

Publishing and the Open Web Platform

POSITION PAPER OF 4DCONCEPT FOR THE W3C WORKSHOP

Main topic : XML First.

Interests of the Participant

As French experts in publishing and documentation engineering since our debut in the 90s, 4Dconcept have promoted an 'XML centric' philosophy (and formerly, SGML) that led us to create a range of products and tools for optimizing and facilitating the management of digital content, in a smooth continuous process from XML authoring to end user viewing and sharing.

4Dconcept's range of software products includes:

- a 'Word-like' and 'tag-less' online XML editor that uses SVG, MathML, CSS and XSLT,
- two XML CMSs, one dedicated (for historical reasons) to highly normed and traceable content (typically, S1000D-based content) and the other to highly flexible XML input formatting and processing, including connections to/from inDesign™, Open-Office, data mining software etc.,
- an ePub3 Reader that operates both on iPad and Android platforms,
- other HTML5 viewers, mainly for maintenance operations, that work directly from XML and SVG content, and also display Flash and 3D content, for example, for training purposes.

4Dconcept's clients include groups in the Publishing sector such as Reed Business Information, Groupe Lagardère, Groupe Moniteur, Lexis Nexis France, Groupe Le Point, 20 Minutes newspapers, Hachette and others, and operators in the Industrial sector such as Airbus, Thales, Safran, DCNS, Alcatel-Lucent, Peugeot-Citroën, and others.

Point of view: the long way towards the ideal online XML editor

4Dconcept's current author software (online XML editor 'Author NEO'), among other characteristics, applies an interface feature particularly adapted to authoring contexts where references have to be inserted into text. Such references can be to anything, very often including but not limited to:

- Points of Interest (POI) such as hotels, campsites, restaurants...
- Illustrations and multi-media files
- Articles in a database
- Parts in a catalog
- Law articles in legal collections
- URLs
- Glossary entries...

The list is endless.

This UI feature is called... *Drag-and-Drop*. It is particularly efficient in a tagless XML editor, all XML tagging being performed automatically in the background.

The drag-and-drop feature is backed by other features that turn the XML editor into an easy-to-use and efficient productivity tool:

- embedded XSL transformations that smoothly paste legacy Office-type content,
- a 'Word-like' toolbar that generates XML structures, tables, bullet lists and so on,
- a set of customizable CSSs that present content clearly and allow the use of data entry widgets (listboxes, calendar helps, checkboxes...).

Still, the editor is not fully Open-Web-based: it also uses Java components. It was built, after much research and development, around the oXygen core from SyncRO Soft, Romania. While searching for a browser-based editing solution, our tests had previously led us to the ActiveX from another well-known publisher, then to building a prototype using CK Editor Javascript libraries (our prototype is still visible!), and even to the use of Tiny MCE.

Finally, as one of our client and sponsor's needs was to switch to standalone use (locally opened and saved files), we chose the SyncRO Soft core for its compatibility with many of the Open Web tools but we did not embed it into a browser. We fulfilled the need for standalone by replacing Web Services to CMS with local JSON files (XQuery-extracted).

What we propose

- During the discussion, we can represent the point of view of an experienced software editor specialized in publishing issues for a wide variety of demanding stakeholders
- On a mobile device (regardless of its OS), using our CMS 'XMS Content Factory', we can demonstrate a full-and-purely-XML production cycle from Authoring to Viewing
- We can demonstrate the use of our state-of-the-art XML editor for publishers
- We can demonstrate the use of our other state-of-the-art apps of interest to publishers.

Denis LEROY

Managing Director, Publishing sector