

LMI AIR Help Plugin

This topic provides information about generating AIR Help from DITA.

The DITA-OT AIR Help plugin is not yet publicly available.

Overview

AIR Help is an evolving new option for delivering online user assistance. This Help delivery format does not specifically define appearance or functionality, but refers to any user assistance application that was developed with Adobe's AIR (Adobe Integrated Runtime) technology. Applications developed using AIR can be installed on the Mac, Windows, and Linux operating systems, and are highly customizable, making this an ideal technology from which to develop an online Help deliverable.

Currently the only commercially available product for generating AIR Help is Adobe's "RoboHelp Packager for AIR." This (beta) product allows you to export an AIR Help file from a RoboHelp WebHelp project. At this time, there is no connection between RoboHelp and DITA other than the option of authoring DITA files in FrameMaker and importing the FrameMaker files into RoboHelp.

The other option for creating AIR Help is custom development. You can take any browser-based set of HTML files and "wrap" them up in an AIR application. The most basic AIR application is one that contains an embedded web browser (based on WebKit) which essentially lets you present your HTML-based help in your custom browser.

The LMI AIR Help plugin provides a direct path from DITA to AIR Help. This implementation of AIR Help provides the following features:

- Tabbed navigation panels for Contents, Index, and Search
- Full text search that allows for both local and remote search indexes
- Forward, Back, Home buttons as well as Next/Previous Browse buttons that follow the structure of topics in the Contents tab
- The ability to make context sensitive calls from an external application
- Position and size of window is preserved between sessions
- Sync with TOC functionality

Additionally, you may customize the Help interface to add features or modify the appearance as needed.

Setup and configuration

<<WHERE TO GET THE PLUGIN .. SETUP REQUIREMENTS>>

For the most basic output, no extra effort is needed. Run your DITA map through the plugin, and it will ..

- generate the “local” full text search index
- compile the SWF
- build batch files for testing and final AIR file creation

The following data is used from the map file when building the AIR file:

- /map/topicmeta/copyright
- /map/topicmeta/prodinfo/prodname
- /map/topicmeta/prodinfo/vrmlist/vrm (the last one)
- /map/topicmeta/prodinfo/prognum
- /map/topicmeta/othermeta/@name='remote-search-index-url'
(@content specifies the location for the remote search index which is loaded on startup)

The Index is built from available indexterm elements.

After a successful build, just run the *airhelp-test.bat* batch file to view and test the new AIR Help file. When you're ready to build the final AIR file, just run the *airhelp-packager.bat* batch file.

Authoring

<<AUTHORING NEEDS .. ??>>

Integration

<<HOOKING UP FOR CONTEXT HELP>>

Output

<<SAMPLES>>

Summary

<<MORE INFO>>