

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

UA Europe?
ANNUAL CONFERENCE
9-10 June 2016, Budapest, Hungary



The Conference for
Software User Assistance

UA Europe?

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, DHTML drop-downs)
- Range of single-sourcing features (snippets, variables, conditional build tags, multi-channel publishing)

RoboHelp user interface

Rh

The screenshot displays the RoboHelp user interface for a topic titled "Drawing a straight line". The interface is divided into several main sections:

- Top Bar:** Shows the application name "RoboHelp - Windows Paint - [Drawing a straight line]" and standard window controls (minimize, maximize, close).
- Menu Bar:** Includes "File", "Project", "Edit", "Insert", "Review", "Collaborate", "Output", and "Tools".
- Insert Tab:** Contains various tool categories:
 - Links:** Hyperlink, GoTo Bookmark, Text Popup, Bookmark, Image Map.
 - Media:** Image, Screen Capture, Multimedia, Captivate, Symbol.
 - Variables:** Variable, Field, Snippet.
 - DHTML:** Expanding Text, DropDown Text, Effects, Trigger.
 - Page Design:** Line Break, Page Break, Topic TOC.
 - HTML:** Text Box, HTML Form, Javascript.
- Project Manager:** A tree view on the left showing the project structure:
 - Project Files
 - Welcome to Windows Paint
 - Microsoft Paint
 - Contents
 - Drawing lines and shapes
 - Drawing a straight line (selected)
 - Drawing a freeform line
 - Drawing a curved line
 - Drawing an ellipse or circle
 - Drawing a rectangle or square
 - Glossary
 - Matthew.css
 - Broken Links
 - URLs
 - Table of Contents
 - Index
- Main Content Area:** Displays the topic content:
 - Design** and **HTML** tabs are visible.
 - A breadcrumb trail shows "Document > Heading 1 > |".
 - A horizontal ruler is present above the text.
 - ## 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
- Right Side:** A vertical "Resource Manager" pane is visible.
- Bottom:** A taskbar shows the "Project Man..." window and two "Windows Pai..." windows.

Flare user interface



The screenshot displays the MadCap Flare 12 user interface. The main window is titled "MS Paint.flprj - MadCap Flare 12". The top menu bar includes File, Home, Insert, View, Project, Review, Tools, Table, Window, and Help. The ribbon contains various tool groups: Clipboard (Paste, Cut, Copy, Delete), Font (Font face: Verdana, Size: 125%, Bold, Italic, Underline, Strikethrough, Color, Background Color), Paragraph (Bulleted List, Numbered List, Indent, Outdent, Paragraph Style), Style Window (Style: h1), Styles (Responsive Layout, Create Style Class, Formatting Window, Stylesheet Links), Create Snippet, Attributes (Attributes Window, Find and Replace, Properties), and Quick Launch (Ctrl + Q).

The interface is divided into several panels:

- Content Explorer:** Shows a tree view of content files. The "Draw lines and shapes" folder is expanded, showing files like "Drawing a curved line.htm", "Drawing a freeform line.htm", "Drawing a rectangle or square.htm", "Drawing a straight line.htm", "Drawing an ellipse or circle.htm" (selected), and "Drawing lines and shapes.htm".
- XML Editor:** Displays the content of "Drawing an ellipse or circle.htm". The main text reads: **draw... Drawing an ellipse or circle**. Below this, it says: "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." There is a "Notes" section with a bullet point: "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." The status bar at the bottom shows "Words: 158 | Font Scale: 120%".
- Dynamic Help:** Shows the "XML Editor" help page. It includes a breadcrumb trail: "You are here: [Interface](#) > [Primary](#) Editors > XML Editor". The main heading is "XML Editor". The text describes the XML Editor as the primary editor used in Flare, used for entering, modifying, and formatting content for topics that users see in the output. It also mentions that it is used for working with master pages and snippets, and that it produces XML files without requiring knowledge of XML.

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

Rh

Friendly
style names
instead of
true XHTML
elements
and classes

Styles

Available in: Matthew.css

Media: (none)

- Character
- Paragraph
 - (none)
 - breadcrumbs
 - Heading 1
 - Heading 2
 - Heading 3
 - Heading 4
 - Heading 5
 - Heading 6
 - Normal
 - Note
- Hyperlink
- Image
- Div
- List
- Multilevel List
- Table
- Other

Media Query

Paragraph Preview

Paragraph Preview content: Multiple lines of placeholder text, with one line highlighted in green and bold.

Formatting

Font: Arial 12pt

Indents: Left 0pt

Spacing: Before 0pt

Style: (No change) (Style for following paragraph)

Description

Normal + color: Green; font-weight: bold;

Hide inherited styles

Format New Delete OK Cancel Apply Help

Flare CSS Editor



XHTML
elements
and
classes

Stylesheet Editor | View: Advanced | Add Selector | Manage Font Sets | Options

Paragraph Styles | Hide Inherited | Medium: (default) | Show: All Properties

fieldset
figcaption
figure
h1
h2
h3
h4
h5
h6
▶ MadCap | relationshipsHeading
▶ MadCap | slideshowBullet
MadCap | slideshowCaption
menu
◀ p
Footer
Header
NoteHeading
SeeAlso
ToDo
pre

Medium: (default)
p.NoteHeading

▶ Font
◀ Background
background:
background-attachment:
background-clip:
background-color:
background-image: ../Images/noteicon.png
background-origin:
background-position:
background-repeat: no-repeat
background-size:
▶ Block
▶ Border
▶ Box
▶ Cell

p.NoteHeading comments:
(no comment)

(no property selected)

This is MadCap Software.

