

MADCAP FLARE DESKTOP 2026

Getting Started

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Welcome to MadCap Flare Desktop—the first native XML content authoring application, which offers single-source authoring in an environment that does not require you to know any coding. From a single Flare project you can produce output in many different formats, including documentation for the web, desktop, print, and mobile.

This chapter discusses the following:

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I Process

When you break down the authoring process in Flare Desktop, you will discover that it can be quite simple. Following are the basic steps that you need to follow for creating and developing a project in Flare Desktop. Although Flare users sometimes need to produce completely different kinds of output from one another (e.g., a technical writer might need a quite large Help system, whereas an eLearning professional could just need some short training courses), the same basic five steps are necessary for everyone.

1. **Start Projects** Create a project from scratch, or start a project by importing existing content from a variety of sources. See "Creating a Project" on page 14.
2. **Author** Add content and features, such as topics, text, a table of contents, cross-references, navigation, page layouts, and all of the other elements necessary to help your end users. See "Authoring" on page 18.
3. **Design** Through the use of features such as stylesheets, skins, page layouts, template pages, and more, you can design a look and feel for your output. See "Design" on page 29.
4. **Develop Targets** Decide the type(s) of output formats that you want to generate and develop targets accordingly to meet your needs. See "Developing Targets" on page 36.
5. **Build and Distribute Output** Generate output from a target, then make the files accessible to your end users. See "Building and Publishing Output" on page 42.

I Getting Started Video and Tutorial

In addition to this PDF guide, we also recommend the Getting Started Video and Getting Started Tutorial for new Flare Desktop users. Although there is certainly common information in all three of these resources, each one is also unique.

The Getting Started Video provides a visual demonstration of how to create a new project, introduces basic information about Flare Desktop, and points you to additional videos and resources to further develop the project.

The Getting Started Tutorial is a PDF file that you can use alongside Flare Desktop to create, develop, and generate output from an actual project.

You can access the video and tutorial from the Get Started topic in the Help system.

I Planning Your Project

Before you create a project in Flare Desktop, you should first take some time to decide exactly what you want to accomplish with your output. Here are some of the questions you might consider:

- What kinds of output do you want to create?
- Do you need online output, print output, or both?
- How many different versions of online and print output do you need?
- Does the output need to be up on a server or placed locally on the end users' computers?
- How will you name your files to keep things consistent and organized?
- What kinds of reusable content will you need?
- How do you want your output to look? Will someone provide you with a design, or will you use one of Flare's project templates, swapping out your company logo and colors?
- Will one author be working on the project or will multiple people be involved?
- Do you need to use a source control system? Which one?
- Do you need to merge multiple project outputs together?
- Would it be useful to keep a few shared files (such as a stylesheet and some images) in a parent project and then synchronize them with child projects (Global Project Linking)?

You might not think of all of the questions you need to ask beforehand. There might be some issues that come to mind after you're already well into your project. And you certainly won't know how to accomplish everything you want to right away. As is the case with any powerful and flexible software application, you will become more familiar and comfortable with it over time and the more you use it. So don't expect to be an expert immediately. But the more planning and preparation you do ahead of time, the smoother your journey in Flare Desktop will be.

Also, it's a good idea to create some test projects and play with Flare Desktop's different features. Once you feel more comfortable with the basic steps and features in Flare Desktop, as well as the workspace, go ahead and get started with your own project.

I Key Concepts and Features

There are seemingly an endless number of things you can do in Flare Desktop. But you don't have to do all of them, or even most of them. Instead, you should begin by learning about the most important concepts and features. These ideas all tend to revolve around the idea of content reuse (or single-sourcing), which means that you can take the same content, reuse it, and produce multiple outputs from it.

Here are some of the most important concepts and features in Flare Desktop:

- **Building Blocks—Content Reuse** In other authoring tools, you're probably used to everything being a part of a single file—the content, the table of contents, the glossary, the styles, and so on. It's not like that in Flare Desktop. Instead, most of the pieces are separate, sort of like building blocks. This is one of the things that helps to make Flare Desktop so powerful and give you so much flexibility in how to create your output.
- **Topic-Based Authoring** Topics are where you type your text and add other content. If you come from the world of print publishing, you'll probably be tempted at first to create really long topics—such as one topic for each chapter or even one topic for an entire PDF manual. And while Flare Desktop lets you create very long topics and there may be cases where you need to do that, for the most part, you want your topics to be smaller, digestible chunks of content that you can reuse for different outputs. Topic-based authoring sets you up for creating eLearning content. That is, creating goal-oriented content for an eLearning course and its learning objectives.
- **Conditions** A condition is a single-sourcing feature that you can apply to files or different areas of your content. Conditions can determine whether certain information displays in some outputs but not in others. You can also control whether content displays on a certain device or screen size. For example, maybe you need to produce both online and print-based output. Much of the content you create is going to be the same for both outputs, but some of it is going to be written only for online output, and some only for print-based output. So you can create condition tags for each and use those tags to separate the content when you build your output.
- **Styles** You can take advantage of cascading stylesheets (CSS files) and the rules around them to control the look of your output in one place. This helps to keep the content separate from its presentation, which is very important when it comes to single-sourcing. CSS isn't a Flare idea. It's an international standard for formatting web content, and it was developed by a group called the World Wide Web Consortium (or W3C). You can learn all about the W3C at w3.org.

Once again, these are just a few of the more important concepts and features in Flare Desktop. For more information about each of these concepts features, as well as others, open the Help system and check out the "Key Features" topic. You can also download the *Key Features Guide*.

I Architecture

You should think about what's important for your goals, consider the features that will best support your efforts, and come up with a structural design.

Flare Desktop is extremely flexible, which means your project universe (i.e., all of your projects, tools, features, elements, and content; and how it is all put together) might end up being somewhat unique. Therefore, you will want to take some time to plan your project architecture, both externally and internally.



For detailed information about project architecture, see the Help system or download the *Architecture Guide*.

I Getting Additional Help

You can use any of the following resources for additional help not provided in this manual.

Knowledge Base

You can browse the online Knowledge Base for articles covering common support issues.

<http://kb.madcapsoftware.com/>

Peer-to-Peer Online Forums

You can visit the online forums to learn from other users or share your own expertise.

<http://forums.madcapsoftware.com/>

Contact Flare Desktop Support

You can contact the Flare Desktop support team and get answers to your specific support issues.

<http://madcapsoftware.com/support/>

Creating a Project

Following are the steps for creating a new Flare project using the Start New Project Wizard.

For more information, see the *Project Creation Guide*. For links to this manual and others, see the Help system.

