

FARFETCH

THE WORLD'S GREATEST SELECTION OF LUXURY

Plain Text with AsciiDocFX

Joaquim Baptista, 25-May-2017

Desktop publishing is not good enough

One Ring to bring them all,
and in the darkness bind them

Semantic markup

“SGML is designed to make your information last longer than the systems that created it.”

— Charles Goldfarb

History of semantic markup

- 1969: GML, IBM BookMaster.
- 1974: SGML.
- 1978: TeX.
- 1985: LaTeX.
- 1989: HTML.
- 1990: IBM ID Doc (SGML).
- 1991: DocBook.
- 1994: LinuxDoc.
- 1998: XML.
- 1999: IBM DITA.
- 2004: OASIS DITA.

```
<!doctype linuxdoc system>
<article opts="sgmlhack">

<title>1º Relatório de Progresso
<subtitle>Intervenções no Serviço de Informática,
          quinzena de 9 a 20 de Julho de 1997
<author>Joaquim Baptista,
        <tt><htmlurl url="mailto:px@acm.org" name="px@acm.org"></tt>
<date>21 de Julho de 1997

<abstract>
Actualizei o sistema operativo da <tt/news/ (Solaris 2.5.1) com
39 patches, mas ainda faltam 3, anunciados mas não disponíveis.

Instalei o <tt/perl5/, o <tt/gzip/ e o <tt/lynx/ na <tt/news/, e
recompilei o INN. Para completar a intervenção, faltou instalar
e testar o INN.
```

Plain text formats

“Primary objective:
bringing order to amorphous online-distributed data.”

— Ian Feldman

History of plain text formats

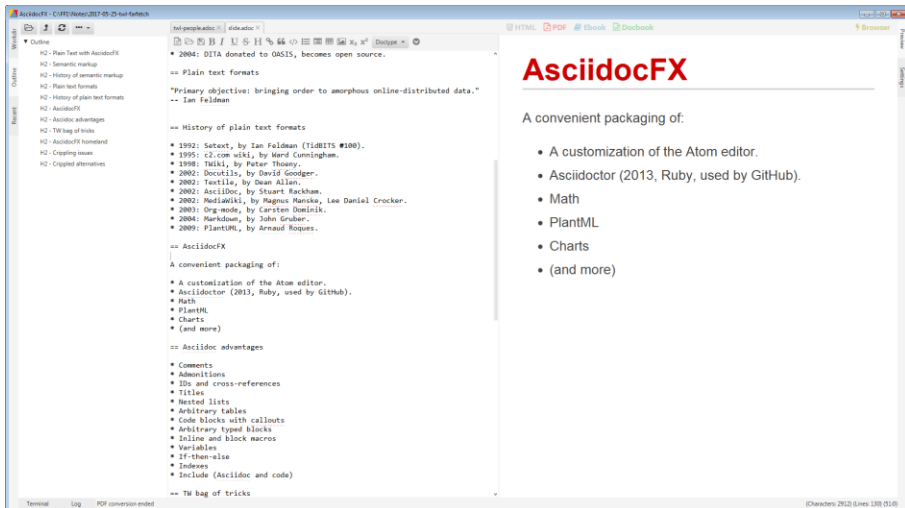
- 1992: Setext, TidBITS #100.
- 1995: c2.com wiki.
- 1998: TWiki.
- 2002: MediaWiki, Docutils, Textile, AsciiDoc.
- 2003: Org-mode.
- 2004: Markdown.
- 2009: PlantUML.

Plain text

History, TidBITS (1992):

- InfoMac archives and mailing list.
- TidBITS#100 and Setext, 1992, by Ian Feldman
- http://docutils.sourceforge.net/mirror/setext/setext_concepts_Aug92.etx.txt
- Easy View, a browser for such texts

AsciidocFX



Convenient open source

- Atom editor, customized
- AsciiDoctor
- Math
- PlantUML
- Charts
- (and more)

AsciiDoc advantages

- Admonitions
- Nested lists
- Arbitrary tables
- IDs and cross-references
- Indexes
- Blocks with titles
- Inline and block macros
- Comments
- Code blocks with callouts
- Include (AsciiDoc and code)
- Variables
- If-then-else
- Arbitrary typed blocks



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DEMO

Used AsciiDocFX as quick IDE on Thales and Farfetch

TW bag of tricks

- Comments with writer's notes.
- Admonitions with TODOs.
- Indexes with TODOs, extra navigation.
- `ifdef:: debug[]` with context.
- `ifdef:: notes[]` to hide TODOs.
- PlantUML to draft possible drawings.
- Includes and `ifdef` as poor man's DITA.
- Back-end for generated API docs.

AsciiDocFX homeland

A flexible technical notepad for several domains:

- ReadMe (GitHub).
- DocBook (O'Reilly).
- LaTeX (math).
- Software specs (UML).
- Reports (charts).
- Slides (Reveal, Deck).
- Portable, because Java.

Crippling AsciiDoc issues

- **Escape hell.**
Escape the escape madness.
- **Intrusive comments**
Changes parsing of next line.
- **Include madness**
Last-line, variable scope, context leaks.
- **Hairy conditions**
Spaghetti text.

Because lines
and regular expressions:

- For hand-crafted text,
annoying.
- For generated text,
impossible.

AsciidocFX misbehaves

- TOC wrong with includes.
- Misterious cache for generated images.
- Builds start failing, requiring relaunch.

Summary: Mostly usable

AsciiDoc:

- Fairly complete.
- Extensible.
- Fragile at corner cases.

AsciiDocFX:

- Open source.
- Convenient.
- Fragile.

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Thanks! Any questions?

Joaquim Baptista, 25-May-2017