

A Whitepaper from **DDi**

Labeling Documentation & Publishing: How to Improve Efficiency by 30%?



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Enterprises are motivated to migrate from Word when they realize that the way they currently create labeling documents is not able to keep up with growth in an enterprise's products and services, growth in document translation, and growth in publishing formats for different countries.

What drives the cost of labeling document creation?

One of the largest cost factors in document creation is labor. The amount of labor performed by labeling resources is based upon the volume of labels that must be written/updated (and other non-core activities like QC, Formatting, Publishing, Tracking, and others), the number of resources available and their efficiency. If the volume of documents is too great then it's necessary to defer the work, increase the number of labeling hour or the efficiency.

Current trends that increase the work for Labeling teams

A number of factors can increase the volume of documents that an enterprise must produce:

- ✔ **Growth in products and services**
As an enterprise increases the variety of products and services it offers, additional labeling documentation is needed.
- ✔ **Global growth**
Customers around the world expect labeling documentation to be translated to their language and culture.
- ✔ **Regulatory Requirements**
Regulatory requirements keep changing, more often in larger markets.
- ✔ **Paper documents replaced by digital content**
Traditional papers for technical documents are rapidly being replaced by digital content because paper can be inconvenient to share, expensive to distribute, and difficult to search for answers. Users want the smallest amount of information that will solve their need in an easily consumable and immediately actionable format.
- ✔ **Electronic formats increasing**
The number of electronic document formats continues to expand beyond traditional formats like PDF files, XML, and online formats.

Creating Labeling documents efficiently

The volume of labels that an enterprise is required to publish will continue to increase. Following that analogy into the documentation environment, we have three basic, inter-related concepts to implement before you can start to achieve 'document manufacturing' efficiencies:

- Consistency of document aligned with Regulations, structure and writing style ('format' standards)
- Reuse of content
- Specialization of tools to fit the 'role'

Most Labeling authors are creative, which is a positive attribute unless it results in the creation of inconsistently formatted content or delivery of information not in the sequence that health agency may expect.

Reuse of content requires writers to think creatively about how to repurpose content, and how to write reusable content modules.

Let's examine specific efficiency methodologies that address both 'style' and 'reuse' and some of the challenges enterprises face in achieving them.

Using format and writing style guidelines

An enterprise can reduce document creation costs by creating style and writing standards defining the appearance of documents. Traditionally, writers follow a style guide that defines an enterprise's standards for editing and formatting, where a person acting as an editor is responsible for ensuring that writers follow the style guide.

Unfortunately, today's constrained resources often require the labeling writers, authors, and communicators to be their own editors. Given the large number of styles in a typical style guide, this can be problematic. Also, since each author has a different style of writing, the lack of an independent editorial review often leads to inconsistencies within and amongst document deliverables.

Using templates to implement document structure efficiencies

The requirement of reuse forces writers to think about structuring content within a single deliverable and across multiple deliverables.

Companies found that shrinking budgets and increased workloads are motivating content developers to look for ways to reduce development costs. One solution is to reduce the amount of time that authors, especially Labeling Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), spend formatting documents. SMEs waste a stunning 30% to 75% of their time formatting documents in non-structured (freestyle) authoring tools. By using structured authoring to enforce consistency, writers don't have to worry about formatting because the styles are applied automatically.

Structure may be thought of as a pattern. Following a pattern provided in structured authoring can speed the creation of content and provide consistent, reusable content.

When users read a labeling document, they usually have an expectation about the content and its presentation. If the writer has decided to remove the table of contents and document the steps in the form of paragraphs, it would make it difficult for the consumer to find and use the information because the expectation of a logical order and appearance is unfulfilled.

Labeling writers often gather information from SMEs by giving them a template to fill out. The reality is that templates are difficult to enforce if authoring tools are not chosen carefully. For example, if templates are set up in Microsoft Word, Labeling writers and SMEs can still change the structure and the paragraph styles.

Using single sourcing with modular content

Single sourcing is a documentation methodology that enables you to reuse a modular chunk of information—also called an object—in multiple documents. First, you build objects such as procedures and tables and put them in source files. Then, you organize them into documents, such as manuals and websites. Finally, you link them together into cross references such as tables of contents and indexes.

If you change an object, it automatically changes in all the other documents that reference it. Compare this method to the traditional copy/paste, which can be a nightmare to maintain. There are several money-saving advantages to single sourcing:

- Reduced labeling translation costs since chunks of text are reused and therefore not retranslated. This can be a major cost saving in enterprises that have more than one language to translate to.
- Increased consistency of information presented.
- Reduced development and maintenance costs and shorter time-to-market efficiencies.
- Rapid reconfiguration since small content modules can be rearranged to create something new.