I How to Create a Project

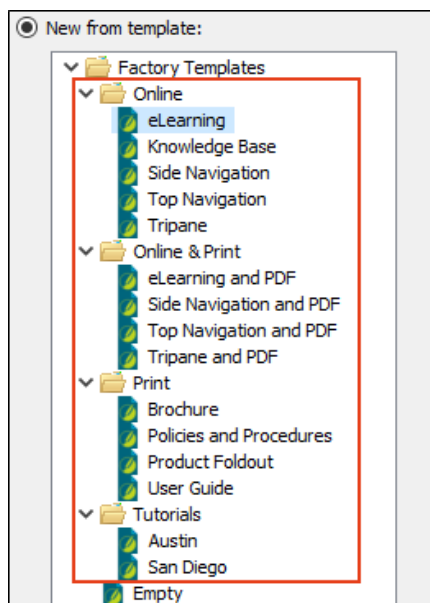
1. On the Start Page click **New Project**. Alternatively, you can select **File > New Project**.
2. Complete the fields on the first page of the wizard and click **Next**.
 - **Project name** Enter a name for the project.
 - **Project folder** Keep the default location for the project, or click to select another.
 - **Language** Select the primary language for the project.
 - (Optional) **Bind to Source Control** Select this if you want to integrate the new Flare project with a source control application.
3. (Optional) If you selected the "Bind to Source Control" option, click **Bind Project**. In the Bind Project dialog, complete the fields, depending on the source control application being used. When you are finished, click **Next**.
4. Select a template using one of the three options—(1) new from template, (2) new from existing, (3) new from import—and click **Next**.

NEW FROM TEMPLATE


Choose either a factory template file or one of your own custom template files as a starting point. The new file will take on all of the settings contained in the template. If you want to use the factory template provided by Flare Desktop, expand the **Factory Templates** folder and click on a template file. If you want to use your own custom template file, expand the appropriate folder and click on a file. For more information about templates, see the Help system.

Flare's factory templates are organized into the following folders:

- **Online** These templates were designed for online output only (although you can always add print-based outputs later).
- **Online & Print** These templates were designed to generate both online and print-based outputs from the same content.
- **Print** These templates were designed for print-based output only (although you can always add online outputs later).
- **Tutorials** This folder contains templates intended to be used with various Flare Tutorials.



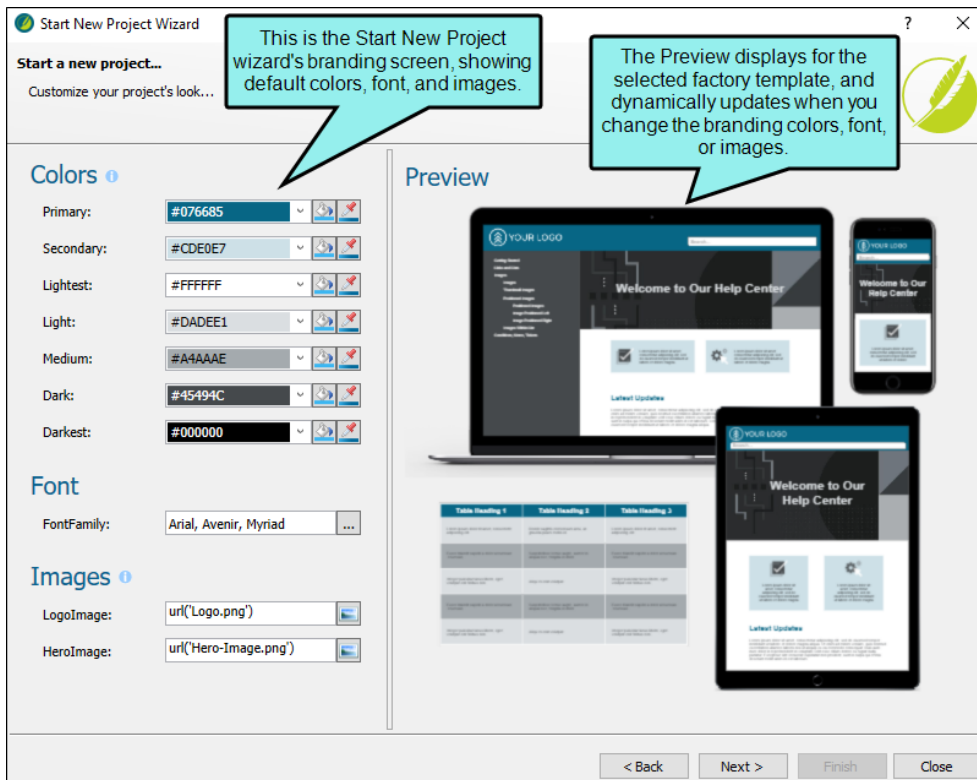
NEW FROM EXISTING


You can use this option if you already have a Flare project that you want to use as the basis for your new project. Click , use the Open File dialog to find a Flare project file (FLPRJ), and double-click it.


NEW FROM IMPORT

You can choose legacy files (e.g., Word, Excel, FrameMaker, HTML, DITA, HTML Help, RoboHelp) to import. If you select this option and click **Next**, a list of import options is displayed. You can select the file type, click **Next** again, and complete the options in the new wizard that opens, instead of completing the rest of the Start New Project Wizard.

5. (Optional) Depending on the template selected, choose branding colors, a font family, logo, and hero image to apply to your project. This will give your project a custom look and feel from the start. These options can be changed later in the Branding Editor. Click **Next**.



 **NOTE** If you use a factory template or a custom preview project template, the branding page displays. If you select files from a **New from existing** or a **New from import** source, the branding screen will be bypassed.

 **NOTE** The field selection for the branding screen in the wizard might change slightly depending on the factory template chosen.

6. Select the primary target for your project and click **Finish**. The targets listed in the drop-down are limited to the those found in the template you selected.

Authoring

As soon as you start a project, you can do any number of things with it. Technically, you could build the final output immediately. However, if it is a new project, building the output right away would not do your end users much good, since the output does not yet have any real substance. The project needs topics, content, cross-references, navigation, and all of the other elements necessary to help your end users.

Some of these features can be used in online output as well as print-based output, some are for online output only, and some are for print output only. Topics are essential for any project, but otherwise you can pick and choose which of the following to include and which to leave out. Also, it is not necessary that you add these items and features in any particular order, although topics usually are created first.

For more detailed information about each of these features—including examples—see the Help system or the appropriate PDF guide.


