

Case Study:

Converting Word into XML

Comhairle

www.comhairle.ie

Comhairle is the national support agency responsible for the provision of information, advice and advocacy to members of the public on social services. It combines all aspects of the work of the National Social Service Board (NSSB) and the relevant information functions of the National Rehabilitation Board (NRB). As a statutory agency, Comhairle comes within the remit of the Department of Social, Community & Family Affairs.

Benefits

For Comhairle, publishing content using Word and XML delivers a number of benefits:

- MS-Word minimises software, training and support costs.
- XML maximises publishing flexibility and interoperability.
- YAWC offers 100% automatic Word to XML conversion.

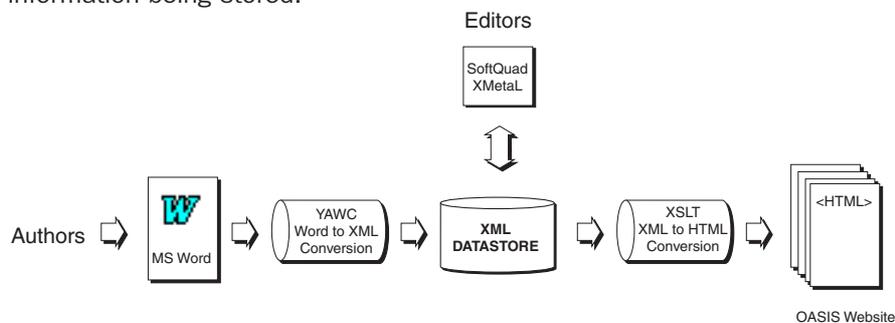
Background

Comhairle is gathering information about citizens interaction with the various departments and agencies of government into a range of simple descriptive texts, with the aim of helping citizens get a clearer understanding of how to attain the services and rights to which they are entitled. A series of written documents is being developed, which will be published electronically and in print, and maintained over time.

A number of authors (generally working externally) editors (mainly internal) are responsible for writing and maintaining the documentation set, and publication is primarily aimed at the OASIS website, although the documents will also be available to individual government bodies to publish on their own sites. The main criteria for the publication system was that it be easy for authors and editors to create and maintain content, and easy for technical staff to publish it electronically as HTML.

Solution

Since MS-Word is the *de facto* editor used by most authors, it was chosen as the main application for editing content. Publishing directly from Word into HTML was not considered feasible, given the considerable manual effort involved, and the multiple target websites envisaged. Instead, Word documents are converted and stored as in a presentation-independent XML format, using an XML DTD developed specifically for the types of information being stored.



Comhairle chose XML Workshops' YAWC VBA macro for conversion of Word into XML. YAWC offers an integrated Save As XML command within the Word authoring environment, so authors or editors can generate valid XML documents directly from MS-Word. YAWC works by converting pre-defined presentation styles in Word (Heading 1, Hyperlink, etc.) into corresponding elements in a given XML DTD. The mapping between styles and elements is controlled in a simple text file, and is extremely quick to set up and configure.

Once stored in XML, XSLT scripts are used to convert the XML into the required presentation HTML for the OASIS website, and automatically apply the required navigation framework.