



Practical and predictable customer documentation.

Structured authoring and multichannel publishing helps Ciena publish documentation for all customer preferences.



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Susanna Carlisi, Content Strategist & Tools Specialist, Ciena

SOLUTION

Adobe FrameMaker

RESULTS



Content **REUSE** saves time and money



IMPROVES content navigation and usability



MINIMIZES errors, delays, and rework



Greater content **VARIETY** pleases customers



Ciena

Established in 1992

Patents: More than 2,000

Hanover, Maryland

www.ciena.com

CHALLENGES

- Improving experience for technical document users
- Accelerate turnaround times for customized publications
- Leveraging existing content and document team skillsets

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Susanna Carlisi, Content Strategist & Tools Specialist, Ciena

Optical networking pioneers

When Ciena engineers figured out how to split light signals traveling through fiber optic lines and dramatically increase lines’ carrying capacity in 1992, some of the world’s leading telecommunications companies flocked to Ciena for its revolutionary technologies. Over the past quarter century, Ciena has continued to innovate, first in hardware, and then in software.

Today, Ciena’s agile, intelligent solutions are key components in more than 1,300 companies’ open, multi-vendor, software-defined networks—including 80% of the world’s largest data and communications network providers. Ciena supports these customers with a variety of user documentation, including user guides, installation guides, conceptual guides, and quick start guides created in Adobe FrameMaker.

Ciena’s document team currently manages more than 25,000 pages of content. However, after collecting customer feedback about how it could improve user documentation, Ciena learned that some users either couldn’t find the resources they needed in the existing libraries or didn’t know which content to use.

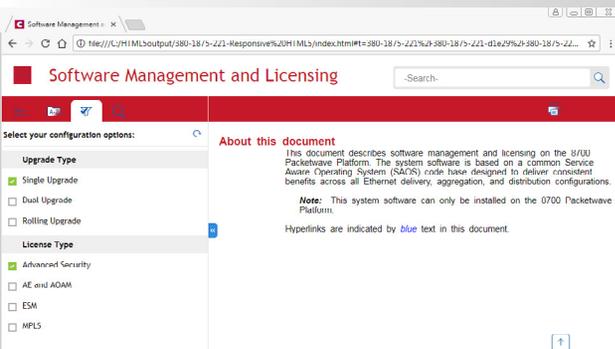
“Customer research showed that we need to create a wider variety of content in multiple output formats,” says Susanna Carlisi, Content Strategist & Tools Specialist at Ciena. “We’re creating multiple formats for our documentation using our existing content by transitioning to the latest version of Adobe FrameMaker for DITA authoring.”

Two types of customers

Some Ciena customers want complete libraries that provide detailed information about everything a product can do, including procedures and reference information. Others, however, prefer succinct, customized documents that focus on quick start activities or address a specific task or problem. To create documentation that meets the needs of increasingly diverse audiences and their web, mobile, desktop, and print preferences, Ciena decided to refresh its technology.

Previously, Ciena created user documentation with unstructured FrameMaker, which didn’t allow for the quick reformatting or easy customization of publications. Without topic-based authoring, there wasn’t a way to customize content according to customer preferences.

The latest release of Adobe FrameMaker supports unstructured and structured content within the same document. It is the only solution available to companies like Ciena that want to transition from unstructured to structured content without disrupting business continuity. Furthermore, the latest release of Adobe FrameMaker enables Ciena to implement topic-based DITA authoring and transition to XML publishing without requiring an expensive custom XML infrastructure.



SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

Adobe FrameMaker

For more information

www.adobe.com/products/framemaker.html



Adobe Systems Incorporated
345 Park Avenue
San Jose, CA 95110-2704
USA
www.adobe.com

"Given Ciena's large volumes of legacy content, Adobe FrameMaker was the best solution to evaluate," says Carlisi. "Most of our writers have been here for more than 10 years, so using a familiar tool eases our transition to an XML/DITA solution."

Enforcing consistency with automated guidance

The transition should be virtually seamless because writers can continue using FrameMaker, as they always have, to maintain existing unstructured documentation. Meanwhile, the switch to topic-based authoring allows Ciena to create flexible chunks of content for output to multiple sources and structured authoring adds consistency to those outputs. Ultimately, the transition supports Ciena's strategic content direction while making authors more valuable to the company.

Adobe FrameMaker also includes resources to help users learn unfamiliar processes. While the structured FrameMaker interface guides authors to create content that conforms to Ciena's templates, it also helps prevent issues related to processing files for different uses and types of output.

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The update supports a planned three-phase transition, which starts with converting existing documents from unstructured to structured FrameMaker with DITA. Phase two will include adding strategic DITA elements, such as the short description, and metadata. During the final phase, Ciena plans to leverage content reuse, including a component content management system (CCMS).

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Adobe FrameMaker is expected to have a minimal impact on existing staff and budgets. The transition of 155 paragraph tags, 16 variables, 21 cross-reference formats, 31 table formats, and up to 15 conditional tags in the unstructured templates can be completed by one full-time equivalent and a consultant.

"Structured Adobe FrameMaker lets Ciena build on our existing FrameMaker investments while giving us powerful new publishing tools for converting XML components for use in PDF, HTML, and eBook formats," says Carlisi. "The ability to reuse common content to quickly publish in various formats is as exciting for us as it will be for our customers."