Using a unified content strategy

A unified content strategy is defined as a repeatable method of identifying all content requirements up front, creating consistently structured content for reuse and managing it in a definitive source, and assembling content on demand to meet customer needs. If your enterprise generates a lot of content, you should consider using an experienced content strategist to lead the development of a unified content strategy.

Using a Content Management System

Many organizations find that a Content Management System (CMS) can help them manage large amounts of content productively. A good CMS keeps structured content up to date and makes it easy to locate content for reuse and publishing, such as filtering for publishing into different formats.

There are different types of CMSs, but unless you need a specialized type, a component CMS would be a good choice since it manages content at a granular level, as compared to the document or page level that most others use.

A CMS is not an absolute requirement for reuse of content. If your analysis determines that a CMS is not right for you, your staff should have the technical knowledge to set up content reuse.

If your analysis determines that a CMS is right for you, then verify that the authoring tools you choose integrate well with popular CMSs, ideally, at no additional cost.

In authoring, the ability to customize the authoring tool to match the role of each contributor cuts the learning curve and training costs dramatically.

Using tools that support publishing and reviewing

In addition to the authoring issues we have examined, enterprises need powerful publishing and reviewing capabilities. This is where many tools fall short. The tools must be able to publish to all the required outputs, such as print, PDF documents, online and xml outputs. The tools must also support a full reviewing cycle, where documents can easily be sent to reviewers, reviewers can easily make changes, and their comments can be easily incorporated.

Using dependable tools

Enterprises demand high levels of dependability in the tools that they use for authoring and publishing labeling documentation, regardless of the size of the document, the amount of content it contains or the type of content. Service and support are essential in large enterprises and a large pool of certified professionals for training, writing, consulting and template design needs to be available.

Efficiency methodologies support

In our final analysis, does Microsoft Word support the efficiency methodologies we discussed that enterprises require for Labeling documentation? Let's look at a summary of our analysis.

Efficiency Methodology	Can Word meet the needs of an enterprise's labeling documentation?
Using format and writing style guidelines	NO. Word allows styles, but it has no mechanism to enforce content writing style and prevent the author from changing the formatting styles or using the ribbon menu to make style changes
Using templates	NO. It is possible to compose a template for authors to fillout, but Word has no mechanism to prevent the author from changing the styles and the structure of template. Overtime, a template with no means of enforcement will fail. Ideally, the tools must be able to separate style from content and enforce the structure rules.
Using single sourcing with modular content	NO. Word lets you include pieces of content, but it does not have the mechanisms built into it to allow enterprise-level reuse and single source.
Using structured authoring	NO. Word only supports unstructured authoring and it does not support a mix of unstructured and structured documents. Word does not allow straight forward authoring in XML. Although its internal structure is XML, it is proprietary and exports to a flat XML text file that is not easily used or transformed into something usable.
Using a Content Management System	NO. Word can not interface with CMSs.
Using role-based tools	NO. Word can not be customized for the role of each contributor.
Using dependable tools	<p>Unfortunately, Word is not dependable in the following common labeling document situations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long documents are known to increase the chance of crashing Word or corrupting the document, especially if a computer is low on memory or if a document has several heavy graphics and tables. • Graphics tend to shift around unpredictably in large documents. • Word has problems generating table contents and index in large documents. • Changes in page layout (single to multi-column) still require insertion of 'section breaks', which can corrupt adjacent, numbered headlines. • Long, multi page tables with a graphic in every row are almost guaranteed to make a Word file crash.

Jumping to structured documents immediately is often too big of a leap, so your authoring tools should allow for a gradual migration.

Conclusion

Word wasn't built to handle the methodologies that enterprises need for efficient creation of technical documentation. Some organizations have tried to force Word into enterprise-level methodologies by adding plug-ins and proprietary macros. Just as a trucking company would never try to turn a car into a truck because they were designed for fundamentally different purposes, eventually enterprises realize that—no matter how much it is modified—Word was never intended to meet demanding, high-volume technical documentation methodology requirements on an enterprise scale.

Microsoft created Word as a mass market, easy-to-use text processing product for everyday business use. That market is huge in comparison to the market for technical document authoring and publishing tools. The hard truth is that Microsoft isn't focused on your enterprise's technical documentation productivity issues because that market is comparatively so small.

Enterprises need a professional set of tools specifically designed for efficient technical documentation authoring and publishing.



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