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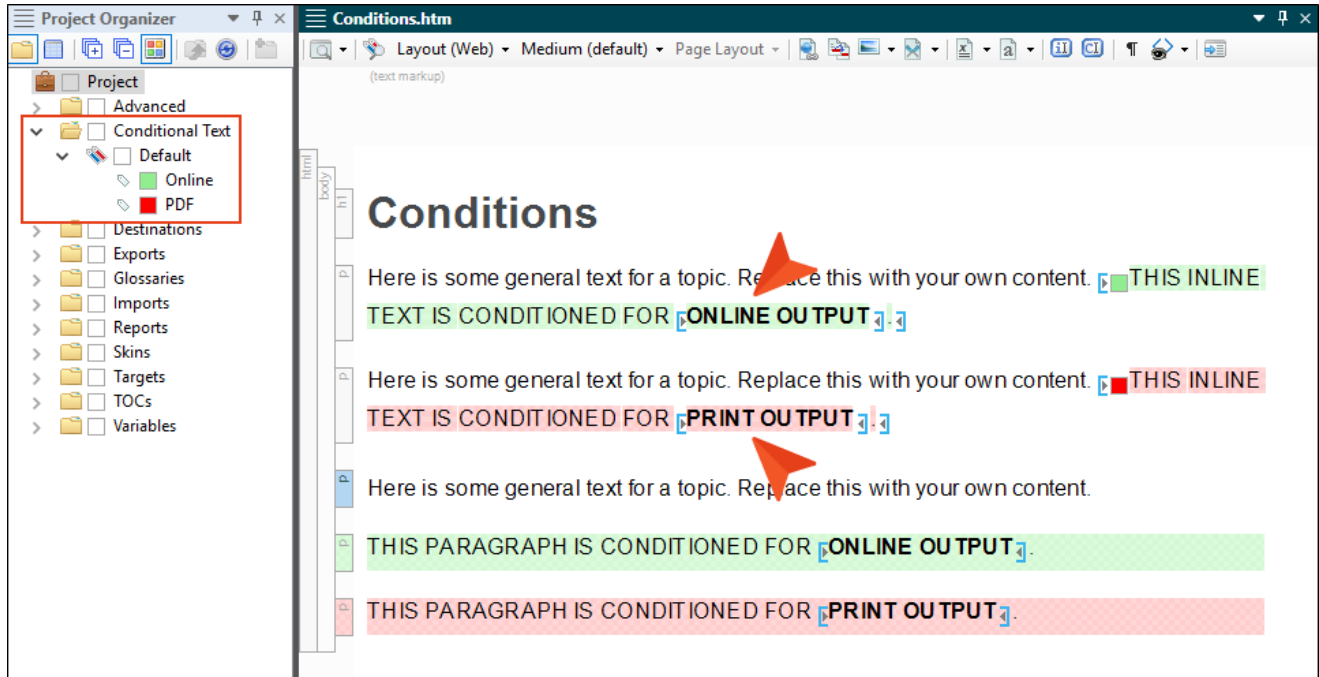
I Topics

A topic is a file containing information about a particular subject. Topics might be the most important part of a project. Everything else is contained within topics (e.g., cross-references, text, images) or points toward topics (e.g., tables of contents). The very reason end users open a Help system or manual is to find information, a little direction. They find that help within individual topics.

To create a topic, open the Content Explorer on the left side of Flare Desktop. Then click  in the local toolbar. After the topic is created and opened, you can edit it in the XML Editor to the right.

Conditions

A condition is a single-sourcing feature that you can apply to files or different areas of your content. Conditions can determine whether certain information displays in some outputs but not in others. You can also control whether content displays on a certain device or screen size.



One way to single-source content is to take advantage of multiple output formats and condition tags. How does it work? Each target in your project is a potential output (using a specific output format, such as HTML5 or PDF). You can create and apply condition tags to content. Then you associate the condition tags to your different targets as necessary, so that some content appears in some targets but not in other targets. This way, you do not need to create a separate project for each output that you want to produce. If most of the content for your outputs is similar, there is no need to rewrite it in another project. Simply specify which sections to include or exclude in which targets through the use of condition tags. This is one reason that topic-based authoring is so appealing. By placing condition tags on individual topic files themselves, you can pick and choose which topics to include in some outputs and which to include in other outputs.

☆ **EXAMPLE** You need to create two PDFs from your project—one for beginning users and another for advanced users. Rather than creating two separate projects, you can put all of the content into a single project.

Then you can create one condition tag called "Beginner Manual" and another condition tag called "Advanced Manual."

After that, you can apply the "Beginner Manual" condition tag to the content that belongs only in the manual for beginners, and you can apply the "Advanced Manual" condition tag to the content that belongs only in the manual for advanced users.

Finally, you open one PDF target and tell Flare Desktop to include the "Beginner Manual" condition tag and exclude the "Advanced Manual" condition tag. In the other PDF target, you do the opposite; exclude the "Beginner Manual" condition tag and include the "Advanced Manual" condition tag.

To add a condition tag set file, open the Project Organizer on the left side of Flare Desktop. Right-click the **Conditional Text** folder and select **Add Condition Tag Set**. After the condition tag set is created and opened, you can edit it in the Condition Tag Set Editor to the right, adding as many conditions as you need.

There are many ways to apply conditions to files and content. One way to apply a condition to a piece of content is to select the content, then open the **Home** ribbon and choose **Conditions**.

For more information about conditions—including steps and examples—see the Help system or the *Condition Tags Guide*.

I Glossaries

A glossary is a feature that you can add to your output to help users understand the meaning of individual terms. You can include a glossary in both online and print-based output. To create a generated glossary in print output, you can let Flare Desktop auto-generate one for you (faster method), or you can create a unique topic and insert a Glossary proxy into it (more powerful and flexible method).

To add a glossary file, open the Project Organizer on the left side of Flare Desktop. Right-click the **Glossaries** folder and select **Add Glossary**. After the glossary is created and opened, you can edit it in the Glossary Editor to the right.

I Images

You can insert images into content files (e.g., topics, snippets). Flare Desktop supports the following types of raster and vector image files: BMP, EMF, EPS, EXPS, GIF, HDP, JPG, JPEG, PDF, PNG, PS, SVG, SWF, TIF, TIFF, WDP, WMF, XAML, XPS.

To insert an image into a content file, open the **Insert** ribbon and select **Image**.

I Indexes

You can include an index in your output through the use of index keywords. An Index proxy is also necessary for print-based outputs. Unlike some features in Flare Desktop, there is no independent index file in your project that becomes the index in your output. Instead, the index is automatically generated when you build output, based on index keywords that you insert into content files in your project.

To insert an index keyword into a content file, open the **View** ribbon and select **Index Window**. Then use the Index window pane on the right to create index keywords, which will be inserted at your cursor location in the open content file.

I Links

You can create many kinds of links, such as cross-references, text hyperlinks, text popups, topic popups, image hyperlinks, togglers, and bookmarks. Cross-references are especially useful in Flare Desktop.

A cross-reference is an automated link that is based on a format with commands. This method of linking saves time because you don't have to type the link text each time, or manage it over time if the destination content changes. Cross-references are recommended when you are linking from one place in your project to another (as opposed to linking to external files or websites). The format can be controlled in your stylesheet. This lets you keep links consistent and change them in just one place by using the MadCap|xref style (or a class of it that you have created). Cross-references are also useful for converting online links to page number references when you are producing printed output (by having a separate format for the cross-reference style in the print medium of the stylesheet).

To insert a link into a content file, open the **Insert** ribbon and use the appropriate button to create a link in the topic, snippet, or template page that is open.

