Red Hat)	
Chenxing Xie, Ph.D. (Univ. Cincinnati)	Stefan Jung (Dometic – Germany)	
	Keith Schengili-Roberts (DITAwriter)	
	Frank Wegmann (Software AG – Germany)	

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What is structured content?

Structured authoring consists of a collection of standards, technologies, and best practices prevalent in the field of technical communication. "Structure" in this context implies that individual documents comply with a specific set of software-enforced rules governing allowable elements, attributes, and relationships.

Software applications such as parsers validate the individual document against its declared rule set. Frequently implemented with structured authoring projects are the following best practices for content development:

- Al model training
- Semantic markup
- Information typing
- Minimalism
- Topic-based authoring
- Metadata-based navigation and assembly
- Content reuse by reference



Benefits

For academic programs . . .

- Increased collaboration.
- Improved student skills development.
- Improved student placement.
- Improved support for professors.
- Increased number of course offerings.
- Increased recognition within academic programs (tenure, funding).
- More opportunities for faculty to work in industry.

For industry practitioners . . .

- Increased collaboration.
- Expanded pool of qualified candidates.
- Decreased onboarding/training costs.
- Increased knowledge sharing.
- Increased opportunities for guest lectures or sections.



2025-2026 Committee Roadmap



2025-2026 Committee Roadmap

2026
DELIVERABLES
Docs-as-code Curriculum Learning Paths
Industry Speaker Bureau
Curriculum Pilot Program Management
Curriculum Pilot Technical Support
Sample Doc Sets • SIGDOC

2025-2026 Committee Roadmap

2025		2026		
DELIVERABLES	HOW TO CONTRIBUTE	DELIVERABLES	HOW TO CONTRIBUTE	
XML Curriculum Resources	- Authoring - Curating - Reviewing - Editing - Testing	Docs-as-code Curriculum Learning Paths	- Authoring - Curating - Reviewing - Editing - Piloting	
XML Curriculum Learning Paths	Sharing activitiesTesting the Guide	Industry Speaker Bureau	- Speakers - Instructors	
No-frills, Industry Style Guide	- Reviewing - Productizing	Curriculum Pilot Program Management	CoordinatorsPilot volunteers	
XML/DITA pilots (3)	Pilot volunteersTechnical support	Curriculum Pilot Technical Support	- Oxygen Editor Admins - Heretto CCMS Admins - GitHub Pages Admins	
Docs-as-code+DITA hybrid resources	- Reviewing - Testing	Sample Doc Sets	- Curating - Testing	

Activity-0: Infrastructure

- Goal: Build out web, GitHub, Slack, and communications services to support the work of the committee and its interactions with stakeholders.
- Resources: Home page: <u>https://acm-sigdoc-structured.org/</u> GitHub samples repo: <u>https://github.com/acm-sigdoc-structured/</u> Work in progress dashboard: <u>Google Drive</u>
- Contact: Oliver Fischer (mativista@yahoo.com)



Activity-1: Curriculum resource development

Goal: Develop a library of professionally developed curriculum resources that are: 1) free, 2) customizable (Creative Commons),
3) professionally developed, and 4) accompanied by source code.

Resources: https://acm-sigdoc-structured.org/1-curriculum-resources.html

Resource	gSlide	gDoc	Powerpoint	MS Word	PDF
What is structured content?	gSlide	gDoc	PPTX	DOCX	PDF
What is semantic markup?	gSlide	gDoc	PPTX	DOCX	PDF
What are DITA topics? NEW !!	gSlide	gDoc	PPTX	DOCX	PDF
How does OASIS DITA support content reuse?		gDoc	100	DOCX	PDF
Introduction to modular docs and templates	gSlide		-	-	1.44
Technical writing and the role of AI !NEW!	-	gDoc		DOCX	PDF
What is agile content management?	-	gDoc	50	DOCX	PDF

Contact: Stan Doherty (sjdoherty.acm@gmail.com)

Activity-1: Curriculum resource development

Goal: Recruit industry professionals to write articles on topics relevant to learning about structured authoring and content management.

- What is copyediting?
- How do I learn about becoming a copyeditor?
- What is a component content management system (CCMS)?
- How does a CCMS differ from a CMS (content management system)?
- What does a technical editor do?
- What does a technical archivist do?
- What is DITA inheritance?
- How is web information architecture different from content architecture?
- What are the different types of metadata relevant to authoring and publishing?
- What is the difference between well-formed and valid markup?
- How far can I go in MS Word to implement structured authoring?

