

# **DITA Migration Proposal**

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# Goals for this migration proposal domain

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This topic provides context for what is in this domain and how you can make use of it.

The OASIS Darwin Information Architecture (hereafter DITA) is simultaneously highly disruptive and highly beneficial technology for organizations. Whether you have worked with DITA for many years or have just started working with it, the arguments in favor of migrating to DITA seem to us true believers to be logical, compelling, and self-evident. Shouldn't we just lay out the benefits to senior management in a few slides, order our "I love DITA" T-shirts, and get ready to cash those blank checks? What could possibly go wrong?

This project, sponsored by the OASIS DITA Adoption Technical Committee, seeks to provide you with a lot of ready-to-customize information about the many benefits of migrating to DITA *and* (importantly) some of the trade-offs and risks that also need to be put on the table. The strongest migration proposal for DITA is one that is balanced, data-driven, and sensitive to the disruption that DITA will cause.

Although this sounds a bit daunting, there is some really good news for you to consider up front.

- *The DITA architecture is an open industry standard:* Most desktop authoring tools and all of the "complete solution" suites are based on proprietary file/content formats, proprietary authoring interfaces, proprietary processing, and (often) proprietary content management. If you have developed your content in one of these environments, you are quite probably locked into the whole package – content format, tools, everything. Building your content on an open industry standard is the key. Any authoring, processing, or content management tools that are compatible with the underlying standard should be interchangeable (in theory). When it comes to DITA-compliant authoring, processing, and content management tools, "proprietary" is not a dirty word. Being able to switch out tools without having to reimplement reformat the underlying content is a big deal. DITA being an open industry standard supported my open-source and commercial tools developers protects an organization's investment in the underlying content.
- *Many organizations in many markets have experience with DITA:* DITA has been in the market as an OASIS standard for over ten years. The likelihood that your organization is facing unique or significantly different requirements is probably small. In the cumulative library of relevant case studies, whitepapers, conference presentations, webinars, and user group notes, you *will* find information that is directly relevant to your particular market and/or audience.

**Tip:** To identify other companies that have adopted DITA in your region or in your market, consider browsing the listing at [Companies Using DITA](#).

- *You are not alone:* With so many companies using DITA, there are abundant training, consulting, and community resources available to you as you begin your investigation. See Appendix X "DITA Resources."
- *DITA sells itself:* In addition to this migration proposal domain, there are numerous sample domains of DITA source content. Without creating any new content, you can download some tools and sample sources in order to demonstrate how DITA works, how it behaves in an authoring tool, how processors generate multiple output types, and how its modular architecture supports agile content reuse. Some percentage of the people who are most skeptical about DITA have rarely or never touched it or seen it live.
- *DITA is for people too:* Yes, DITA can be a playground for XML nerds, but it is also something that has been deployed in real organizations with real people for a long time. The impact that DITA can have on writers, editors, managers, and architects is reasonably well known and documented in many contexts. Having a feel for those human costs (good, bad, and indifferent) is critical to your developing a well-rounded proposal. DITA certainly has its critics and detractors. Some of their arguments are, quite honestly, valid and some are specious. You should assume that the people on your team and elsewhere in your organization have heard the stories and will be more open to your argument if you, in turn, are open about the people stuff – roles, careers, recruiting, mentoring, productivity, resistance, change management, and so on. One of the two most common mistakes in selling a DITA migration involves a lack of investment in selling the people affected by the migration. Not all of them need to agree with you, but they are all stakeholders and need to be treated as such.

**Tip:** A good place to start your investigation about DITA roles would be the OASIS DITA Adoption whitepaper [Roles and Responsibilities of a DITA Adoption](#).

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## How to use this domain

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This topic provides an overview of the XML source content in this domain and how you might adapt that content to your needs.

### Key names available in this domain

The DITA map named `mapkeys_dita-migration.ditamap` contains a collection DITA key definitions that are used throughout this domain. Key names are *italicized*, key values are **boldfaced**.

```
<keydef keys="k_kw_migrate_org-name"><topicmeta>
  <keywords><keyword>[YOUR-ORG-NAME]</keyword></keywords>
</topicmeta></keydef>
<keydef keys="k_kw_migrate_product-name-1"><topicmeta>
  <keywords><keyword>[YOUR-PRODUCT-NAME]</keyword></keywords>
</topicmeta></keydef>
<keydef keys="k_kw_migrate_product-name-2"><topicmeta>
  <keywords><keyword>[YOUR-PRODUCT-NAME-2]</keyword></keywords>
</topicmeta></keydef>
<keydef keys="k_kw_migrate_proposal-title"><topicmeta>
  <keywords><keyword>[YOUR-PROPOSAL-TITLE]</keyword></keywords>
</topicmeta></keydef>
```

If you update the value of one of these keys in this map, all references to that key name in topics throughout this domain will auto-magically update the next time you open a topic or generate output.

Try it.

Key name	Referenced key value
<code>k_kw_migrate_org-name</code>	<b>[YOUR-ORG-NAME]</b>
<code>k_kw_migrate_product-name-1</code>	<b>[YOUR-PRODUCT-NAME]</b>
<code>k_kw_migrate_product-name-2</code>	<b>[YOUR-PRODUCT-NAME-2]</b>
<code>k_kw_migrate_proposal-title</code>	<b>[YOUR-PROPOSAL-TITLE]</b>

## Before you begin – a few considerations . . .

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This topic provides an overview of some show-stopper issues for organizations considering a DITA migration.

At the end of the day, most DITA migration proposals seek to "close the deal" with a few critical selling points:

- Industry standards content consistency (markup and metadata)
- Content reuse
- Lower translation costs
- Long-term writer productivity gains – do more with fewer people
- Content management and sharing
- Output consistency across product lines and development sites
- Integration with corporate publishing portals

Although these tend to be compelling business drivers for most companies, you may be working in or for an organization that has an alternate set of values and priorities. Before you invest your evenings and weekends in developing a migration proposal, you should pause for a moment to consider the following potential show-stoppers.

- Home-grown tooling
- Home-grown processes
- Special snowflakes
- One person's concept of waste . . .
- Feathered nests
- Tail of the dog
- The Maginot line
- zero-cost migration
- zero-attrition migration
- zero-disruption migration
- bad content miracle cure