I Template Pages

A template page lets you automatically apply certain content—such as breadcrumbs, menus, toolbars, search bars, footer text, or mini-TOCs—to multiple topics in the output. A template page is primarily used in online outputs. However, it can be used in Word output as well. For Word output, a template page lets you determine page specifications (such as size or orientation) and to apply certain content (e.g., header text or page numbers) to many topics in a manual. For print-based outputs other than Word, page layouts are used instead of template pages.

To add a template page file, open the Content Explorer on the left side of Flare Desktop. Expand the **Resources** folder. Right-click the **TemplatePages** folder (you can create this subfolder from the local toolbar if it doesn't already exist) and select **New > Template Page**. After the template page is created and opened, you can edit it in the XML Editor to the right.

I Micro Content

Micro content is short, concise information that stands alone and is easily consumable. In Flare Desktop, it begins with the creation of a collection of brief *phrases* and corresponding *responses*, such as questions and answers. After generating HTML5 output, these phrase/response combinations can be used in different ways as users interact with your output. For example, it can greatly improve the user experience when people search in your HTML5 output. It can also be used to create field-level context-sensitive Help.

To add a micro content file, open the Content Explorer on the left side of Flare Desktop. Expand the **Resources** folder. Right-click the **MicroContent** folder (you can create this subfolder from the local toolbar if it doesn't already exist) and select **New > Micro Content**. After the micro content file is created and opened, you can add phrases and responses to it in the editor to the right.

I Multimedia

Flare Desktop lets you include various kinds of multimedia elements in your output, including video, audio, and 3D models.

To insert multimedia into a content file, open the **Insert** ribbon and from the **Multimedia** drop-down, choose the kind of element you'd like to add.

I Page Layouts

A page layout is used for page specifications (e.g., size, margins) and to apply certain content (e.g., headers, footers, page numbers) to many (or all) topics in print-based output. It allows for easy configuration through the use of content frames, bleeds, crop marks, registration marks, margins, padding, alignment features, and more. You might create multiple page layouts for different purposes (e.g., title page, TOC, chapters, appendix). Page layouts are similar to template pages, but are more flexible and easier to use. The general rule is that page layouts are recommended for *print-based output*, and template pages continue to be the best method for automatically adding headers, footers, breadcrumbs, and more in multiple topics for *online output*. Another difference between page layouts and template pages is that page layouts can be used for Adobe PDF, Microsoft Word or Microsoft PowerPoint, whereas template pages can be used only for Microsoft Word when creating print-based output.

To add a page layout file, open the Content Explorer on the left side of Flare Desktop. Expand the **Resources** folder. Right-click the **PageLayouts** folder (you can create this subfolder from the local toolbar if it doesn't already exist) and select **New > Page Layout**. After the page layout is created and opened, you can edit it in the XML Editor to the right.

I Responsive Content

For HTML5 output, you can use the Responsive Layout window pane to help you design responsive content. This window pane lets you create a one-row grid to hold content. The benefit of putting your content into such a grid is that it allows it to shift and be responsive to screens of different sizes. The Get Started topic in Flare Desktop's Help system is one example where such a responsive layout is used.

To create a responsive layout, open the **Home** ribbon and select **Responsive Layout**. Then use the Responsive Layout window pane on the right to create a style, insert a row, and create a responsive layout in the open content file.

I Snippets

A snippet is a chunk of formatted content that is heavily used in single-sourcing. Snippets can include text, tables, images, and whatever else can be included in a normal topic. You can insert snippets into one or more topics throughout your project, thus allowing you to reuse content that is maintained in one place. You can even insert them into other snippets, creating nested snippets. Snippets are not usually intended for single words or very short phrases that change frequently. In those cases, you probably want to use variables instead.

To add a snippet file, open the Content Explorer on the left side of Flare Desktop. Expand the **Resources** folder. Right-click the **Snippets** folder (you can create this subfolder from the local toolbar if it doesn't already exist) and select **New > Snippet**. After the snippet is created and opened, you can edit it in the XML Editor to the right.

To insert a snippet into a content file, open the **Insert** ribbon and select **Snippet**.

I Tables

A table in Flare Desktop is much like it is in any word processing program, such as Microsoft Word, or in a printed textbook. It is a group of intersecting columns and rows that you can add to a topic for various purposes, such as comparing different elements.

To insert a table into a content file, open the **Table** ribbon and select **Insert Table**.

I Tables of Contents

A table of contents (TOC) in Flare Desktop works much like a TOC in a printed book. It provides an outline of contents in your Help system so that end users can easily and quickly navigate to the information they need. You create a TOC, adding books, topic links, and links to external files in a structure that you think would be useful for the user. End users then browse through a TOC to find information. For print-based and EPUB output, you need to use the TOC Editor to create a TOC just as you would create one for online output. However, there is a fundamental difference. Performing this task for online output creates an actual TOC in the output, which people use to navigate from topic to topic. This is not the case for print-based output. Performing this task for print-based output lets you indicate which topics will be included in the output and in what order. In that sense, this TOC functions more as an outline for print-based output. Therefore, for print-based output, you can think of it as an "outline TOC." If you want to include a generated TOC in print-based output, you need to use a TOC proxy in a topic instead.

To add a TOC file, open the Project Organizer on the left side of Flare Desktop. Right-click the **TOCs** folder and select **Add Table of Contents**. After the TOC is created and opened, you can edit it in the TOC Editor to the right.

I Variables

A variable is a small piece of plain text or auto-generated content that can be edited in one place but used in many places throughout your project. Variables are especially useful for text that might change frequently, such as version numbers and dates. Variables are stored in variable sets, which can hold multiple variables. Depending on the template you select when creating a project, Flare Desktop may provide you with an initial variable set, but you can add as many additional variable sets and variables as you like. There are different kinds of variables: (1) basic ones that you create, (2) custom date/time variables that you create, (3) system variables (e.g., date and time; titles; page count; Chapter, Section, and Volume numbers), (4) Heading variables, and (5) Running Head variables. Some of these are especially useful for page headers and footers in print-based output.

To add a variable set file, open the Project Organizer on the left side of Flare Desktop. Right-click the **Variables** folder and select **Add Variable Set**. After the variable set is created and opened, you can edit it in the Variable Set Editor to the right, adding as many variables as you need into it.

To insert a variable into a content file, open the **Insert** ribbon and select **Variable**.

I Other Features

In addition to the elements and features just described, there are many others that can be added to a Flare project. Following is a partial list. For more information about each of these, please see the Help system.

- Accessibility
- Browse sequences
- Context-sensitive Help
- Equations
- Footnotes and endnotes
- IFrame
- Plug-In API
- Proxies
- QR codes
- Slideshows
- Text boxes

CHAPTER 4

Design

There are numerous features for "dressing up" your output. For more detailed information about the features in this chapter, including examples, see the Help system or the appropriate PDF guide.

