Structured Authoring and DITA

Structured authoring has become one of the most popular ways of developing content. The main focus is on separating the data (words, images, links, etc.) from presentation (typeface, margins, color, etc.). This type of authoring is increasingly used in all manner of organizations. Structured authoring as a framework is the basis of today’s content management systems.

The open-source standard, DITA, is a form of structured authoring designed specifically for documentation. DITA (Darwin Information Typing Architecture) is often referenced as a skill area in job postings for technical writers. Many authoring tools support the use of DITA.

Who should take this course?

This course is designed for students seeking an introduction to structured authoring and DITA. It is primarily of interest to technical communicators and other professionals tasked with creating and managing extensive libraries of content.

Course Objectives

- Identify the attributes of a structured authoring environment.
- Describe the basic framework of DITA.
- Explain why and when structured authoring may or may not be appropriate.
- Apply structured authoring principles and a DITA framework to a body of documentation.

Course Details

- Length: 3 hours
- Classroom Type: Computer
- Prerequisites: College-level writing skills

The above prerequisites are considered to be the basic skills and knowledge needed prior to taking this class. Instructors will assume your readiness for the class materials and will NOT use class time to discuss prerequisite materials.
Course Contents

**Identify the attributes of a structured authoring environment.**
- Differentiate between data and presentation.
- Describe the workings of data-base publishing systems.

**Describe the basic framework of DITA.**
- Explain how DITA is used for publishing.
- List the most common elements of DITA.

**Explain why and when structured authoring may or may not be appropriate.**
- Describe scenarios for effective structured authoring.
- List the challenges and benefits of employing structured authoring.

**Apply structured authoring principles and a DITA framework to a body of documentation.**
- Design a document definition and template.
- Assemble a document using DITA constructs.