

Information Design: The Key to Reuse

Presented by
Tina Hedlund

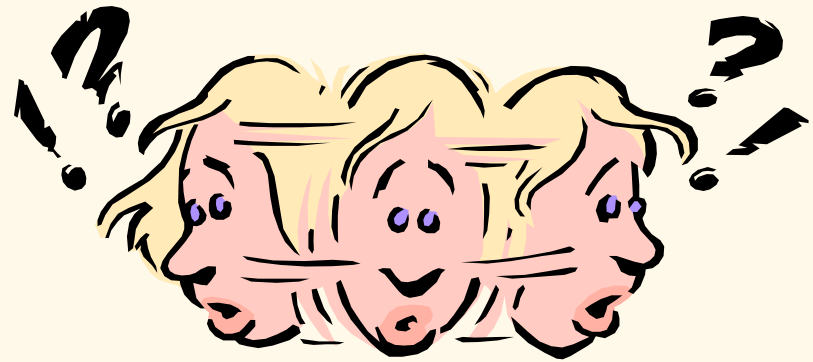
Tina.Hedlund@comtech-serv.com

The Center for Information Development Management
Denver, CO



The Problem

- No consistent suite of information
- No consistent structure of the information
- No idea how customers use their information
- No idea what information customers need



Planning for Reuse



- What are you producing now?
- What information do users need?
- What can you stop producing?
- How will you do deliver that information?
- What is the best structure for your information?

Information Model

- High-level framework for categorizing your information
- User task oriented
- For example, you may create a Maintenance category and within that category define a task for troubleshooting system errors
- Define information types

Information Types

Maintenance

— Concept

— Troubleshooting Procedure

— Reference

— Title

— Overview

— Steps

XML formalizes the structure

The screenshot shows the Epic Editor interface with a document titled "Sample.xml - Sample (document F051)". The menu bar includes File, Edit, Find, View, Insert, Entities, Table, Tools, Options, Format, Window, and Help. The toolbar contains various icons for file operations, editing, and formatting. The left pane shows a tree view of the document structure:

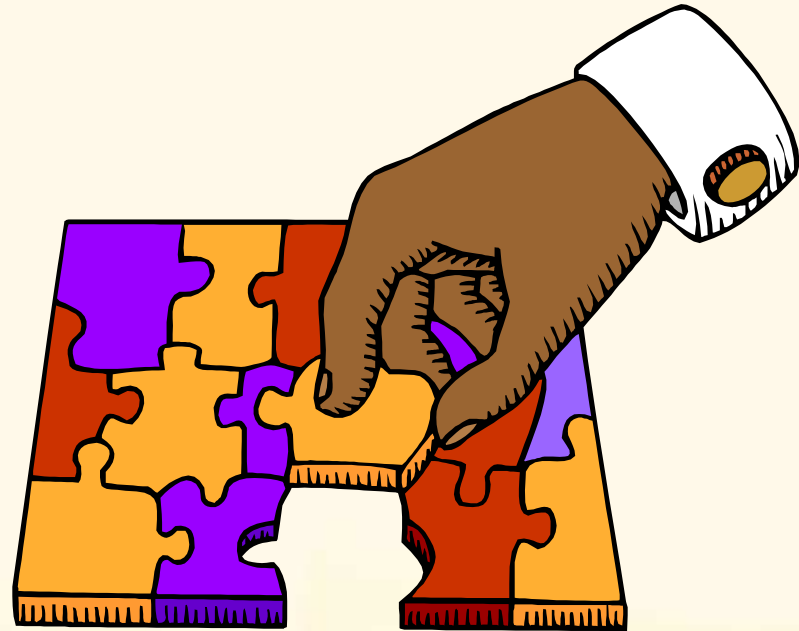
- document
 - procedure
 - title: Set the time
 - overview: The clock on yo
 - step: Open the on-screen r
 - step: Select "Set the time"
 - step: Set the hour
 - substep: Select hour
 - ...
 - procedure
- document