This chapter discusses the following:

- Styles and Local Formatting30
- Common Design Features31

I Styles and Local Formatting

The two basic methods for accomplishing most formatting tasks are the use of styles and local formatting.

Styles and Stylesheets

Styles are used to control the look and feel of your documentation, and keep the content separate from its presentation. The styling is based on cascading stylesheets (CSS), which is an international standard for formatting web content, developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (or [W3C](#)).

For all kinds of information about styles—including steps and examples—see the Help system or the *Styles Guide*.

Local Formatting

Sometimes called “inline formatting,” local formatting is a way to change the look and feel of content directly so that the changes are applied only to that specific content (as opposed to applying the changes throughout your project via the use of styles).

Styles are recommended over local formatting.

I Common Design Features

Following are some of the primary ways that you can design your project.

Autonumbers

Autonumbering is a feature where content is numbered automatically. It is often used to place numbers on headings, chapter titles, table captions, image captions, and so on.

To create autonumbers, you should add an autonumber format to a style in your stylesheet. For details about how to do this, see the Help system, the *Autonumbers Guide*, or the *Styles Guide*.

Following are some of the most popular ways to use autonumbering:

- **Chapter, Section, and Volume Numbers** If you are producing output that is organized into multiple chapters, sections, and/or volumes, you can apply autonumbers to those different elements. Not only does this let you produce numbers automatically for chapter, section, and volume headings, but you can also incorporate this numbering into other content (e.g., page numbers, figure captions, table headings).
- **Paragraphs** You can apply autonumbering to different levels of paragraphs in your project.




☆ EXAMPLE










You might specify that the first-level paragraphs contain number formats such as 1.0, 2.0, 3.0, and so on. Maybe your second level paragraphs would be formatted as 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, and so on. And finally, the third level paragraphs might be formatted as 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, and so on.

- **Figure Captions** Perhaps you have inserted multiple images into your project, with a caption under each image. If you want the captions for each chapter to be numbered (e.g., "Figure 1-1," "Figure 1-2," "Figure 1-3," "Figure 2-1," "Figure 2-2"), you can apply autonumber formats to that content. If you insert a new figure caption with that format between existing captions, Flare Desktop will renumber them automatically.
- **Table Headings** Another way to make use of autonumbering is to apply them to headings for tables in your project (e.g., Table 1, Table 2, Table 3).

Lists

Flare Desktop lets you work with numbered and bulleted lists in a variety of ways. This includes creating simple, multi-level, and custom format lists.

The easiest way to create a numbered, bulleted, or definition list is to use Flare Desktop's quick drop-down menu button in the **Home** ribbon. Click the down arrow next to the list button  and select a format from the menu. However, when creating numbered or bulleted lists, it is a best practice to limit your selections to the **Bullet List**  and **Numbered List**  options, then rely on list style settings to provide the type of list item automatically depending on its level.

Option	Description
	Inserts a bullet list (recommended).
	Inserts a circle bullet list.
	Inserts a square bullet list.
	Inserts a numbered list (recommended).
	Inserts a lower alpha numbered list.
	Inserts an upper alpha numbered list.
	Inserts a lower Roman numbered list.
	Inserts an upper Roman numbered list.
	Inserts a definition list.

Template Pages

These are used to apply certain content to multiple pages automatically in the output. See "Template Pages" on page 24.

Page Layouts

These are used for page specifications in print-based output. See "Page Layouts" on page 25.

Paragraph Formatting

You can affect the look and behavior of paragraphs in various ways. These settings can be applied locally or to the style used for the paragraph. Modifying the style is typically preferable to changing the settings locally for a single paragraph.

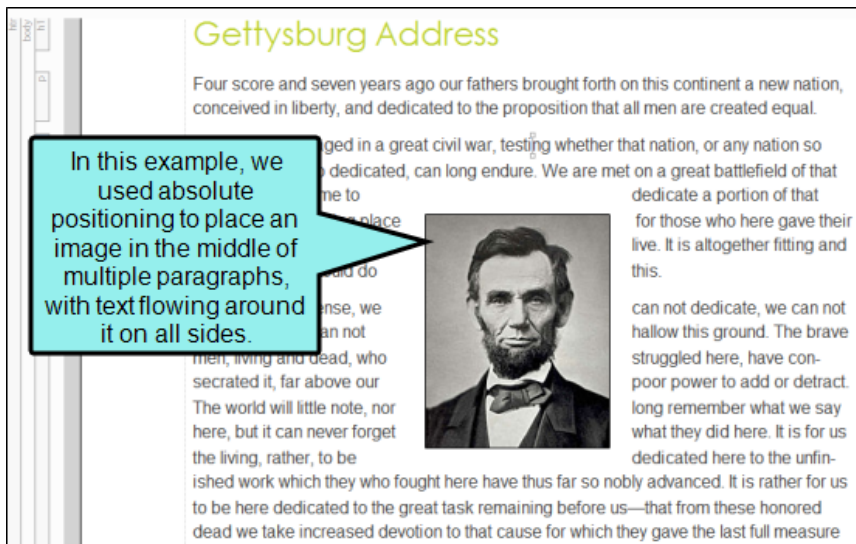
Some of the most common formatting changes to paragraphs include alignment, background, breaks, indentation, line spacing, and spacing above/below. But there are many more ways to format your paragraphs than just these.

For details on how you can format your paragraphs—including steps and examples—see the Help system or the *Styles Guide*.

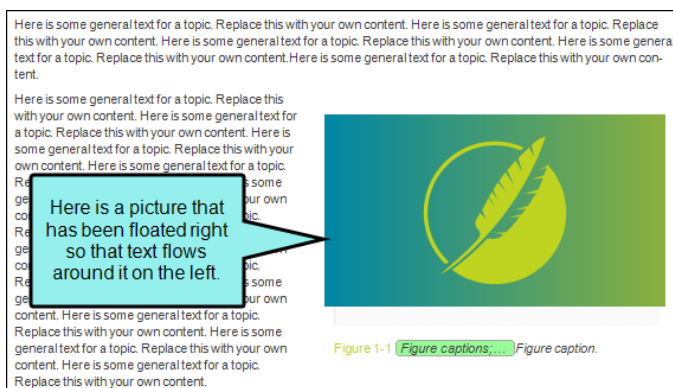
Object Positioning

You can adjust the positioning of content in a couple of ways:

- **Absolute Positioning** You can use absolute positioning, which frees content from the main text so you can click and drag it anywhere in the topic to reposition it.



- Float Positioning** Another way to position an object is to "float" it to the left or right on a page. When you float an object to the left, wraparound text can flow on the right side of the object. When you float an object to the right, wraparound text can flow on the left side of the object. You can also float objects outside of the frames where the normal text flow occurs.



For details on positioning—including steps and examples—see the Help system, the *Styles Guide*, or the *Print-Based Output Guide*.

