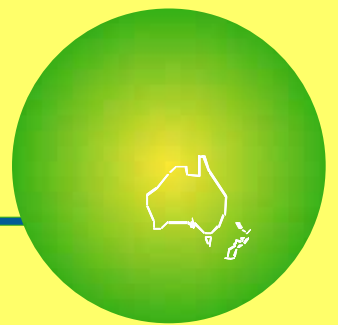


AODC 2006



9th Annual
Australasian

Online
Documentation and Content
Conference

Technical Writing

Cairns
May 3-5

Tradewinds Esplanade

Content Management

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Help

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AODC 2006 Cairns Australia



9th Australasian Online Documentation and Content Conference

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HyperWrite Pty Ltd is pleased to present AODC 2006 - the Ninth Annual Australasian Online Documentation and Content conference. Since the very first AODC in Melbourne in 1998, the conference has developed a reputation as the premier event for technical writers, Help developers, Web authors, and content and document developers from Australia and New Zealand. The Conference sessions cover a range of techniques, technologies and case studies, all of major significance to documentation professionals. AODC is also a great place to network with your peers!

AODC 2006 will feature a collection of expert speakers from around the world, including Dave Gash (USA), Dr Tom James (UK), and Dr Carol Barnum (USA), and internationally recognised Australian experts including Gerry Gaffney from Information and Design, Rhonda Bracey from Cybertext Consulting, and Tony Self from HyperWrite.

Learn about Vista AP Help, DITA and DocBook, and new techniques!

Featuring:

- | | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ◆ <u>Carol Barnum</u> | <u>Southern Polytechnic</u> | ◆ <u>Michael Havill</u> | <u>AuthorIT</u> |
| ◆ <u>Rhonda Bracey</u> | <u>Cybertext Consulting</u> | ◆ <u>Tom James</u> | <u>Salisbury District Council</u> |
| ◆ <u>Gerry Gaffney</u> | <u>Information and Design</u> | ◆ <u>Choco Munday</u> | <u>Australian Federal Police</u> |
| ◆ <u>Dave Gash</u> | <u>HyperTrain dot Com</u> | ◆ <u>Tony Self</u> | <u>HyperWrite</u> |
| ◆ <u>Mike Hamilton</u> | <u>MadCap Software</u> | ◆ <u>Kylie Weaver</u> | <u>Swinburne University</u> |

All new topics covering techniques, technologies and case studies

Windows Vista AP Help Update

Microsoft is developing a completely new system for user assistance delivery for the "Vista" (formerly "Longhorn") version of Windows. The integrated Help experience in Vista is designed to greatly improve the effectiveness of user assistance. In this session, we take an inside look at this emerging technology. You will see a demonstration of Vista's AP Help, and learn about its fundamental elements and new publishing paradigm. You will learn how a semantic authoring model enables Help authors to create higher quality content, how the Help viewer pane provides a consistent entry point to Help, and how a new task-based organisational structure makes it easier for users to find the Help they need.

Designing Content for Reusability

The term 'single-sourcing' has many definitions, but most refer to the ability to create content once, and use it for different purposes. As authoring tools incorporate this 're-purposing' as a feature, technical communicators have to give thought to how the technique can be used effectively. Can Help topics really become training PowerPoint slides or pages of a user guide? In this session, we will look at reusability from the perspective of the content and its context of use. We will discover how a disciplined, methodical approach to designing content can actually achieve cost-effective, reliable and efficient re-purposing.

DITA or DocBook?

So you're convinced that a move to XML-based, structured authoring is inevitable. XML isn't a language in itself, but a family of hundreds of languages. So what type of XML should your documents be created and stored in? Fortunately, there are two XML languages designed specifically for documentation: DITA and DocBook. Both are open standards that have all the structures and elements needed for user guides, manuals, text books, and other forms of technical documentation. So which one is the best? In this session, we will examine the two standards, their history and ongoing development, the tools available to work with them, and the benefits that they can provide to a documentation project.

