



**SYSTEMS  
DOCUMENTATION  
INCORPORATED**

# Structured Authoring and DITA

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We Make

Information Perform

# Agenda



- ◆ **Some basics**
- ◆ **Why do people read our stuff?**
- ◆ **How does DITA fit in?**
- ◆ **Is there a method to the madness?**
- ◆ **The infamous “Making Breakfast” example**
- ◆ **What the example could look like:**
- ◆ **Looking at some of the content**
- ◆ **More content**
- ◆ **Questions?**

# Some basics



- ◆ **What does structured authoring mean to you?**
- ◆ **From an article in Carolina Communique:**
  - **Structured authoring is a publishing workflow that lets you define and enforce consistent organization of information in documents, whether printed or online.**
- ◆ **What it means to me:**
  - **Defining a goal and assembling architected topics to help the reader achieve that goal.**

# Why do people read our stuff?



- ◆ **Most readers come to the documentation to find out how to do something.**
- ◆ **Our task is to identify the readers and their goals.**
- ◆ **Break down the goal into its component tasks.**
- ◆ **Then identify the information (concepts and reference) that ensures success in the tasks.**

# How does DITA fit in?



- ◆ **An XML language**
- ◆ **Topic-based architecture**
  - **Task**
  - **Concept**
  - **Reference**
- ◆ **Task oriented**
- ◆ **Supports inheritance of attributes**
- ◆ **Enforces structure and supports hierarchy**

# How does DITA fit in?



- ◆ **All topic types architected**
  - **Enforces structure to that level**
    - Majority of elements optional, though
- ◆ **Can specialize existing elements**
  - **Support your own architecture**
  - **Add restrictions not in base**
  - **Take advantage of base processing or augment that processing**

# Is there a method to the madness?



- ◆ **Identify the main tasks.**
- ◆ **Decompose those into salient sub tasks until you are sure that the topics contain a single procedure.**
- ◆ **Relate the topics together in the order you need.**
- ◆ **Write the tasks and identify other relevant information (but don't write those).**
- ◆ **Write the related information and note the relationships to the tasks.**
- ◆ **Link the topics together in your preferred navigation.**

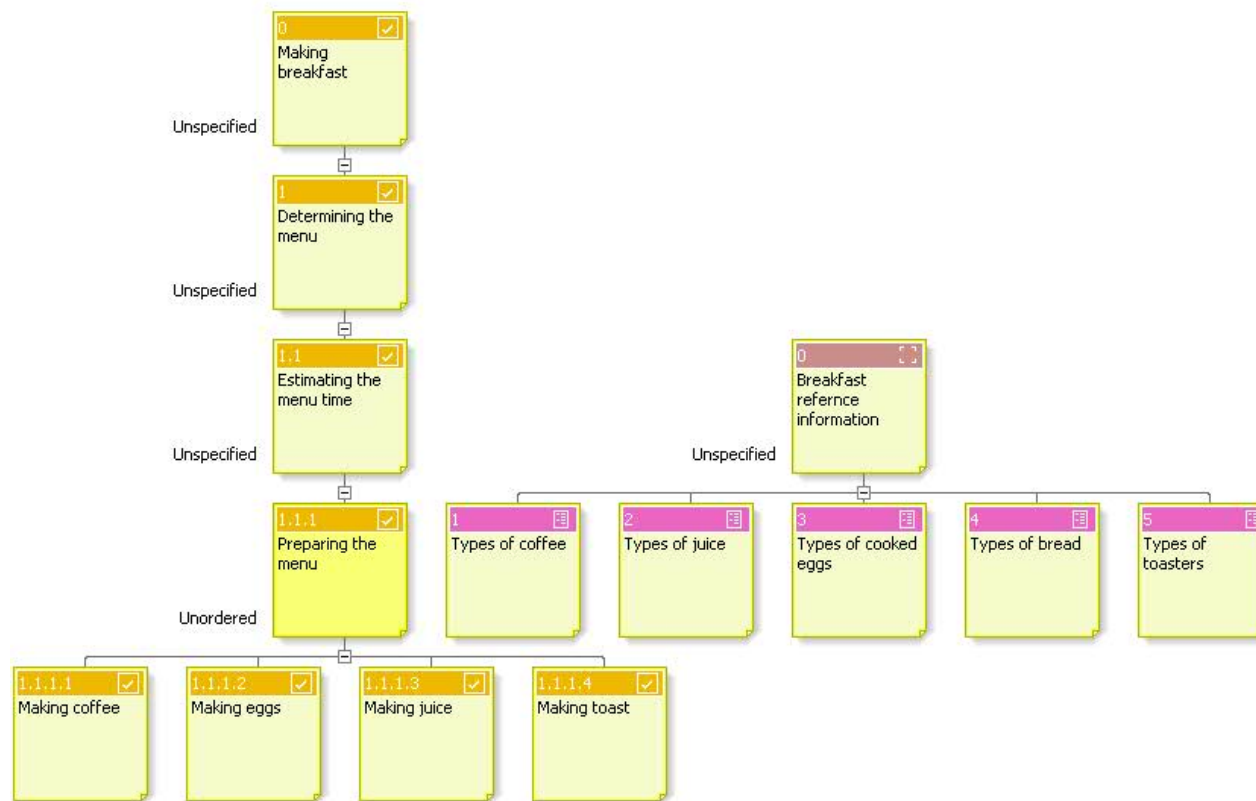
# The infamous “Making Breakfast” example