Skins

A skin is a file that contains information about the appearance of an online output window. Depending on the type of output, a skin can help to determine the following:

- Main menu position
- Slide-out position
- Slide-out menu style
- Top menu depth levels
- User interface text
- Size and position of output
- Which navigation elements to include
- Other settings...

To add a skin file, open the Project Organizer on the left side of Flare Desktop. Right-click the **Skins** folder and select **Add Skin**. After the skin is created and opened, you can edit it in the Skin Editor to the right.

For more information on creating and using skins, see the Help system or the *Skins Guide*.

Developing Targets

The first task in developing a target for your project is to determine which type of output is most appropriate for your needs. You might even need to produce multiple outputs and require more than one output type. After you decide on the kinds of outputs, you can add targets based on those formats and editing the settings for each.

For more detailed information about developing targets—including examples—see the Help system, the *Targets Guide*, or the *Print-Based Output Guide*.

This chapter discusses the following:

Targets	37
Online vs. Print-Based Output	37
HTML5—Recommended Online Output Type	38
PDF and Word—Recommended Print-Based Output Types	40
Other Output Types	40
HTML Help (Legacy Output)	41
Output Type Comparison Tables	41

I Targets

There are several types of online output and print-based output that you can produce in Flare Desktop. HTML5 is the recommended online output type, and for print-based output, PDF and Word are preferred. Each output type has its own set of advantages.

It is easy to confuse output types with targets, but they are two different (although related) concepts. A target is one instance of an output type. It is the engine that takes all of your files and settings, and brings them together to produce the end result. When you build your final output, you are essentially building one or more of the targets in your project.

To add a target file, open the Project Organizer on the left side of Flare Desktop. Right-click the **Targets** folder and select **Add Target**. After the target is created and opened, you can edit it in the Target Editor to the right. The editor is different for each output type.

For more information about targets—including steps and examples—see the Help system or the *Targets Guide*.

I Online vs. Print-Based Output

There is a fine line between what is called "online output" and what is called "print-based output." The truth is that topics in virtually any of Flare Desktop's online output types can be sent to a printer, and therefore considered print-based. Similarly, any of the print-based output types can be viewed electronically, and therefore considered online.

The real distinction between online and print-based outputs has to do with their primary purpose. Online outputs are usually intended to be viewed on a screen, rather than on a printed page. The idea is to show only small pieces of content at a time and allow users to jump around to other topics or elements of the output.

On the other hand, print-based output follows a more traditional format that you would find in an actual book or manual—with the pieces of the output following one after the other on pages until the end of the book (e.g., title page, table of contents, preface, chapters, index, appendixes—with page numbers, as well as header or footer content, shown along the way).

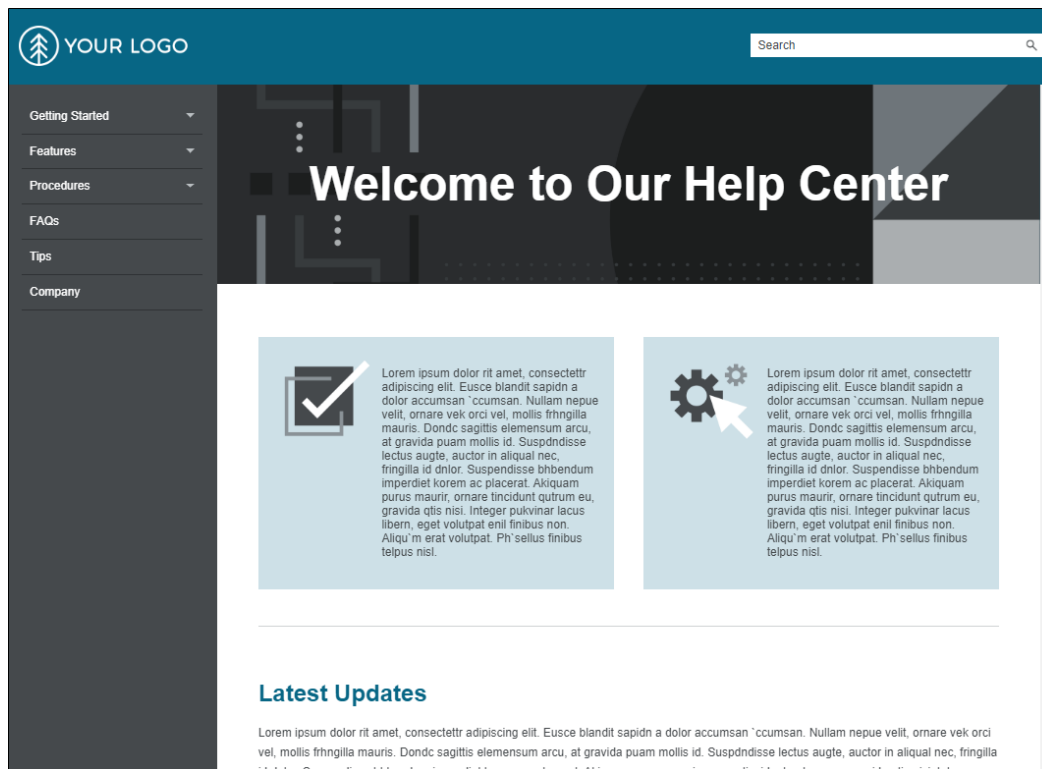
The exceptions are EPUB and PowerPoint. EPUB output is intended to be viewed on a screen, but follows a structure closer to print-based outputs. PowerPoint is a print-based output, but it is commonly shared and viewed digitally (e.g., you intend to create an online presentation).

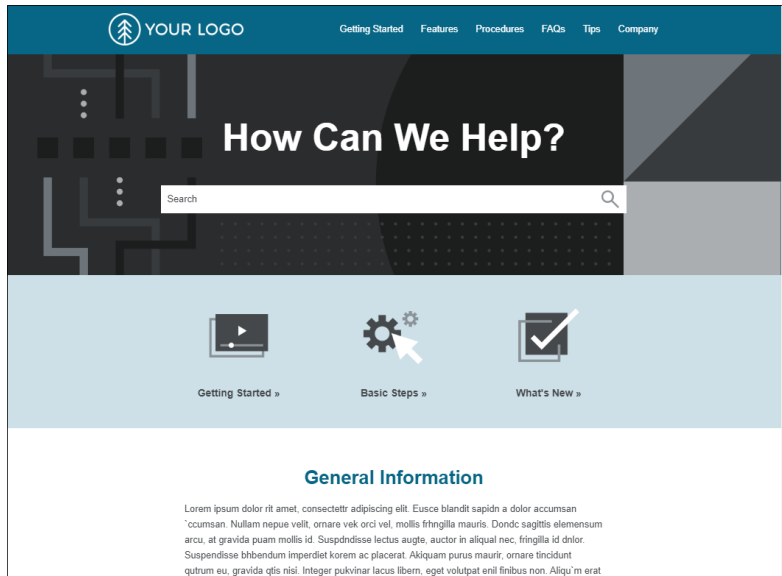
HTML5—Recommended Online Output Type

There are several online output options available in Flare Desktop, but HTML5 is the recommended format.