Indexing vs Full Text Search

In a graduate course on usability testing at Southern Polytechnic State University, students formed teams to evaluate the differences between searching and using an index for look-up tasks for an online information product. The purpose was to learn whether a good index would stand up in a usability evaluation that compared its use with searching. Using Adobe Acrobat Reader for the search tasks and a software program that linked index entries to pages in the product, users worked with both tools to find information. The results were surprising, and suggested that more study is needed to better understand users' search preferences.

Wikis, Blogs and Collaborative Authoring

The advent of Wikipedia, now the largest encyclopedia, is making another profound change to the way reference material is produced. But can UA professionals use the "wiki" method to produce documents? In this session, we will investigate the potential role of new and emerging technologies and techniques, such as wikis, RSS, blogging and podcasting, in the documentation arena. At the heart of most of these ideas is the concept of collaborative authoring, where users are encouraged to contribute to the documentation directly and immediately. We will find that we can use some of these technologies in our own work.

Better Authoring through CSS and Micro-structures

In this tip-filled session, we look at techniques for streamlining the authoring process through two approaches: micro-structures and CSS layouts. It is increasingly common for documentation projects to include content produced by "non-writers" (often subject-matter experts). The authoring and editing lifecycle can be streamlined by developing micro-structures for specific types of page within the site, and distributing them to the "non-writers". Instead of receiving unstructured, raw content, the returned information can be of improved quality with a clear structure. Another technique for creating content more effectively is to take CSS up to the next level, and use it for page layout. Highly accessible, semantic yet graphically-rich sites can be built without tables, using just CSS for layout.

Making the Case for Usability

This is the story of a company that went from a single request for a late-stage usability test of its product to a user-centred design process that builds usability into product development every step of the way. Most companies are quite secretive about the fact they conduct usability testing on their products, so we never get to see what the issues were for users and how products improved as a result. This story is different. Using screen captures, video clips, and metrics of performance improvement and cost savings, the focus of this presentation is on the issues learned and improvements made to the startup wizard, help, error messages, language and layout. Through usability testing, both the product and the development process improved, along with the company's bottom line.

Word Abuse

Technical Writers and other wordsmiths can sometimes be complacent about the way the English language changes. Although subtle, it is easy to accept words such as "Spam", "Subjectlets", "Treeware" "Earwitness" "Flame" and "Authored" as being legitimate words. The common misuse of words makes communicating difficult, and downright annoying in some cases. This presentation takes a light-hearted look at some of the more common forms of word abuse, poor English, apostrophe abuse and "un-words" that have snuck in to our language. It also presents some insights into the "Americanisation" of our language, and why we should not be slinging arrows at the Americans. After all, Australian and Kiwi English, as it will be demonstrated, far outstrips American English in made-up words, jargon and word abuse. Incidentally, "snuck" is a cromulent word!

Self-Aware Navigation Devices

As a User Assistance system or Web site grows in size and complexity, maintenance of interpage navigation becomes increasingly difficult. What were once simple links between pages quickly become a nightmare to modify and keep current as the system evolves. This session presents a method for creating powerful yet flexible navigation devices that are self-generating, self-activating, and, best of all, easy to maintain when the system changes. We'll cover Browse Sequences, Related Topics, and Breadcrumbs, and how to implement them using simple JavaScript arrays. The result: pages that know who they are, what they are, and where they can go - sentient navigation!

Collaborative Authoring through Web Services

How do you organise a project where entirely separate organisations are responsible for producing different parts of the Web site? This was the challenge for Salisbury District Council (SDC) in the UK, where a combination of web services and controlled lists made it possible to "syndicate" content between different sites. The UK has a two-tier local government system, but residents are never sure which council (county or district) provides which services. SDC developed an "A to Z" that lists its own services and those of the county council. In this case study, we examine this challenging project, and obtain an insight into how Web services may be incorporated into other forms of online documentation.

DIY Usability

Many people have the impression that "doing usability" means investing in a lab and hiring expensive contractors. However, you can get great results - and great value for money - by doing it yourself. You will learn: how to throw out the bathwater, how to keep the baby, and simple tips and tricks for conducting your own usability activities on a shoestring budget.