- ◆ **This is a task made up of multiple subtasks.**
  - **Determining the menu.**
  - **Estimating the timing for the menu.**
  - **Preparing the selected menu items.**
    - Need to know process and time required so that you can meet the goal
  - **Related information includes tools, ingredients, descriptions, spices, and other things I may not recognize right now.**



# What the example could look like:



# Looking at some of the content



**Estimating the menu time**

The key to a successful breakfast is ensuring that all the items arrive at the table simultaneously.

**Before you begin**  
Make sure you determine all the menu items for this particular breakfast.

**Steps for this task**

1. Examine the recipes for each item.
2. Add the prep time to the cooking time.  
Use the recipe with the largest sum for the next step.
3. Add the time it takes to set up the kitchen to prepare the items.

**Result**  
The sum of step 3 is the maximum time it takes to get your menu to the table.

The following items comprise the menu:

- Fresh-ground coffee
- Store-bought orange juice
- Eggs Benedict
- Toasted bagel with cream cheese
- 1/2 a honeydew melon

The items have the following times:

*Table 1. Times for menu items*

Item	Prep time	Cooking time	Total time
Fresh-ground coffee	4 mins.	6 mins.	10 mins.
Store-bought orange juice	0	30 secs.	30 secs.
Eggs Benedict	3 mins.	20 mins.	23 mins.
Toasted bagel with cream cheese	2 mins.	5 mins.	7 mins.
1/2 a honeydew melon	1 min. 30 secs.	0	1 min. 30 secs.

**Note:** These times are for illustrative purposes only. Please see the individual recipes for the exact times.

Your kitchen setup time is 12 minutes. Therefore the time to make breakfast is 35 mins.

**What to do next**  
Prepare the menu.

[Preparing the menu](#)

Parent topic: [Determining the menu](#)

# More content



**Making coffee**

How you make coffee depends upon the type of coffee you are serving. The basic process is fairly simple with a few side steps.

**Before you begin**  
Make sure that coffee is one of your menu items.

**Steps for this task**

1. Determine how much coffee you need. The amount and type of coffee affects the time it takes for the coffee to brew.
2. Decide which type of coffee you are going to brew.
3. Select the method for the type of coffee you are preparing.

Type of coffee	Advantage and brewing method
Instant	Ultimate convenience and minimum time; this method does not require a percolator. Brewing method is "Making instant coffee."
Pre-ground	More robust flavor and most convenient of the percolator brewing methods. Brewing method is "Making pre-ground coffee."
Fresh-ground	Freshest flavor and usually the best quality when prepared correctly. Brewing method is "Making fresh-ground coffee."

**Result**  
You will have the appropriate amount of coffee for your menu.

[Making instant coffee](#)  
Instant coffee is the ultimate in convenience. Some folks prefer it over any other type of coffee so preparing it correctly is an art.

[Making fresh-ground coffee](#)  
For the freshest, most robust flavor, fresh ground coffee cannot be beat. There are additional considerations and time requirements when making fresh-ground coffee beyond pre-ground coffee.

[Making pre-ground coffee](#)  
While pre-ground coffee requires more work than instant, prepared properly, this type of coffee is more flavorful and richer.

Parent topic: Determining the menu

# Questions?



**I may have answers. :D**