Resources: https://acm-sigdoc-structured.org/4-content-development.html



Contact: Stan Doherty (sjdoherty.acm@gmail.com)

Activity-1: Curriculum content development

Goal:

Curate these resources using a multiple peer reviewers.

Part#	Drafts	Article	Author(s)	Editor	Tech Reviewer	Instruct. Reviewer
ACM-014			and the second se	Sector Participation		and an elitic de l'arte de la recentration
ACM-015	<u>GitHub</u>	Introduction to DITA	Oliver Fischer	Scot Marvin	Rob Hanna	Carlos Evia
ACM-018	<u>GitHub</u>	What are the differences between XML and HTML?	Chenxing Xie	Scot Marvin	Timed out - Stan Doherty (replacement)	Emily Gresbrink
ACM-019		What best practices for organizing my online portfolio?	Oliver Fischer	Ready	TBD	Timed out go with what we have.
ACM-021		What does a technical copy editor do?	JoAnn Hackos	TBD	TBD	TBD

Resources: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Ya105jfpTf1986EThbziVactMqbxrkc73ndT9tTCZc/edit?gid=0#gid=0
SIGDC

Contact: Stan Doherty (sjdoherty.acm@gmail.com)

Activity-2: XML curriculum learning paths

- Goal:Offer educators a guide for teaching with our XML/DITA
curriculum resources. These can be sequenced to form a learning
path for students. Some resources are conceptual, others tutorial.
Here are ingredients:
 - ► What is structured content? ► What is semantic markup?
 - ► What is DITA?
 ► What are DITA topics?
 - ► How do I manage reusable text resources?
 - ► How does OASIS DITA support content reuse?
 - Heretto CCMS Quickstart
 Oxygen Editor Quickstart
- Resources: In progress: "Guide to Teaching Structured Authoring in a DITAbased environment"

Contact: Rebekka Andersen (randersen@ucdavis.edu)

Activity-3: No-frills, industry-flavored style guide

- Goal: Provide instructors and students with a brief, customizable industryflavored style guide. Use for committee documentation.
 - Touch on concepts such as Voice, Headings, Diagrams, Code blocks, and Terminology.
 - Status: In progress review & revisions.

Resources: <u>https://acm-sigdoc-structured.org/5-style-guide.html</u>

Contact: Emily Gresbrink (<u>emily.gresbrink@mnsu.edu</u>) Scot Marvin (scotmarvin@gmail.com)



Activity-4: Fall 2025 curriculum pilot projects

- Goal: Identify and support three instructors who want to teach structured authoring in a DITA-based environment in their Fall 2025 courses. Instructors would use our guide for teaching with the XML/DITA curriculum resources which can be sequenced to form a learning path. Instructors would commit to testing our committee resources and periodically checking in the Rebekka. Recruiting pilots now.
- Resources: XML curriculum resources. Guide to be completed by July 15.
- Contact: Rebekka Andersen (<u>randersen@ucdavis.edu</u>) Carlos Evia (cevia@vt.edu)



Activity-5: XML/Docs-as-code hybrid resources

Goal: Develop resources that demonstrate how to integrate content in Markdown with structured content in XML/DITA and Lightweight DITA in docs-as-code workflows.

Resources: In progress.

Contact: Carlos Evia (cevia@vt.edu)



Closing thoughts

- 1. All is not replacing technical writers in general. It is accelerating the content development cycle and raising the bar for first-job skills. Al *will* replace many of the scut-work jobs previously performed by entry-level TWs.
- Per the US Bureau of Labor Statistics <u>Occupational Outlook Handbook</u>, there will be a 4% increase in TW jobs in the next 10 years. That is quite low, assuming that 25% of current 50,000 technical writers will *not* be retiring.
- 3. If the resources and consulting that committee offers lowers the bar for instructors to design and deliver courses or course segments on structured authoring, that would be a huge success.
- 4. Please send us your thoughts and concerns. You are our stakeholders.



Thank You!

See the <u>Committee on Structured</u> <u>Authoring and Content Management page</u> of the ACM SIGDOC website to learn more about committee activities, available resources, and volunteer opportunities.

Contact Committee Chair Stan Doherty at sjdoherty.acm@gmail.com to learn more or to get involved.

