Deep Dive with RoboHelp & Flare

Matthew Ellison

UA Europe
Matthew Ellison

- Consultant and trainer for User Assistance tools and technologies
- Technical Director of annual UA Europe conference
What we’ll cover in this session

- What RoboHelp and Flare have in common
- Comparison of their user interfaces
- Content authoring and formatting
- The key distinguishing features of each tool
- Future directions
Please note:

- Current version of Flare is 12, released March 2016
- Current version of RoboHelp is 2015, released June 2015
What RoboHelp and Flare have in common

- Edit content as XHTML format using CSS
- Output to a range of formats including responsive HTML5
- Support for established Help features (TOC, Index, Search, Glossary, keyword-based links, DHTM drop-downs)
- Range of single-sourcing features (snippets, variables, conditional build tags, multi-channel publishing)
Drawing a straight line

Drawing a straight line enables you to connect two points with the shortest possible line.

To draw a straight line

1. In the toolbox, click Line
2. Below the toolbox, click a line width.
3. Drag the pointer to draw the line.

Notes
Flare user interface

**Drawing an ellipse or circle**
You can draw a perfect ellipse or circle.

**To draw an ellipse or circle**
1. In the toolbox, click **Ellipse**.
2. Below the toolbox, click a fill style.
3. Drag the pointer to draw the ellipse or circle.

**Notes**
- When you drag the pointer, the foreground color is used to draw the line surrounding the shape, and the background color is used to fill the shape. To use the background color to draw the line surrounding the shape and the foreground color to fill the shape, hold down the right mouse button and drag the pointer.
- You can draw a circle by holding down **SHIFT** and dragging the pointer.
Content authoring and formatting

In general:

- RoboHelp shields you from the nasty reality of HTML elements and CSS classes
- Flare enables you to exploit your XML/XHTML and CSS knowledge
RoboHelp CSS Editor

Friendly style names instead of true XHTML elements and classes
Flare CSS Editor

XHTML elements and classes

CSS properties
Descendant (complex) selectors

- One of my favourite CSS techniques
- Reduces the number of unique styles you need
- Simplifies mark-up and saves time
Example of descendant selector

1. Step text
   a. Sub-step text
   b. Sub-step text
   c. Sub-step text
2. Step text
3. Step text

```html
<ol>
  <li>Step text</li>
  <ol>
    <li>Sub-step text</li>
    <li>Sub-step text</li>
    <li>Sub-step text</li>
  </ol>
</ol>

ol ol {list-style-type: lower-alpha}
```
Examples of other useful descendant selectors

- `ul ul { }`
- `ul ol { }`
- `ol ul { }`
- `li p { }`
- `table p { }`
- `div.Note ul { }`
Flare calls them “Complex Selectors”
Adding descendant selectors in Flare

Open the style sheet in a text editor.
Descendant selectors in RoboHelp

- No direct support
- Can open style sheet in text-based Code Editor
- RoboHelp may change or remove your code
Options for collaborative authoring

- RoboHelp
  - Resource Manager: share style sheets, topics, images, snippets, and master pages

- Flare
  - External Resources and SharePoint Explorer: share any files
  - Project Linking
Project-based nature of RoboHelp/Flare

**Content**
- Topics
- Images
- Snippets
- Style sheet

**Project**
- TOC
- Skin
- Glossary
- etc.
Sharing files between projects

FLARE PROJECT

A B C D

CENTRAL REPOSITORY OF FILES

A B C D

Files copied and synchronized

FLARE PROJECT

A B C D

FLARE PROJECT

A B C D

FLARE PROJECT

A B C D

The Conference for Software User Assistance
RoboHelp’s Resource Manager

- Out of sync
- In sync
- Updated disabled
Managing linked resources in RoboHelp

Use this to disable the update of linked resources.
Project linking in Flare

Flare Project Import File

GLOBAL.flprj
- *.css
- *.flsnp
- *.png

GLOBAL.flprj
- style.css*
- warning.flsnp
- logo.png

FLARE PROJECT
- .flimpfl
  - style.css*
  - warning.flsnp
  - logo.png

FLARE PROJECT
- .flimpfl
  - style.css*
  - warning.flsnp
  - logo.png

The Conference for Software User Assistance

UA Europe
Setting up options for Source Project

Global project

Import everything…

…including linked files…

…except topics and targets

The Conference for Software User Assistance
Responsive web design

- Design for an optimal viewing experience over a range of different device sizes and types
- As size of **Viewport** changes:
  - Images resize automatically
  - Column widths resize automatically
- At specific **Breakpoints**:
  - Navigation controls change position and/or presentation
  - Page elements change position or disappear altogether
Creating a New Account

The word “Select” in this topic is a “User Defined Variable” which can be changed from “Click” to “Tap” depending on the author’s target delivery of desktop vs. Tablet, Phablet or Smartphone.

Accounts are the lifeblood of any business such as Whirl the World Travel. Without accounts providing a steady influx of customers, the business withers and dies.

To Create a New Account in Salesbuilder:

1. Tap the New Account button.
2. Add the Account Name and any other pertinent information.
3. Tap Save and Close.

©2011-2014 Whirl the World

[a fictitious company]
Creating a New Account

Accounts are the lifeblood of any business such as Whirl the World Travel. Without accounts providing a steady influx of customers, the business withers and dies.