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

```
<ol>  
  <li>Step text</li>  
  <ol>  
    <li>Sub-step text</li>  
    <li>Sub-step text</li>  
    <li>Sub-step text</li>  
  </ol>  
  <li>Step text</li>  
  <li>Step text</li>  
</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 { }
```

Editing descendant selectors in Flare



Styles.css*

Stylesheet Editor | View: Advanced | Add Selector | Manage Font Sets | Options ▾

All Styles ▾

Hide Inherited



Medium: (default) ▾

(Linked Stylesheets)

(Generic Classes)

▸ (Generic Pseudo Classes)

(Identifiers)

▾ (Complex Selectors)

div.Row-4-4-4 > div

div.Row-4-4-4 > div:nth-child(1)

div.Row-4-4-4 > div:nth-child(2)

div.Row-4-4-4 > div:nth-child(3)

div.Row-6-6 > div

div.Row-6-6 > div:nth-child(1)

div.Row-6-6 > div:nth-child(2)

div.Row-8-4 > div

div.Row-8-4 > div:nth-child(1)

div.Row-8-4 > div:nth-child(2)

ol > li::marker

ol ol

ol ul

ul > li::marker

ul ol

Flare calls them
“Complex Selectors”

Medium: (default)

ol ol

▸ Box

▸ Cell

▾ List

list-style:

list-style-image:

list-style-position:

list-style-type:

lower-alpha

▸ Table

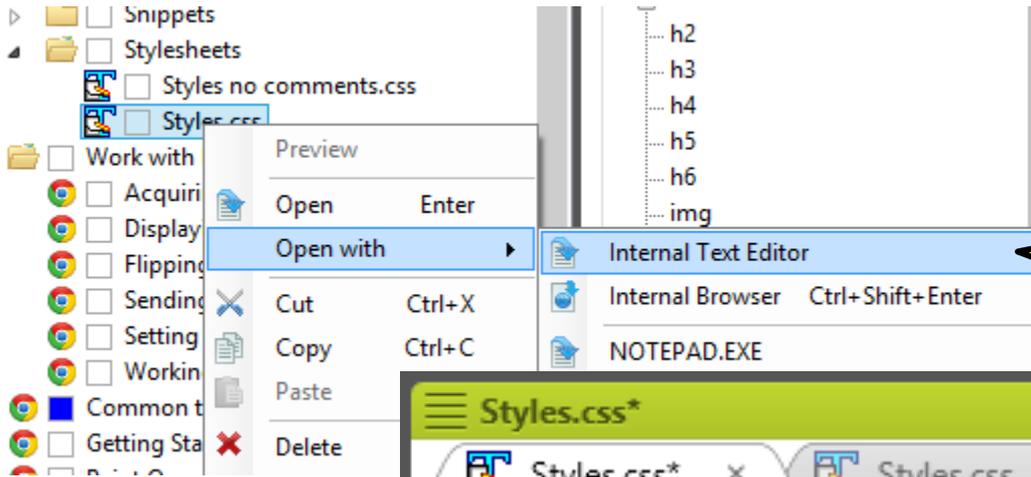
▸ Positioning

▸ Extensions

▸ Padding

▸ PrintSupport

Adding descendant selectors in Flare



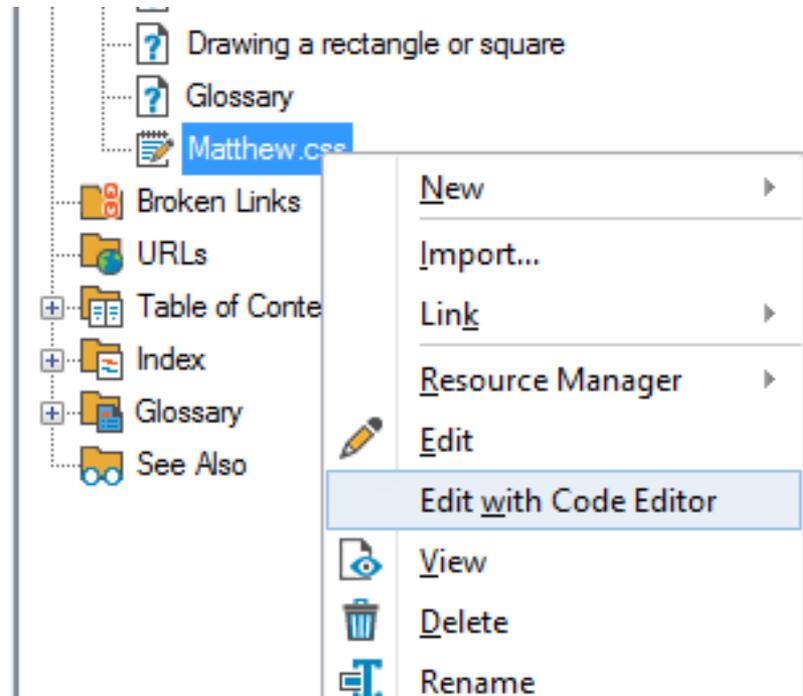
Open the style sheet in a text editor

A screenshot of a text editor window titled 'Styles.css*'. The editor shows the following CSS code:

```
300 ol ol
301 {
302     list-style-type: lower-alpha;
303 }
304
305 ul ul
306 {
307     list-style-type: circle;
308 }
309
310 table p
311 {
312     margin-top: 0.25em
313 }
314
```

