

Microcontent Authoring

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Microcontent-based authoring makes content easier to scan, and it increases user satisfaction and success. Microcontent can also be reused and accessed by other systems, including embedded user assistance, context-sensitive help, chatbots, and voice-based search. Google calls these microcontent blocks "snippets," and they are a key, highly visible aspect of Google search results. In this session, Scott will review real-world examples of microcontent and discuss how it is used and created.

What is microcontent?

"Microcontent should be an ultra-short abstract of its associated macrocontent."
- Jakob Nielsen, 1998

Why is microcontent important?

- Short attention spans
- Targeted
- Focused
- Summarizes/entices
- Reusable and curatable

How microcontent will impact technical communication

Single sourcing

- Content reuse
- Integration

Writing style/architecture

- Microcontent-based vs topic-based

Examples

- Historical examples
- Help search results
- Google's structured data page types

Google Structured Data Types

FAQ

- A page with question and answers.
- Does not allow users to submit alternative answers.

Q&A

A page where users can submit answers to a question or multiple questions.

How to

- Walks users through a set of steps to complete a task.
- Can feature video, images, and text.
- Only available on mobile devices, not desktop.

How microcontent can be reused

- Embedded UA
- Context-sensitive help
- Chatbots
- Voice-based search
 - Android (Google Assistant) - Google
 - macOS/iOS (Siri) - Google, Yelp, ...
 - Windows (Cortana) - Bing
 - Echo (Alexa) - Alexa Answers

How to create microcontent

Search only: MadCap Flare and other authoring tools

Google integration:

- JSON-LD (recommended)
- Microdata
- RDFa

How – MadCap Flare

- Create Micro Content file (**Home > Create Micro Content**)
- Type a **Phrase**
- Add the matching content (the "**Response**")

How – JSON-LD (recommended)

What is it?

- JavaScript markup in a <script> tag inside the page head or body.
- Can be added dynamically.

Example

```
{
  "@context": "https://json-ld.org/context/person.jsonld",
  "@id": "http://example.com/Robert_Smith",
  "name": "Robert Smith",
  "born": "1959-04-21",
  "spouse": "http://example.com/Mary_Poole"
}
```

How – Microdata

What is it?

- Open-community HTML specification
- Used to nest structured data within page head or body
- Uses HTML tag attributes

Example

```
<div>
  <div itemtype="http://www.w3.org/2000/01/rdf-schema#Resource"
  itemid="http://example.com/Robert_Smith" itemscope>
    <meta itemprop="http://schema.org/birthDate" content="1959-04-21" />
    <meta itemprop="http://xmlns.com/foaf/0.1/name" content="Robert Smith" />
    <link itemprop="http://schema.org/spouse" href="http://example.com/Mary_Poole" />
  </div>
</div>
```

How – RDFa

What is it?

- HTML5 extension that uses HTML tag attributes
- Can be used inside the page head or body

Example

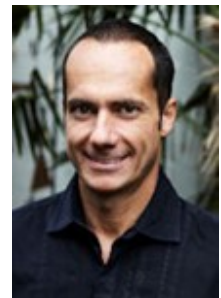
```
<div xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml"
  prefix="
    foaf:http://xmlns.com/foaf/0.1/
    schema: http://schema.org/
    rdf: http://www.w3.org/1999/02/22-rdf-syntax-ns#
    xsd: http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#
    rdfs: http://www.w3.org/2000/01/rdf-schema#">
  <div typeof="rdfs:Resource" about="http://example.com/Robert_Smith">
    <div rel="schema:spouse" resource="http://example.com/Mary_Poole">
    <div property="foaf:name" content="Robert Smith">
    <div property="schema:birthDate" datatype="xsd:date" content="1959-04-21">
  </div>
</div>
```

About the presenter

Scott DeLoach is the Founder of Click**Start**, where he provides training and consulting for MadCap Flare, embedded user assistance, JavaScript/jQuery, CSS, and HTML5. He has been developing browser-based help systems for 25+ years, and he has received four Best in Show awards for his work from STC.

Scott is a certified Flare and Doc-to-Help instructor, and he is the author of *MadCap Flare: The Definitive Guide*, *CSS to the Point*, and *HTML5 to the Point*. For more information about Scott's books see www.lulu.com/clickstart.

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