SuccessStories

This page contains or provides links to success stories that FOP users were kind enough to publish. If you have a FOP success story, don't hesitate to add it to this page, either as a link or in text.

Links to success stories in the mailing list archives

- by Michael Partridge
- by Glen Mazza
- by Dennis Myrén
- by Mark Lawford
- by Jay Bryant
- Various testimonials

Other success stories

Creating PDF reports from JUnit tests

In my day job I'm creating automated tests for our erp system.

Writing the tests was straightforward, but my users did not like the html test reports that are available by default. They put more trust documents that look familiar to them.

So I decided to create PDF reports from the test results that have the look and feel of sign-off documents.

I selected FOP to generate the report.

Because I use so much open source libraries in our tests, I developed the PDF convertor as open source software too. This became my night job.

I started a project on SourceForge, and after a few days I got help from someone.

He created two additional stylesheets that render the test results in a different layout.

My users at work feel confortable with the more familiar layout, and it helped to get automated testing accepted.

More info is available on the project home page

Jan

FOP used to create multi-lingual data-driven reports

My day job has me maintaining a small database of health personnel information. When my team was given the task of creating a set of data driven reports, I looked to trying something a little different. Our usual process for report generation involves dumping our data into excel or word and then sending it off to our publications department for translation (into French) and formatting, etc. Because this report was essentially using a single template to generate 20 pages (1 report per province * 10 provinces * 2 languages) I decided I wanted a solution that would use XML and some sort of template to generate the reports. After some searching I decided on using FOP. Having no experience with FOP, XSLT or FO the learning curve was quite steep initially, but we held on and managed to figure things out. I'm happy to report that we finished the reports and they were completely generated via FOP:

http://secure.cihi.ca/cihiweb/dispPage.jsp?cw_page=AR_1446_E (unfortunately our website requires you enter your org name and country - sorry) http://secure.cihi.ca/cihiweb/dispPage.jsp?cw_page=AR_1446_F (version Francais)

For all intents and purposes these reports are generated from a single stylesheet and a combination of 3 XML data files (one contain health professional data & counts, one containing provincial information such as english and french name & population counts, and a final one containing the document text such as the title, subtitle, footnotes, etc. in both languages). Because this was not a 'sanctioned project' (using FOP that is) - I'm not sure what role, if any, FOP will play within my employer organization in the future. I do know that I was pleased with the results and I'm hoping to use this proof of concept to promote the idea of automating some of our publication generation (especially tables).

Thanks to the FOP team for sharing this great tool and for allowing me to use it to expand my knowledge (and get some work done at the same time). I hope this inspires others to take the plunge and give FOP a try. If you have any questions - please feel free to contact me.

Robin (rscarriere *at* gmail dot com)

FOP used to publish pharmaceutics industry book

At my former job I developed a system for converting a full 5k page pharmaceutics book from quark-xpress to fop with a database back-end.

The work involved several steps, first manage to build a flexible enough database to store the information, then, convert all the information from quark-xpress to it (which involved some wacky formatting cleaning) and finally mounting a server to assemble the book with pretty pages, some pages with 2 columns others with one, depending on the content, all well behaved and so on.

At the time, I opted for not using XSLT at all, and so I built the whole .fo files by hand and mounted it as needed (well, with so many exceptions in the system, I don't think I opted wrong here).

The website of the client is at http://www.mapaterapeutico.pt (pity that some sections are login reserved).

The book is on it's way to the 3rd edition using this system, and edition timed where reduced from about 3 months to assemble the new edition to one, two weeks tops.

The PDF generated by the publishing server are post-processed for colour conversion (from rgb to cmyk) and sent directly after that to the printing offsets.

The same database that is used to publish the book is used to supply the site information, avoiding double insertion of the same information.

I'm not sure of the future of the system, because I moved on, but giving the huge benefits of it, I bet they will keep using it.

I've to thank everyone in the FOP Team and for sure Jeremy (which even sorted out some of my problems with FOP at the time) for all support in the last 2 or 3 years that this project already had over my shoulders, because without his help and the help off everyone else at the forums (specially when I moved from 0.25 to 0.94). FOP opened my horizons on many levels, and for that I'm very gratefully for it. I for sure will continue to use FOP.

Luís Ferro (kindaian *at* gmail dot com)

Add yours!