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

SELF-CONTAINED

- Images

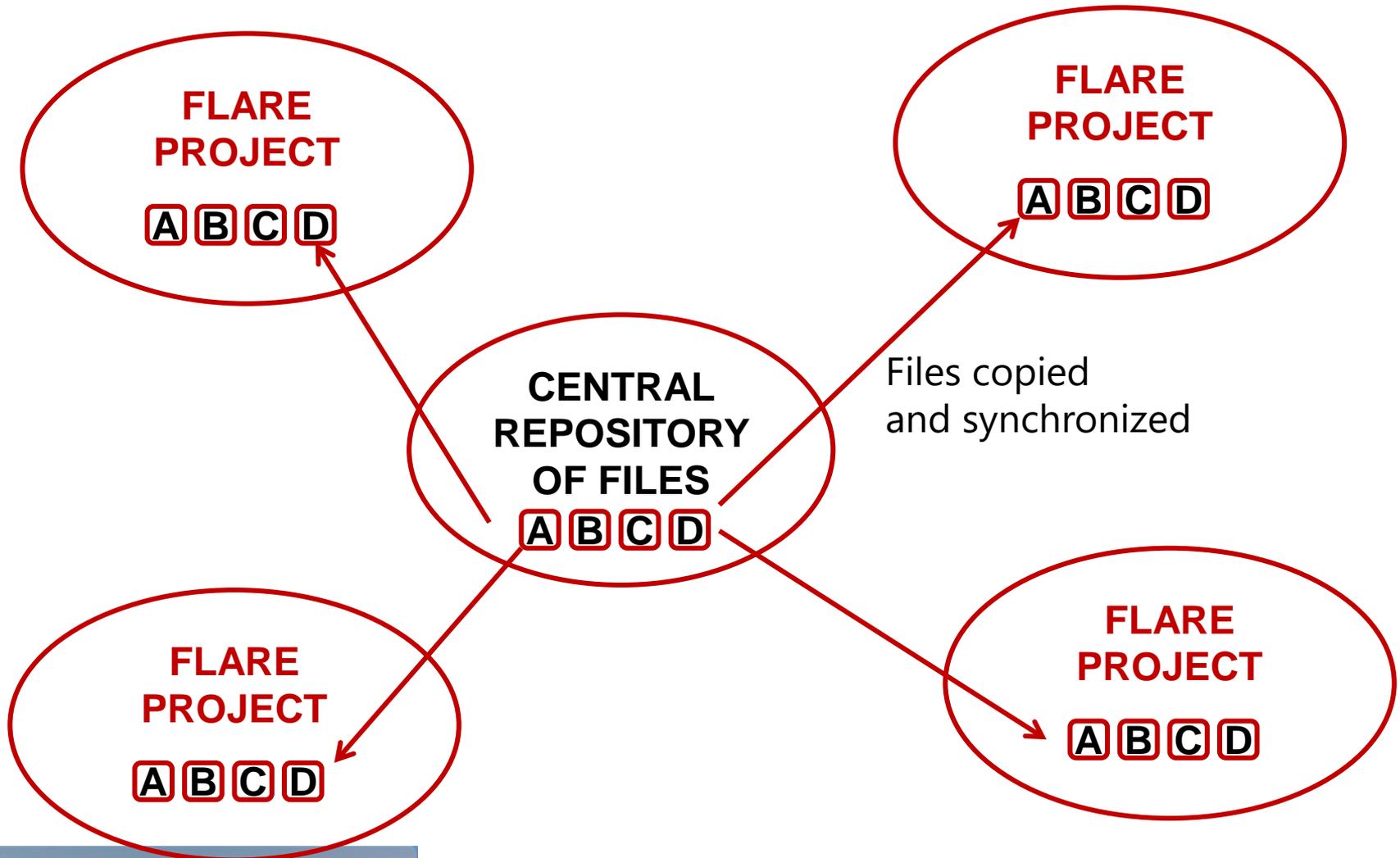
Content

- Topics
- Images
- Snippets
- Style sheet

Project

- TOC
- Skin
- Glossary
- etc.

