Lightweight DITA: An Introduction

Working Draft 01

6 December 2016

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(Authoritative)
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Additional artifacts:
This document is part of a work product that also includes:

- ZIP file that contains the DITA source for this document. http://docs.oasis-open.org/dita/LwDITA/v1.0/cn01/LwDITA-v1.0-cn01-DITA-source.zip

Related work:
This document is related to:

- Darwin Information Typing Architecture (DITA) Part 1: Base Edition. http://docs.oasis-open.org/dita/dita/v1.3/dita-v1.3-part1-base.html. This edition contains topic and map; it is designed for implementers and users who need only the most fundamental pieces of the DITA framework.
Abstract:
Lightweight DITA (LwDITA) is a slimmed-down version of DITA that is designed to ease adoption and implementation of DITA.

LwDITA provides a subset of the functionality of the full DITA standard. It has a limited element and attribute set, stricter content models, support for non-XML languages such as Markdown and HTML5, and a simplified specialization mechanism.

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1 Introduction

Lightweight DITA (LwDITA) is a slimmed-down version of DITA. It is designed to ease adoption and implementation of DITA.

This committee note explains the rationale for LwDITA. It also provides an overview of the LwDITA authoring modes, information about the intended audiences for each authoring mode, and an introduction to the LwDITA mechanism for template-based topic specialization.

1.1 References

The following are references to external documents or resources that readers of this document might find useful.

[CommonMark]


[GFM]

*Writing on GitHub.* [https://help.github.com/categories/writing-on-github/](https://help.github.com/categories/writing-on-github/).

[HTML5]


[LwDITA-IXIASOFT]


[Markingdown-DITA]


[YAML]


1.2 Terminology

This section provides information about terminology and how it is used in this committee note.

**ATX headers**

(MDITA) One or two hash (#) marks at the beginning of a line of text. One hash mark indicates a topic title, and two hash marks indicates a section title.

**document type**

A type of DITA topic or map that is designed for a specific purpose.
specialization

The process of creating a new DITA element or attribute from an existing element or attribute. The new element or attribute inherits characteristics from the element or attribute from which it was specialized, which reduces design work and enables the reuse of existing transformations.
2 Why Lightweight DITA?

Lightweight DITA (LwDITA) is a slimmed-down version of DITA that is designed to ease adoption and implementation of DITA. It also adds support for authoring in Markdown and HTML5, as well as a simplified mechanism for specialization.

2.1 Simplified model

Full DITA has more power (and thus complexity) than is needed in some situations. LwDITA provides a slimmed-down alternative.

Conference presentations and practitioners’ blogs occasionally describe DITA as an intimidating language with too many element types. In the all-inclusive edition, the DITA 1.3 standard has 26 document types and 621 element types. Even in the base edition, DITA 1.3 has four document types and 189 element types. In contrast, LwDITA has one topic type that can contain a maximum of 35 element types.

Comment by Kristen J Eberlein on 30 November 2016

I don’t think this is necessarily the best title for the topic. Other possibilities include:

- Simplified architecture
- Simplified structure
- Subset of full DITA

Comment by Carlos Evia on 1 December 2016

I vote for Simplified structure. We don’t want to use DITA subset when talking about all the LwDITA authoring modes.

A simplified DITA will be an easier entry point to DITA for both authors and vendors building commercial tools and applications.

2.2 Support for non-XML formats

LwDITA adds support for structured authoring in Markdown and HTML5.

New forms of non-XML structured authoring have gained popularity. Many in industry and academic have adopted text-only languages like JSON or Markdown. Many authors also are using the extended semantic markup of HTML5 to create structured documents for the Web.

LwDITA has three authoring modes:

- XDITA: A XML-based variant
- MDITA: A Markdown-based variant
- HDITA: An HTML5-based variant
XDITA, HDITA, and MDITA are designed for full compatibility with each other as well as conformance with the OASIS DITA and W3C HTML5 standards. MDITA aligns with the CommonMark effort for a Markdown standard, while also adopting some elements of GitHub Flavored Markdown and YAML.

Comment by Kristen J Eberlein on 30 November 2016

This will do for now, but I think we are going to need to be very rigorous about how we talk about compatibility and conformance. I expect that we will need a separate topic (topics?) to cover this.

The multiple authoring modes are designed to enable authors to continue working with the type of structured content – XML, HTML, or Markdown – that they are comfortable with and currently using. Rather than asking authors to adopt a single authoring platform, LwDITA provides mappings from one authoring mode to another. LwDITA also acts an entry point to full DITA for those who need more functionality and richer semantic structures.

2.3 Simplified specialization mechanism

[Rationale for a simplified specialization mechanism]
3 Lightweight DITA design

[Introduction to this chapter]

3.1 Subset of elements and attributes

[Overview of the DITA 1.3 elements and attributes that are part of Lightweight DITA]

3.2 Stricter content model

Lightweight DITA does not permit mixed content. This ensures a predictable markup structure in topics and so simplifies reuse, transformations, style sheet logic, and tools development.