Keen to Learn More?

If you are ready to delve more deeply into some of the topics covered at AODC, why not also register for a pre-Conference workshop. Two half-day workshops will be conducted on the day before the Conference.

See the AODC Web Site (www.aodc.com.au) for details.

Reviewing Screen-Based Content

Have you been asked to edit or critique a Web site, Help system, or any other content designed for the computer screen? If you don't know what to look for (other than checking the usual things such as writing style, punctuation, etc.), then this session is for you. We discover practical tips and techniques for dealing with screen-based content, and look at various tools that can help automate some of the tasks.

MadCap Flare

This session provides an insight into MadCap Software's new Help authoring tool, Flare. Presented by one of MadCap's founders, Mike Hamilton, the session explains Flare's fundamental work flow and operating principals. The session also demonstrates the process of importing a RoboHelp project and discusses the issues and challenges that organisations might experience in migrating from RoboHelp to Flare. An insight into the long term strategy for Flare will also be presented.

Practical XML: Using Data Islands

Of course we write for our users, but once in a while you just have to ask, "What about meeee?!? What can current technology do to help make my job a bit easier?" This session introduces XML data islands and explores their use to simplify routine page maintenance, create customised data displays, and store and process various kinds of client-side information. We'll see how to include both internal and external islands in pages, connect their data to specific HTML objects, and display and manipulate the data in the browser.

Structured Authoring – Taking the Plunge

By now we are probably familiar with the basic concepts of XML, and the fundamental principles of structured authoring. We are probably also aware of schemas such as DITA, DocBook and MAML. But are we ready to take the plunge and start writing manuals in an XML format? Where do we start? How do we start? In this session, we take that plunge, and step through the process of getting a structured authoring project started. We will look at the task of choosing an appropriate schema, selecting an authoring tool, and transforming content for delivery. This is an important topic for all authors preparing for the transition from narrative to structured authoring.

Dr Carol Barnum **Southern Polytechnic State University**
 Dr Carol Barnum is the Director of the Usability Centre at Southern Polytechnic and Professor of Information Design and Communication. She is the author of numerous articles and five books, with the most recent book, *Usability Testing and Research*, winning the top publication award from the Society for Technical Communication's international competition. She is a Fellow of STC, a recipient of STC's Gould Award for Excellence in Teaching Technical Communication, and winner of the best presenter award at the European Usability Professionals Association conference in London. Last year she presented in Canada, Ireland, China, and New Zealand.

Rhonda Bracey **Cybertext Consulting**
 Rhonda Bracey runs her own technical writing and consultancy business in Perth, Western Australia. She has developed, written, and edited online Help and content for numerous clients over many years. She was one of the first AuthorIT Certified Consultants announced in 2003. In 2003, 2004 and 2005, Rhonda won STC Excellence awards for entries in the Online Communication competition (Australia Chapter). She spoke at the 2005 and 2006 WritersUA Conferences, and presented sessions on AuthorIT and training at the annual STC Conferences between 2002 and 2004.

Gerry Gaffney **Information and Design**
 Gerry Gaffney is well known in the usability field, and has written and presented on a variety of usability and related topics. Gerry is a member of the editorial board of User Experience, the magazine of the Usability Professionals' Association (UPA). He has spoken and conducted usability workshops in Australia, Hong Kong, China and Taiwan. Gerry lectures in User Centred Design at Swinburne University, and has also been an occasional lecturer at RMIT, VUT, Monash and Deakin universities. He wrote the *Usability Toolkit* materials, used and referenced extensively by usability practitioners world-wide in a variety of academic and commercial organisations.

Dave Gash **HyperTrain dot Com**
 "Uncle Dave" Gash is the owner of HyperTrain dot Com, a Californian firm specialising in hypertext training for Help system developers. A veteran software professional with over twenty years of development, documentation, and training experience, Dave holds degrees in Business and Computer Science, and is well known in the technical publications community as an interesting and animated technical instructor with an astounding wardrobe of colourful shirts.