Sharing files between projects



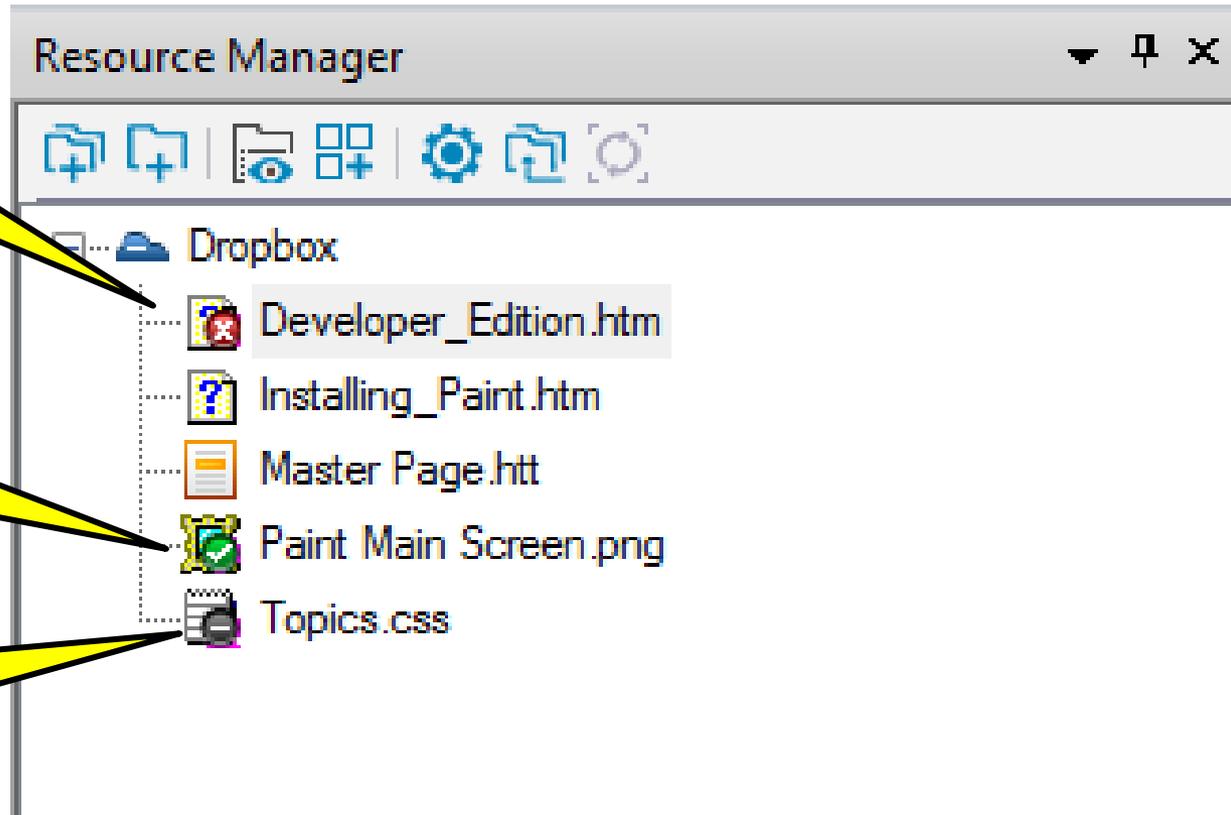
RoboHelp's Resource Manager



Out of sync

In sync

Updated disabled



Managing linked resources in RoboHelp



Manage Linked Resources

Resource in the project

```
/*Created with Adobe RoboHelp 2015.*/  
body {  
  font-family: Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, Sans-serif;  
  font-size: 10pt;  
}  
h1 {  
  font-weight: bold;  
  font-size: 14pt;  
  margin-bottom: 0;  
}
```

Resource in the shared location

```
/*Created with Adobe RoboHelp 11.*/  
body {  
  font-family: Arial;  
  font-size: 12pt;  
}  
h1 {  
  font-weight: bold;  
  font-size: 14pt;  
  margin-bottom: 0;  
  color: #ff0000;  
  x-next-class: ;  
}
```

Compare...

Filter Resources: Clear

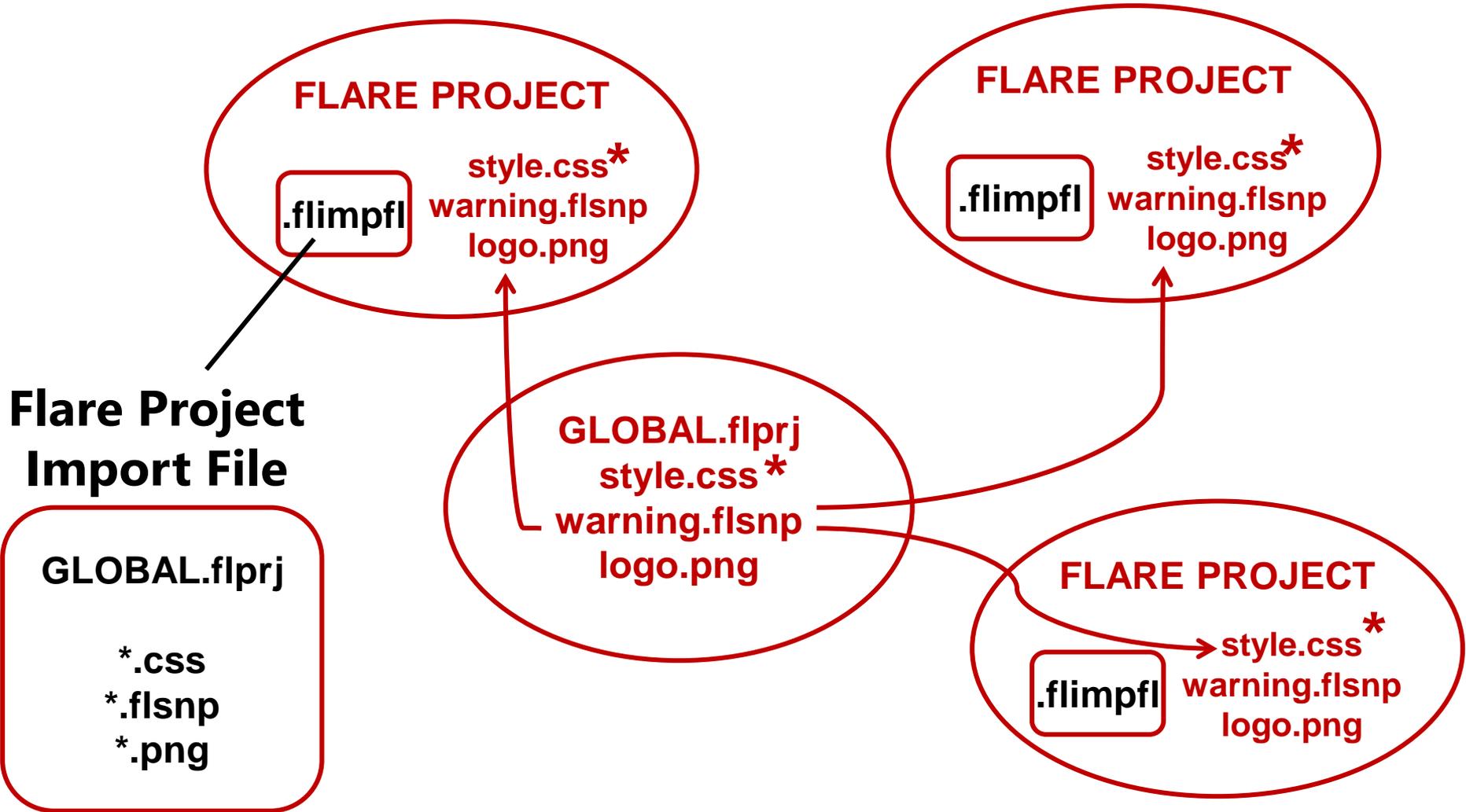
Project Path	Shared Path	Type
Update Disabled		
Topics.css	D:\Dropbox\RoboHelp Shared Location\Topics.css	Stylesheet
Modified in the project		
Developer_Edition.htm	D:\Dropbox\RoboHelp Shared Location\Developer_Edition.htm	Topic
In sync		
Paint Main Screen.png	D:\Dropbox\RoboHelp Shared Location\Paint Main Screen.png	Image

