DITA Maps and Documents

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A DITA map is used to gather DITA resources into an ordered hierarchy. Such maps can be used for a variety of purposes, such as managing shared resources (e.g. glossaries), specifying part of a document (e.g. a chapter), or specifying a document (e.g. a user guide).

A DITA map uses a nested hierarchy of `topicref` elements to specify the structure of a DITA document. Such elements can refer to DITA resources (such as DITA topics and maps) or foreign data (such as images and videos).

Over time the topics (or sub-maps) that a map references may be updated. Such updates can be marked in a number of ways, including:

- DITA's `rev` and `status` flags
- an editor's track change markup scheme.

Each topic could be checked for update individually and marked up appropriately, say using DeltaXML's DITA topic compare technology.

An alternative would be to use two versions of the map to drive the comparison of the topics that it uses. Here the main issue is in aligning the topics for comparison.

Aligning Topics within a Map Driven Topic Comparison

Correctly aligning the topics when performing a map driven topic comparison is, in general, a difficult problem. However, there are some common sub-classes of this problem that are more tractable. In this section we examine some of the more tractable cases in more detail.

Consider the context where a dita document (and all of its source) are kept within a directory tree on the file system and document versioning is done by copying this directory. In this context the two dita documents can be compared by gathering the relative paths from the top-level maps to each of the referenced dita-topics, and comparing those topics that have the same relative paths. This is the approach that the demo Map comparator takes. Note that it is possible to identify both the insertion of new topics and the deletion of old topics using this approach. However, it is not possible to handle topics whose relative location has changed.

Some Content Management and Version Control Systems record the movement of resources (e.g. DITA topic files). Assuming that this data can be supplied (in a suitable form) to the DITA Map comparator then it can be used to enhance the relative path scheme, to align topics that have moved.

It might also be feasible to manually specify which topics have moved location. For example, if chapters are each located in their own sub-map, then moving the location of a chapter to a different directory (say renaming the directory to reflect a change in the chapter's name) then it should be possible to specify a map level relative base adjustment, which could be applied to all the nested references.

DeltaXML DITA Compare - taking control of document changes

This sample document shows some of the benefits of DeltaXML DITA Compare, which shows revisions in all your DITA documents. DeltaXML DITA Compare takes the pain out of tracking and documenting changes in all DITA documents.

You can simply execute DeltaXML DITA Compare and provide it with two versions of, say, a DITA topic and it will generate a new topic file which shows all the changes. Added, deleted and changed text will be highlighted. This simple example shows how this works.

This document represents Version ~~1~~2. You will see that when 'Version 1' is changed to 'Version 2', the change is shown.

~~This paragraph appears only in Version 1 and not in Version 2.~~

A Section

When a topic has sections, each section will be aligned with a section in the other document and not to a paragraph.

This paragraph is the same as the paragraph before/after it but is not aligned because the first is in a section and the second is outside the section.

Benefits

~~This paragraph is the same as the paragraph before/after it but is not aligned because the first is in a section and the second is outside the section.~~

Here are some of the benefits of using DeltaXML DITA Compare:

- An author does not need to set up revision flags to show where changes have been made
- You can decide when publishing whether to show changes between the current document and the last major or minor release, or any version in between
- Your own specialization of DITA elements is preserved, so the quality of your generated output is preserved
- You only need to add two lines to your ditaval file, specifying the text decoration for added and deleted text, to show changes in your published documents
- The output generated by DeltaXML DITA Compare is a DITA document which you can edit in any way you choose, ~~perhaps~~for example to fine-tune the changes that you want to show
- You can show exactly which words have been added and deleted or you can simply highlight added words.

Tables

Here is a an example of a table which has been changed:

Table 1: Table Example

DITA Topic element	Are changes shown?	Comment
Paragraph <p>	Yes	Every added or deleted word is wrapped in a phrase <ph> element with a rev attribute to indicate if it is added or deleted.
Section <section>	Yes	Changes shown within each paragraph or other content of the section.
Lists <ol> or <ul>	Yes	Changes shown within each list item <li>

DITA Topic element	Are changes shown?	Comment
Table <table>	Yes	Changes shown within the text content of each cell of the table. DeltaXML DITA Compare ~~processes~~understands the structure of tables so these are handled intelligently.

Summary

DeltaXML DITA frees editors to work on documents without having to track where they are making changes. Simply by comparing either minor or major revisions using DeltaXML DITACompare, revision flags are added and reviewers and customers can see exactly where changes have been made. And because DeltaXML DITA Compare generates standard DITA documents, you can edit them and publish changes using your existing publishing infrastructure.

New Topic.

A new reference topic to be inserted.

The new reference topic's content.

~~Old Topic.~~

~~An old reference topic to be deleted.~~

~~The old reference topic's content.~~