- **HTML5** This output format supports the HTML5 specification developed by the [Web Hypertext Application Technology Working Group \(WHATWG\)](#) and the [World Wide Web Consortium \(W3C\)](#). Therefore, the HTML5 format results in better markup and offers unique characteristics and features not found in other outputs (e.g., frameless, responsive, micro content, private output). HTML5 also lets you create traditional Tripane output or the newer Side or Top Navigation outputs, which give your output the appearance of a modern website with integrated responsive skins and content.

For more information, see the *HTML5 Guide*. For links to this PDF manual and others, see the Help system.





It is possible to generate HTML5 output with eLearning components for learning and development (L&D) courses. You can use Flare Desktop to leverage single-sourced content from a project for creating interactive knowledge checks and gradable quizzes. It provides the capability to design courses with linear workflows, form questions, and build online output with learning management system (LMS) standards for sharing. Use the Target Editor to set output options for eLearning material.



I PDF and Word—Recommended Print-Based Output Types

Flare Desktop provides multiple print-based output options, but PDF and Word are recommended.

- **Adobe PDF** Short for "Portable Document Format," PDF is an open standard format for electronic documentation exchange invented by Adobe. PDF files are used to represent a two-dimensional document in a device- and resolution-independent fixed-layout format.
- **Microsoft Word** The output can be exported to Microsoft Word in DOCX, DOC, PDF, or XPS format.

For more information, see the *Print-Based Output Guide*. For links to this PDF manual and others, see the Help system.

I Other Output Types

Following are a few other unique output options in Flare Desktop:

- **Clean XHTML** Clean XHTML produces basic HTML files that are free of MadCap-specific tags and not dependent upon other MadCap-generated files. The output does not include any skins, search, navigation, or other extra features; it is simply your single-sourced content. This lets you re-purpose your output in many flexible ways (e.g., you can embed the output files into other applications, such as project management tools, wikis, or eLearning systems). A common use for this output format is for publishing to Salesforce[®], ServiceNow[®], and Zendesk. You might also perform other types of post-processing tasks with the output.
- **Eclipse Help** This is a Java-based Help system that requires the latest Java Runtime Environment (JRE) and Java version. Use Eclipse Help to create an Eclipse plug-in for the Eclipse Help Viewer.

For more information, see the *Eclipse Help Guide*. For links to this PDF manual and others, see the Help system.

- **EPUB** This is a format for creating reflowable digital books (ebooks). It is developed and maintained by the International Digital Publishing Forum (IDPF). EPUB is sort of a hybrid format. The output is designed to be viewed electronically; in that way, it is like an online format. On the other hand, its structure is like a book or manual; in that way, it is like a print-based format. In fact, you can follow many of the same steps for creating EPUB output that

you would follow for producing a PDF. For additional information about this group and the EPUB format, see <http://idpf.org/>.

- **PowerPoint** Microsoft PowerPoint output is supported for slideshow presentations. This format is ideal for single-sourcing content (e.g., text, images, lists, tables) in your project and creating PowerPoint (PPTX) output. The content packaged for PowerPoint is your deliverable for printed distribution or online presentations. You do not need to edit slides in PowerPoint, but you can if necessary. The PowerPoint output type is a hybrid format. Although it has elements of a print-based output, it is commonly shared and viewed digitally (e.g., you intend to create an online presentation).

I HTML Help (Legacy Output)

In addition to the output options mentioned, you can create HTML Help, which is an older legacy online output not often used by most authors. See the Help system for information about this output format.

I Output Type Comparison Tables

To compare the various outputs side-by-side, you can open the Help system to the topic "Output Type Comparison Tables."

Building and Publishing Output

After you have created a project, added and formatted content, and developed a target, you are ready to build and publish the final output. Your output might be online (similar to a website) or print-based (such as a PDF). Of course, you can build the output at any point during the development process, but if you make additional changes to content, targets, or the look and feel, you will need to build the output again to make sure the changes are included in the files that you deliver to your end users.

For more detailed information about the features in this chapter, including examples, see the Help system or the *Targets Guide*.

This chapter discusses the following:

Ways to Build and Publish Targets	43
Interface or Command Line	44
Where Output Files are Stored	45
Publishing Features	46

I Ways to Build and Publish Targets

Building the final output involves generating one or more targets in your project, usually with just the click of a button or two. You can build output in the following ways:

- **Primary Target** Do this if you are only concerned about building and publishing the primary target for your project.
- **Single Target** Do this if you want to build and publish a target that may or may not be designated as your primary target.
- **Multiple Targets** Do this if you want to quickly build and publish multiple targets using an option in the Builds window pane. The targets do not need to be within the project that you currently have open. This is an alternative to using batch targets.
- **Batch Target** Do this if you want to build and publish one or multiple targets in a batch file, perhaps scheduled to run at a specific time.
- **MadCap Flare Online** MadCap Flare Online is a cloud-based platform that lets you plan, track, and manage the processes, content, and teams that are at the heart of your organization. MadCap Flare Online's integration with MadCap Flare Desktop lets you store copies of your projects in Flare Online, continue to work on them locally in Flare Desktop, and keep both sets of copies in sync. You can use Flare Online to quickly build and publish output (and roll back when necessary) without the need to involve an IT department. Custom vanity URLs let you produce meaningful paths for your outputs. You can also send topics and snippets for review in Flare Online, as well as use custom checklists to track your progress in Flare projects. For more information about Flare Online and how you can build and publish your output on it, see the *MadCap Flare Online Integration Guide* or the Help system.

I Interface or Command Line

You can build and publish output (primary, single, multiple, or batch targets) using either the Flare Desktop interface or your system's command line. There are benefits to using each method.

User Interface

This method lets you build output using options in Flare Desktop's workspace. When you generate a target using this method, the Builds window pane opens at the bottom of the workspace. You can continue working in your project while targets are generated behind the scenes.

There are many ways to initiate the building of a target. For example, you can double-click the target in the Project Organizer. Then in the Target Editor, click **Build** in the local toolbar.

Command Line

This option is intended for more advanced users. It lets you build targets from your operating system's command line. Using this method, you do not have to open Flare Desktop at all. In addition, this method lets you build a single target or all targets in your Flare project in one batch. The best way to use this feature is to create a batch file with the necessary commands in it. Then you can use a scheduling tool (such as the "Scheduled Tasks" utility in Windows) to run the batch file automatically whenever you want. This is similar to the "batch target" feature. However, the command line feature works outside of the Flare Desktop interface, is a bit more manual, and does not support as many processes. For steps see the Help system.

I Where Output Files are Stored

When you build a target, Flare Desktop creates output files and places them in a folder named after the target, which is stored in a subfolder of your project called "Output." For example, let's say your project is stored here: C:\MyProject. In that case, after you generate output, the files would be stored here:

```
C:\MyProject\Output\MyName\TargetName
```

Depending on the output type associated with the target, the generated output might consist of many files.