Update in Project at Shared location Update on Sync

Remove Link Replace Link Close

Use this to disable the updated of linked resources

Project linking in Flare



Setting up options for Source Project



Source Project

Imported Files

Removed Links

Source Project:

C:\Users\Matthew\Desktop\Flare Training for Abbott Labs\ipswitch - Matthew's\ipswitch.flprj

Auto-reimport before "Generate Output" Browse...

Delete stale files Open

Delete unreferenced files

Include Files:

All Files (*.*) Edit...

Auto-include linked files

Exclude Files:

.htm;.html;*.ftar Edit...

Note: These fields let you select files to import or exclude. To import or exclude specific files: (1) save your changes; (2) click the Import or Exclude button above;

Global project

Import everything...

...including linked files...

...except topics and targets

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

RoboHelp's responsive HTML5 output



Salesbuilder 2

Help for Sales and Development
Salesbuilder Animated Tour
Installing and Configuring
How do I?
Create a New Account
Create a New Contact
Use Drag-and-Drop
Use the Search facility
Sales Staff Information
Marketing
Corporate Addresses

-Search-

Home > How do I? > Create a New Account

Creating a New Account

TIP! 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

Desktop layout

RoboHelp's responsive HTML5 output

Rh



Salesbuilder 2

Home > How do I? > Create a New Account

Creating a New Account

TIP 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

Mobile layout



UA Europe?

RoboHelp's responsive layout editor

Layout Customization: Azure_Blue

Layout Components

- Basic settings
- Media Query
- Header
- Content (Desktop)
- Functionbar (Desktop)
- Functionbar (Tablet)
- Functionbar (Mobile)
- Sidebar (Desktop)
- Sidebar (Tablet)
- Sidebar (Mobile)
- Search (All)
- Search (Mobile)
- TOC (All)
- TOC (Tablet / Mobile)
- Index
- Glossary
- Filter (All)

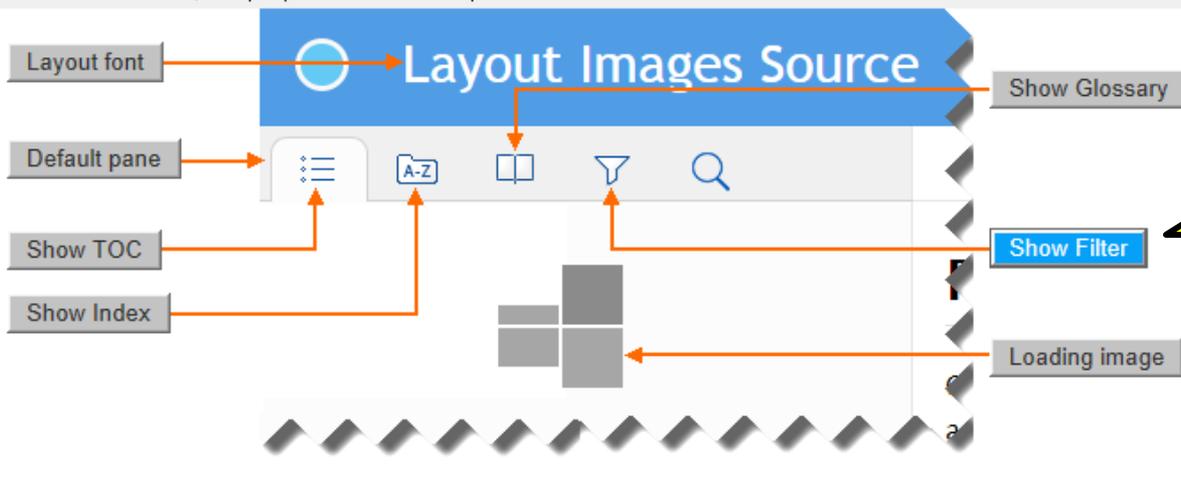
Properties

Layout font	"Trebuchet MS", Arial, sans-serif
Default pane	toc
Show TOC	true
Show Index	true
Show Glossary	true
Show Filter	true
Loading image	loading.gif

Reset component Reset property

Show Filter
Do you want to show the filter option in the output? Setting this to false will only hide the filter for the reader. You can still use the filter through a context sensitive help call. (If you enable dynamic filters in your output settings.)