The right pane displays the XML structure of the document, showing the following elements and their content:

- title: Set the time
- overview: The clock on your VCR should set itself automatically when you first turn it on. If it does not set automatically, set the time manually.
- step: Open the on-screen menu
- step: Select "Set the time"
- step: Set the hour
- substep: Select hour
- ...
- procedure
- document

Granularity of authoring

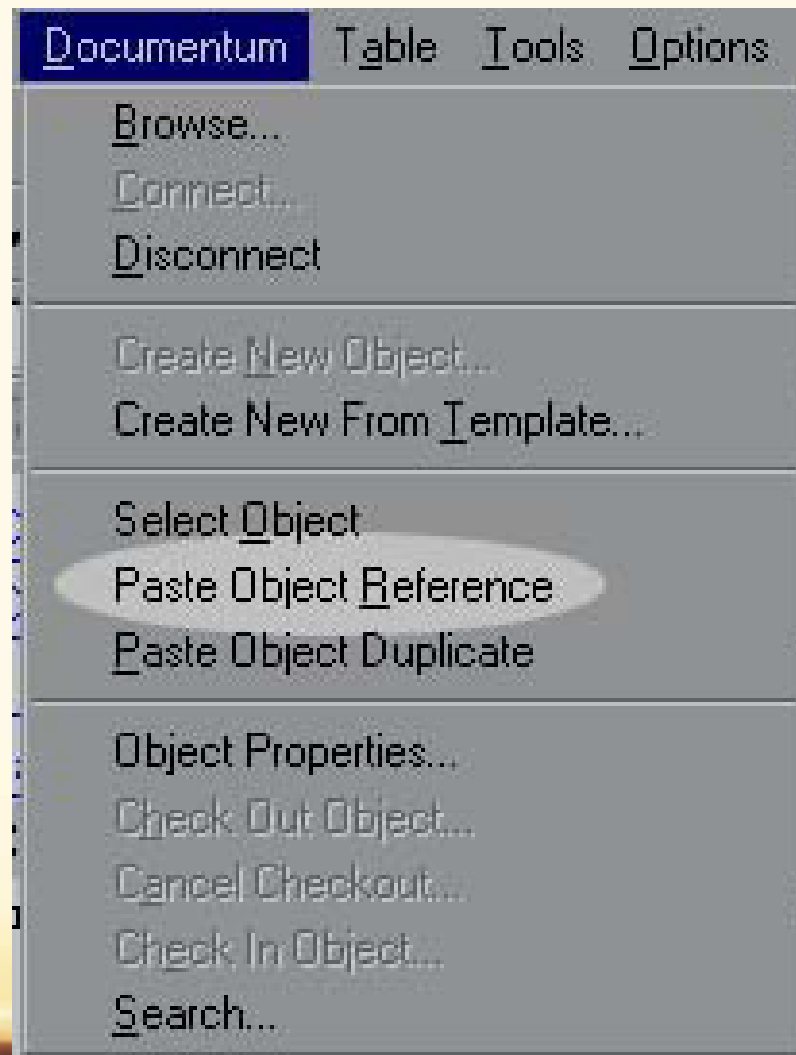
- Document
 - Book
 - Chapter
- Topic
 - Procedure
 - Concept
 - Cautions and warnings



How do you create and reuse content?

- Static content (author defined)
- Build lists
- Mix and matched to create deliverables
- Reuse achieved by
 - Building TOCs
 - Pasting by reference

Pasting by reference



Reuse Strategy

- Have your reuse strategy in place before you write anything!
- Spans the entire library
- Provides context for your authors
 - Is the content for one deliverable?
 - Will it be used several times and in what context?

What to do next...

- Create an information model that consists of
 - Well-defined suite of information
 - Information types
 - Structure of your information types
- Create a reuse strategy that consists of
 - Reusable topics
 - Content plan
 - What will be reused within information types
 - Like cautions and warnings