Mike Hamilton **MadCap Software**
 Mike Hamilton is the Vice-President of Product Management at MadCap Software where he is working on the next generation authoring tool, Flare. Before joining MadCap Software, Mike was the Product Manager for the RoboHelp product line since the days of Blue Sky Software, eHelp, and Macromedia. Mike joined the RoboHelp team in 1999 as a founding member of the Training Solutions Program team, where he co-authored the certified training materials supporting the RoboHelp family.

Matthew Armstrong **AuthorIT Software**
 Matthew Armstrong is a member of the AuthorIT Team., and peppers his calendar with speaking engagements on a wide range of topics surrounding Content Management. Matthew's background has allowed him to specialise in the Translation, Training and Online Help sectors. AuthorIT is one of a new breed of tools for authoring, management and publishing of printed and online documentation, and is now used in over 50 countries across 5 continents. He is based in Auckland.

Dr Tom James **Salisbury District Council**
 Tom James is the Salisbury District Council's e-Government programme manager. This role involves the modernisation and e-enabling of over 100 distinct services offered by the council to residents, businesses and visitors to Salisbury District, covering a mediaeval cathedral city and a large rural hinterland with over 100,000 residents. His previous experience was as a consultant with Digitext, specialising in providing accessible, usable and maintainable content for large organisations. Dr Tom has been active in developing content for the Web for the last nine years, and has published numerous white papers in the area.

Frank 'Choco' Munday **Australian Federal Police**
 Choco Munday has an adventure-filled background, having spent 20 years in the Royal Australian Navy as an Electronic Technician. Although writing was always something he excelled at, Frank didn't realise how much he would enjoy it as a career! After a short period in the computer industry, he moved into Technical Publishing in Defence Electronics. After a stint in management, Frank returned to Internet and intranet documentation, working for a variety of organisations including CSIRO, University of Canberra, and IP Australia. Frank is currently a permanent member of the Australian Federal Police, where his role includes teaching Technical Writing techniques, publishing Technical Manuals, Help Systems, User Guides, and brochures.

Tony Self **HyperWrite**
 Tony Self is a founding partner in HyperWrite, which was the first hypertext document development company in Australia. Tony has over 20 years of documentation experience, including 13 years with online and hypertext documents in WinHelp and HTML formats. He has managed large online documentation projects in Australia and New Zealand. In addition to consulting, Tony lectures in technical communication at Swinburne University. He is the co-author of *Swimming With the Tide, a Business Guide to the Internet*.

Kylie Weaver **Swinburne University**
 Kylie Weaver lectures at Swinburne University in the Graduate Diploma of Technical Communication. Kylie also documents security software for CA, a multinational software development company. After graduating with an honours degree in English Literature (Gothic fiction) in 1995, Kylie made the 'obvious' step into computer documentation. Kylie has more than 10 years experience as a technical writer and business analyst, and has worked in both Australia and the UK. She has recently taken up fiction writing.

Registration Form

Mail to address below or fax to **+61 (0)3 9445 9363**

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Please charge my credit card. Amount: A\$1,199.00 inc GST Mastercard

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<p>Registration</p> <p>Attention Penny Bradley Tel +61 (0)3 9803-8291 Fax +61 (0)3 9445-9363 E-mail pbradley@aodc.com.au Address PO Box 4266 Mulgrave VIC 3170 Australia</p>	<p>Conference Cancellation</p> <p>Full refunds will be available until 13 April, 2006 Bookings are non refundable after this date. Substitutions accepted until 2 May 2006.</p> <p>AODC hosted by HyperWrite Pty Ltd ABN 44 007 347 462</p>	<p>Hotel Reservations</p> <p>Tradewinds Esplanade - Cairns 137 The Esplanade Cairns QLD 4870 Australia Tel: +61 (0)7 4053-0300 Booking Code: AODC Conference Special room rates through www.aodc.com.au</p>
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