Click on the button to view/edit properties of the component



Click to identify corresponding property

RoboHelp's responsive HTML5 settings



The screenshot shows a window titled 'Responsive HTML5 Settings' with a close button in the top right corner. On the left is a sidebar with a tree view containing the following items: General, Content, Search, Optimization (highlighted with a blue box), Publish, and SharePoint. The main area of the window contains a list of six settings, each with a checkbox:

- Convert auto-sizing and custom-sized popups to hyperlinks
- Convert text-only popups to hyperlinks
- Convert absolute image size to relative image size
- Convert absolute table size to relative table size
- Enable zoom on iOS devices
- Use Adobe Captivate HTML5 output

No CSS coding required

Media queries in RoboHelp

Screen Profile Properties (Android_Phone) [X]

Name:

Type:

Screen Size

	Minimum:	Maximum:
Width:	<input type="text" value="300"/>	<input type="text" value="900"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Height:	<input type="text" value="300"/>	<input type="text" value="1200"/>

[Help on screen sizes](#)

Browser(s):

Make a Media Query available to your style sheet by creating a Screen Profile

Media queries in RoboHelp

The screenshot shows the 'Styles' window in RoboHelp. The 'Available in:' dropdown is set to 'Topics.css'. The 'Media:' dropdown is set to 'Android_Phone' and is circled in red. The 'Media Query' field contains the text 'only screen and (min-width: 300px) and (max-width: 900px)'. The 'Paragraph Preview' shows the text 'Page text page text page text page text' and 'page text page text page text page text'. The 'Formatting' section shows the font set to 'Verdana' and the size set to '200%', which is also circled in red. The 'Other' section is expanded to show 'Background + Text (BODY)'. The 'List' section is also expanded to show 'ol'.

Flare's responsive HTML5 output



madcap software

Search

Contents Index

- Paint Overview
- Common tasks
- Drawing lines and shapes
- Working with color
- Working with pictures
- Help Viewer

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.

Desktop layout

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



LightHTML5*

HTML5 Skin Editor | Preview

General

Size

Setup

Toolbar

Community

Styles

UI Text

Resizable

Topic Settings

Show navigation link at top of topic ⓘ

Show navigation link at bottom of topic

Responsive Output Settings

Enable responsive output

Tablet Max-Width: 1279 px

Mobile Max-Width: 767 px

Breakpoints between different Media types

Editing HTML5 layout (Styles in skin)



The screenshot shows the LightHTML5 Skin Editor interface. The top bar includes the title 'LightHTML5*' and navigation tabs for 'Web Medium', 'Tablet Medium', and 'Mobile Medium'. The 'Mobile Medium' tab is selected. The main preview area displays a mobile skin for 'Ipswitch WS_FTP' with a navigation menu, a search bar, and a main content area titled 'Introduction'. A yellow callout box with a black border is overlaid on the preview, containing the text: 'Styles cascade: Web > Tablet > Mobile'. The left sidebar contains a 'Styles' panel with a tree view showing the hierarchy of styles: Global, Main Page, Header, Logo, Background, Layout, Search Bar, Search Input, and Navigation. The 'Background' style is currently selected, showing options for Gradient, Color, and Image.

Media queries in Flare



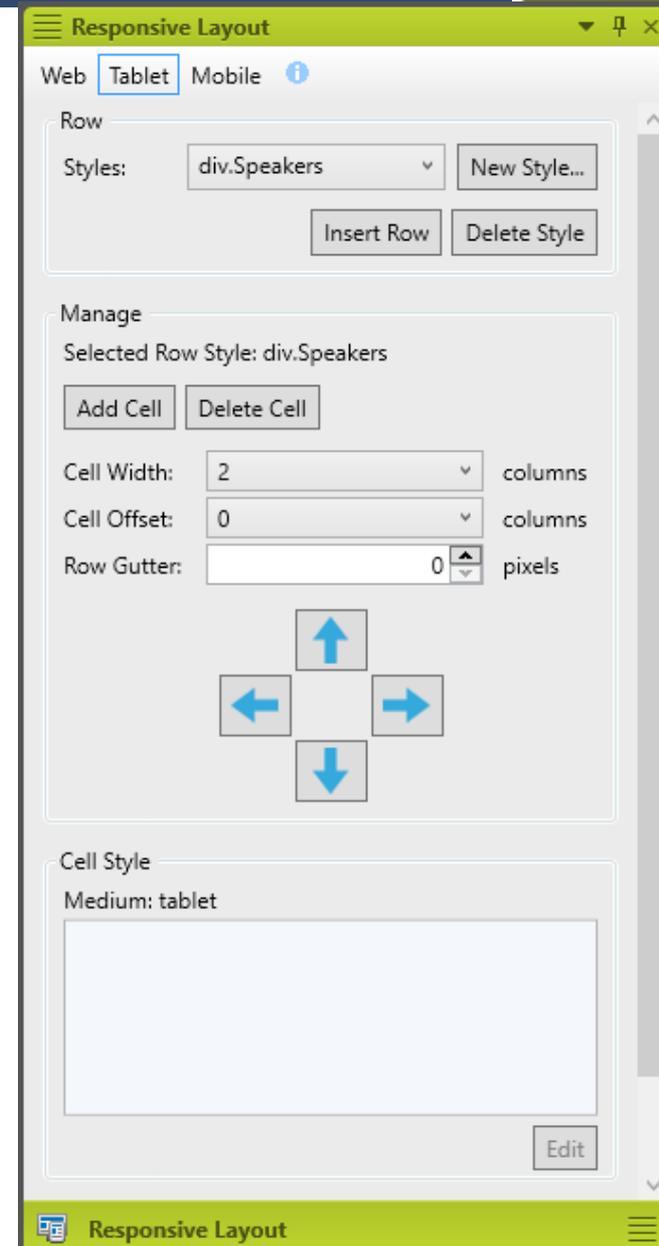
- Built-in support for Tablet and Mobile CSS media queries
- You can create your own custom media queries using a dialog:

The screenshot shows a dialog box titled "New Medium" with a close button (X) in the top right corner. Inside the dialog, there are two radio buttons: "Medium" (unselected) and "Media Query" (selected). Below the radio buttons is a text input field containing the text "only screen and (max-width: 800px)". Underneath the text field, there are four dropdown menus: "only", "screen", "and", and "max-width". To the right of these dropdowns is a numeric input field with the value "800" and a unit dropdown menu with "px". At the bottom right of the dialog are "OK" and "Cancel" buttons.

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

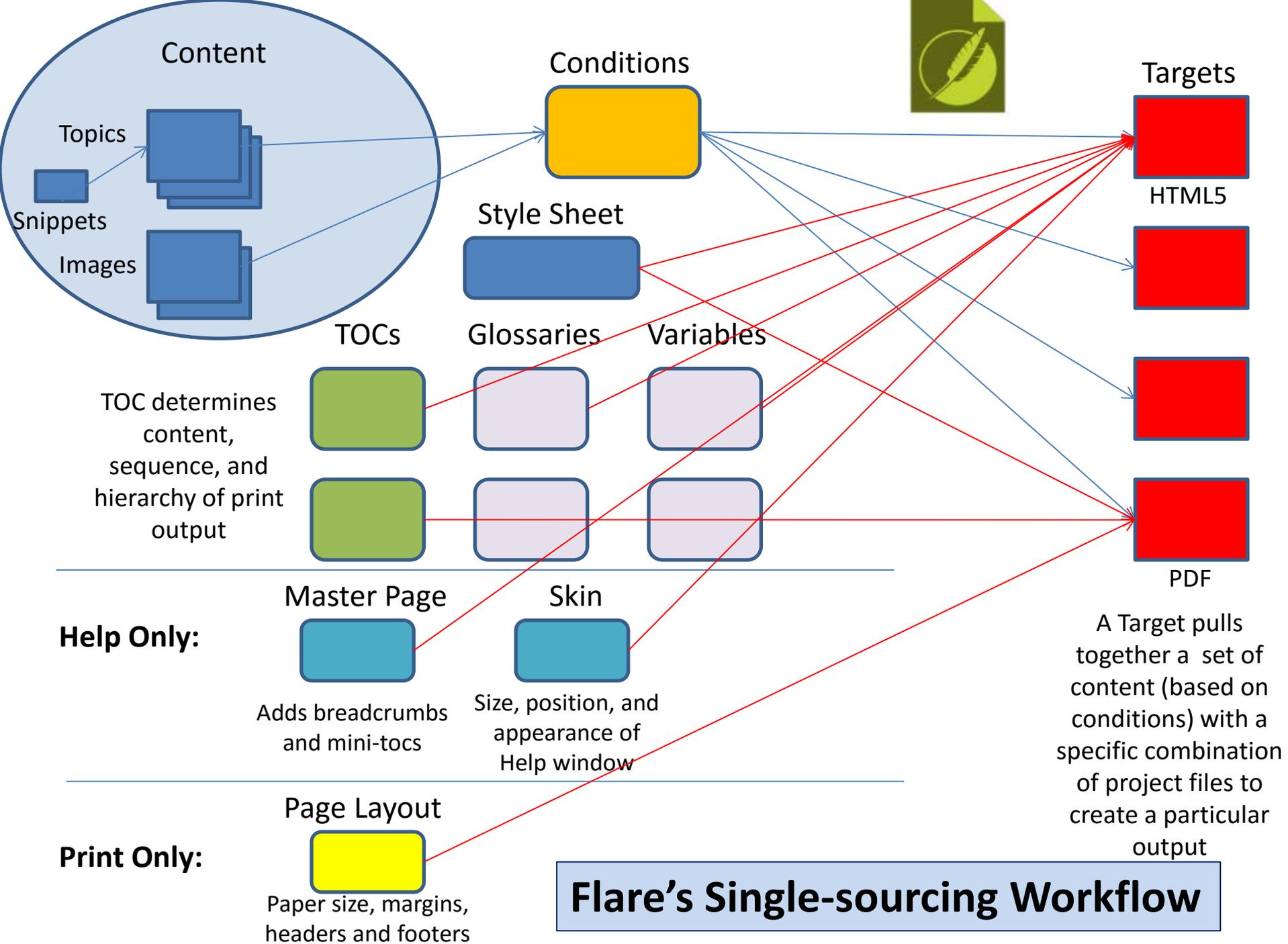
Even Pages: Print Left

Odd Pages: Print Right

Apply to all Sections

Restart Page Numbering on First Chapter

OK Cancel



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

Dynamic Content Filters

Rh

☰ A-Z 📖 🗑️ 🔍

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



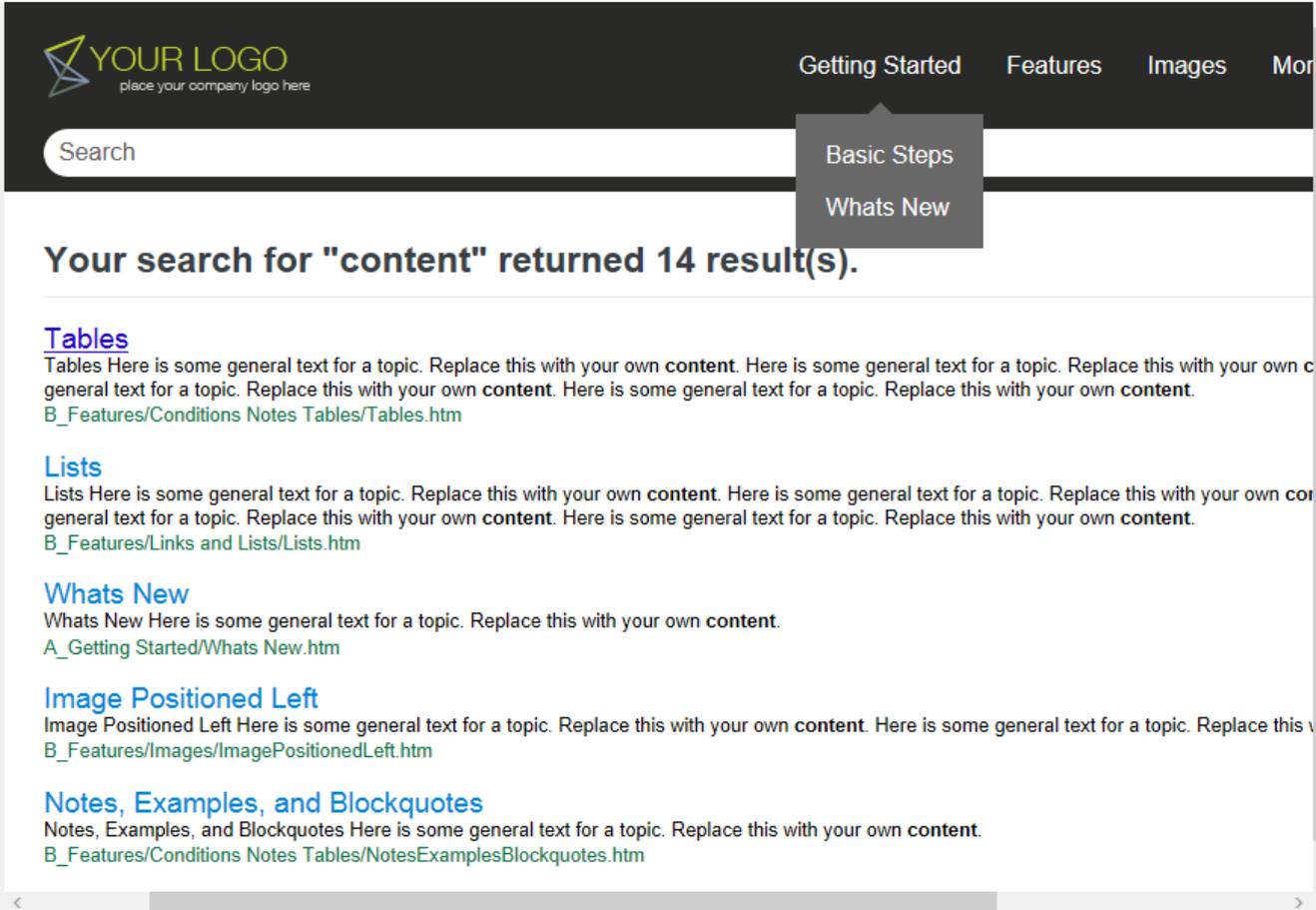
- Single-sourcing to all output formats
- MadCap Capture integration
- Project linking
- Top Navigation skin

Flare's top navigation skin

HTML5 Skin Editor | Preview | **Web Medium** | Tablet Medium | Mobile Medium | Highlight

Setup | Styles | UI Text

- Global
 - Main Page
- Header
 - Header**
 - Logo
 - Search Bar
 - Search Input
 - Search Filter
 - Search Filter (selected)
 - Search Filter Drop-down
 - Search Filter Drop-down (hover)
 - Search Submit Button
- Menu
 - Menu
 - Menu Item
 - Menu Item (hover)
- Search Results
 - Search Heading
 - Search Results
 - Search Result Abstract
 - Search Result Link
 - Search Result Link (active)
 - Search Result Link (focus)



The screenshot displays a web application interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with a logo placeholder "YOUR LOGO" and a search bar. The navigation menu includes "Getting Started", "Features", "Images", and "More". A dropdown menu is open over the search bar, showing "Basic Steps" and "Whats New". Below the search bar, the search results are displayed, starting with "Your search for 'content' returned 14 result(s)". The results are categorized into "Tables", "Lists", "Whats New", "Image Positioned Left", and "Notes, Examples, and Blockquotes". Each category has a brief description and a link to a sample page.

YOUR LOGO
place your company logo here

Getting Started | Features | Images | More

Search

Basic Steps
Whats New

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

Tables
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
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. Here is some general text for a topic. Replace this with your own content. [B_Features/Links and Lists/Lists.htm](#)

Whats New
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. 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/NotesExamplesBlockquotes.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 Ellison

UA Europe?

matthew@uaeurope.com