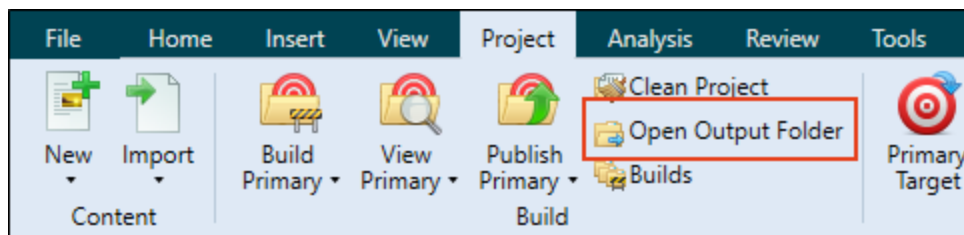
Publishing Features

To distribute output, you can simply open your Output folder to retrieve the files manually, or you can use Flare Desktop's publishing destination feature to automatically send a copy of the output files to another location (e.g., to a network folder or a website).

NOTE If you choose to use Flare Desktop's integration with MadCap Flare Online, your published output can be hosted on MadCap servers.

Retrieving Files Manually

Select Project > Open Output Folder.



You can also select this button in the Builds window pane.

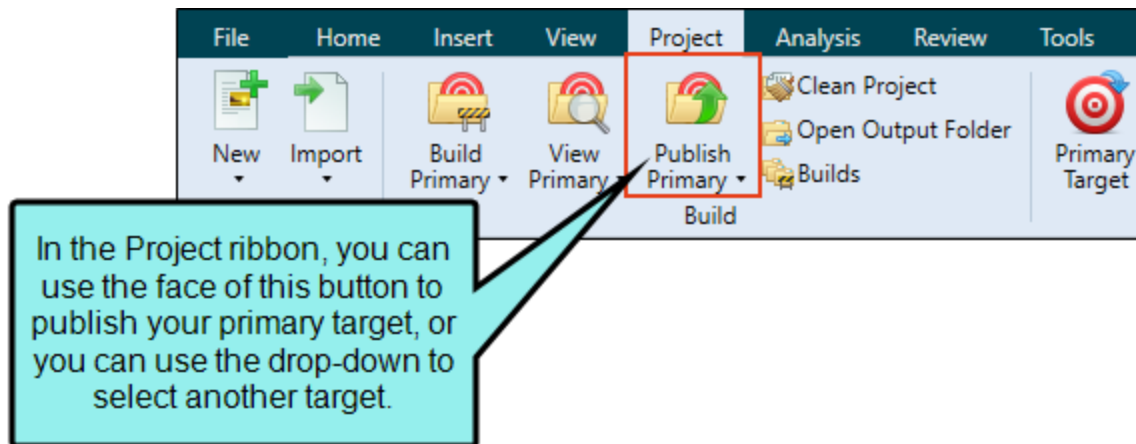
Navigate to the folder showing the name of your target. Then you can copy those files to any location you want, whether it is on a network, in a version control directory, or up on a web server. You might need to work with your network or web administrator to learn the proper way to move files in your company, including login credentials.

Using the Publishing Destination Feature

To use this automated feature, you must first create a publishing destination for your output. In the Project Organizer, right-click the **Destinations** folder and select **Add Destination**.

Next, open your target and on the **Publishing** tab, associate the publishing destination with the target.

Then when you build your output (or after you build it) you simply use the **Publish** button or check box, depending on the method you use for generating the output (e.g., build primary target, single target, batch target).



Batch Target Editor | Build and Publish Build Only Publish Only

Targets

Schedule

Target	Output Type	Build <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Publish <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Online Output/H...	HTML5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
PDF - Crop Reg ...	PDF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
PDF - Crop Reg ...	PDF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
PDF - Crop Reg ...	PDF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
PDF - Crop Reg ...	PDF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
PDF/UserGuideA...	PDF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
PDF - Crop Reg ...	PDF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
PDF - Crop Reg ...	PDF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
PDF - Crop Reg ...	PDF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

In a batch target, you can use check boxes to indicate which targets should automatically be published.

TIP You do not need to build the target to see how a particular topic will look in the final output. You can always preview topics as you develop your project by clicking in the local toolbar of the XML Editor. If you click the face of the button, the preview is shown based on the format specified in the primary target. If you click the down arrow, you can select any of the targets in your project from a menu. The preview is then displayed using the output format specified in that target. As you make changes in a topic, snippet, or template page, the preview window pane updates automatically.

APPENDIX

PDFs

The following PDFs are available for download from the Help system.

I Tutorials

Autonumbers Tutorial

Back-to-Top Button Tutorial

Context-Sensitive Help Tutorial

Custom Toolbar Tutorial

eLearning Tutorial—Basic

eLearning Tutorial—Advanced

Getting Started Tutorial

Image Tooltips Tutorial

Lists Tutorial

Meta Tags Tutorial

Micro Content Tutorial—Basic

Micro Content Tutorial—Advanced

Responsive Output Tutorial

Single-Sourcing Tutorial

Snippet Conditions Tutorial

Styles Tutorials

Tables Tutorial

Word Import Tutorial

| Cheat Sheets

Context-Sensitive Help Cheat Sheet

Folders and Files Cheat Sheet

Learning & Development Cheat Sheet

Lists Cheat Sheet

Micro Content Cheat Sheet

Print-Based Output Cheat Sheet

Search Cheat Sheet

Shortcuts Cheat Sheet

Structure Bars Cheat Sheet

Styles Cheat Sheet

I User Guides

Accessibility Guide

Analysis and Reports Guide

Architecture Guide

Autonumbers Guide

Branding Guide

Condition Tags Guide

Context-Sensitive Help Guide

Eclipse Help Guide

eLearning Guide

*Flare Online Integration
Guide*

Getting Started Guide

Global Project Linking Guide

HTML5 Guide

Images Guide

Import Guide

Indexing Guide

Key Features Guide

Lists Guide

Meta Tags Guide

Micro Content Guide

Navigation Links Guide

Plug-In API Guide

Print-Based Output Guide

Project Creation Guide

QR Codes Guide

*Reviews & Contributions With
Contributor Guide*

Scripting Guide

Search Guide

SharePoint Guide

Skins Guide

Snippets Guide

Source Control Guide: Git

*Source Control Guide:
Perforce Helix Core*

*Source Control Guide:
Subversion*

*Source Control Guide: Team
Foundation Server*

Styles Guide

Tables Guide

Tables of Contents Guide

Targets Guide

Template Pages Guide

Templates Guide

Topics Guide

Touring the Workspace Guide

*Transition From FrameMaker
Guide*

*Translation and Localization
Guide*

Variables Guide

Videos Guide

What's New Guide