To Create a New Account in Salesbuilder:
1. Tap the **New Account** button.
2. Add the **Account Name** and any other pertinent information.
3. Tap **Save and Close**.

©2011-2014 Whirl the World a fictitious company
RoboHelp’s responsive layout editor

Click to identify corresponding property
RoboHelp’s responsive HTML5 settings

No CSS coding required
Media queries in RoboHelp

Make a Media Query available to your style sheet by creating a Screen Profile.
Media queries in RoboHelp
Flare’s responsive HTML5 output

Painting with a brush

Painting with a brush enables you to add solid strokes of color.

To paint with a brush
1. In the toolbox, click Brush.
2. Below the toolbox, click a brush shape.
3. To paint, drag the pointer over the image.

Notes

- When you drag the pointer, the brush uses the foreground color. To use the background color, click and hold down the right mouse button when you drag the pointer.
- To undo up to three changes, on the Edit menu, click Undo for each change.
Flare’s responsive HTML5 output

You are here: Working with color > Painting with a brush

**Painting with a brush**

Painting with a brush enables you to add solid strokes of color.

**To paint with a brush**
1. In the toolbox, click Brush.
2. Below the toolbox, click a brush shape.
3. To paint, drag the pointer over the image.

**Notes**
- When you drag the pointer, the brush uses the foreground color. To use the background color, click and hold down the right mouse button when you drag the pointer.
- To undo up to three changes, on the Edit menu, click Undo for each change.

Mobile layout
Enable responsive output in HTML5 skin

---

Breakpoints between different Media types
Editing HTML5 layout (Styles in skin)

Styles cascade: Web > Tablet > Mobile
Media queries in Flare

- Built-in support for Tablet and Mobile CSS media queries

- You can create your own custom media queries using a dialog:
New Responsive Layout in Flare

- Required CSS can be created entirely using Flare’s UI
- Ideal if you need specific layouts for particular devices or screen sizes
- Changes in Flare’s Responsive Layout editor cause changes to style sheet
Single-sourcing to print

- RoboHelp
  - Use FrameMaker source, or
  - Publish to Word/PDF from RoboHelp (some clean-up required)

- Flare
  - Publish to PDF
Configuring headers & footers

Configure multiple Headers & Footers

Sections (Ctrl+Click to multiselect)
- <Default Title Page>
- TOC
- Chapter Layout
- Glossary
- Index
- Other Topics
- Word Documents

Select Masterpages for Headers/Footers

First Page: Print First
Apply to all pages in the section

Even Pages: Print Left

Odd Pages: Print Right

Apply to all Sections

Restart Page Numbering on First Chapter

OK
Cancel
**Flare’s Single-sourcing Workflow**

**TOC determines content, sequence, and hierarchy of print output**

**Help Only:**
- Master Page: Adds breadcrumbs and mini-tocs
- Skin: Size, position, and appearance of Help window

**Print Only:**
- Page Layout: Paper size, margins, headers and footers

**Targets**
- HTML5
- PDF

A Target pulls together a set of content (based on conditions) with a specific combination of project files to create a particular output.
Distinguishing features of RoboHelp

- FrameMaker integration (can be driven from FM)
- Captivate integration (less significant)
- Adobe AIR
- Adaptive multiscreen publishing
- Dynamic Content Filters
Dynamic Content Filters

Select just the options you want to include

Company Role
- Sales
- Software Developer

Travel Market Type
- Corporate Travel
- Leisure Travel
- Custom

Country Location
- US
- UK
- Canada
Distinguishing features of Flare

- Single-sourcing to all output formats
- MadCap Capture integration
- Project linking
- Top Navigation skin
Flare’s top navigation skin

Your search for "content" returned 14 result(s).

Tables
Here is some general text for a topic. Replace this with your own content. Here is some general text for a topic. Replace this with your own content. Here is some general text for a topic. Replace this with your own content. Here is some general text for a topic. Replace this with your own content.
B_Features/Conditions Notes Tables/Tables.htm

Lists
Here is some general text for a topic. Replace this with your own content. Here is some general text for a topic. Replace this with your own content. Here is some general text for a topic. Replace this with your own content.
B_Features/Links and Lists/Lists.htm

Whats New
Here is some general text for a topic. Replace this with your own content.
A_Getting Started/Whats New.htm

Image Positioned Left
Image Positioned Left Here is some general text for a topic. Replace this with your own content. Here is some general text for a topic. Replace this with your own content.
B_Features/Images/ImagePositionedLeft.htm

Notes, Examples, and Blockquotes
Notes, Examples, and Blockquotes Here is some general text for a topic. Replace this with your own content.
B_Features/Conditions Notes Tables/Notes/ExamplesBlockquotes.htm
Criteria for choosing RoboHelp or Flare

- Initial set-up of styles and project infrastructure
- Ongoing authoring experience
- Required workflow for print publishing
- Preferred end-user experience for responsive HTML5
- Miscellaneous special features
Future directions

- Enhanced search
  - Filtering
  - Faceted search

- New layout and presentation paradigms for HTML5 output
  - Better SEO
  - Better mobile support
  - RIP trip-pane window
Thanks for attending!
Final questions?

matthew@uaeurope.com