All text must be within `<p>` elements. Within `<p>` elements, the following inline elements can appear:

- `<b>`
- `<i>`
- `<ph>`
- `<sub>`
- `<sup>`

In DITA 1.3, the following markup is valid:

```
<section>My section contains a list ...
  <ul>
    <li>List item #1</li>
    <li>List item #2</li>
  </ul>
</section>
```

In Lightweight DITA, the following markup must be used:

```
<section>
  <p>My section contains a list ...</p>
  <ul>
    <li>
      <p>List item #1</p>
    </li>
    <li>
      <p>List item #2</p>
    </li>
  </ul>
</section>
```

3.3 Subset of reuse mechanisms

Lightweight DITA has a smaller set of reuse mechanisms than DITA 1.3.

**Conditional processing**

The only conditional processing attribute is `@props`. 
Content reference

The @conref attribute is available only on the following elements:

- <li>
- <p>
- <section>
- <table>

Key reference

The @keyref attribute is available only on <ph>.

Variable text

For variable text, such as product names, authors are limited to using @keyref on <ph>.

Comment by Kristen J Eberlein on 2 December 2016

I think we should add some of the reasons for these design choices.

3.4 New elements and attributes

[Lists new elements and attributes; purpose; why they are needed]

3.5 Lightweight DITA document types

LwDITA includes document types for topic and map.

3.5.1 LwDITA topic

The LwDITA topic contains the fundamental structures that are necessary to author a unit of stand-alone information.

A LwDITA topic can contain the following structural elements:

Title

A label that connotes the purpose of the content that is associated with it.

Short description

A brief depiction of the purpose or theme of a topic.

Prolog

A container for metadata about a topic (for example, author information or subject category).

Body

A container for the main content of a topic. It might include several sections.

Section

An organizational division within a topic. It can have an optional title.

A LwDITA topic can be represented in XDITA, MDITA, and HDITA.
3.5.2 LwDITA map

The LwDITA map contains the fundamental structures that are necessary to XXX

A LwDITA map can contain the following structural elements:

- XXX
- XXX
4 Lightweight DITA authoring modes

[Introduction to this chapter]

4.1 XDITA

XDITA is the authoring mode of Lightweight DITA that uses XML to structure information. XDITA is a subset of DITA, with new multimedia elements added to support interoperability with HTML5.

Comment by Carlos Evia on 5 December 2016

After we introduce the three LwDITA "flavors," we will need a topic to show how they play together: Maps in XDITA, MDITA, and HDITA referencing X, H, and T topics.

4.1.1 Audience for XDITA

XDITA is designed to be used by individuals who want to author DITA content but whom do not want (or need) the full power of DITA.

Example of potential users of XDITA include the following:

- Information developers who use an XML editor but who want a smaller set of elements and attributes with which to work
- Departments who want to reduce the cost of developing and maintaining style sheets by eliminating mixed content
- Content developers who want their DITA content to be subsumed by a product documentation set that is based on Markdown or HTML5

4.1.2 Example of an XDITA topic

The following topic is authored in XDITA. In addition to basic DITA elements, note the new `<video>` element that is highlighted in bold.

Comment by Kristen J Eberlein on 24 November 2016

Is the markup for the `<data>` element what we want to recommend? Would the following be preferable?

```xml
<data name="author">
  <data value="Kevin Lewis"/>
</data>
```

Or the following?

```xml
<data name="author" value="Kevin Lewis"/>
```

Comment by Carlos Evia on 30 November 2016
K. Eberlein's recommendation for data is correct and I have updated the example.

<topic id="install-and-setup">
  <title>Installing and Setting up Remote Lighting</title>
  <shortdesc>Installation of your lighting kit includes installing the light bulbs into light fixtures, preparing the remote control, and programming lighting groups.</shortdesc>
  <prolog>
    <data name="author">
      <data value="Kevin Lewis"/>
    </data>
  </prolog>
  <body>
    <section>
      <title>Steps</title>
      <ul>
        <li><p>Install light bulbs.</p></li>
        <li><p>Prepare remote control.</p></li>
        <li><p>Program lighting groups.</p></li>
      </ul>
    </section>
    <section>
      <title>Example</title>
      <p>The following video demonstrates a recommended installation:</p>
      <video>
        <controls />
        <source value="remote.mp4" />
      </video>
    </section>
  </body>
</topic>

4.1.3 Example of an XDITA map
The following map is authored in XDITA.

<map id="remote-main">
  <topicmeta>
    <navtitle>Remote Lighting Network</navtitle>
  </topicmeta>
  <topicref href="introduction.dita">
    <topicmeta>
      <navtitle>Introduction</navtitle>
    </topicmeta>
  </topicref>
  <topicref href="alternatives.dita">
    <topicmeta>
      <navtitle>Alternative lighting setups</navtitle>
    </topicmeta>
  </topicref>
  <topicref href="low-power.dita">
    <topicmeta>
      <navtitle>Low power installation</navtitle>
    </topicmeta>
  </topicref>
  <topicref href="high-power.dita">
    <topicmeta>
      <navtitle>High power installation</navtitle>
    </topicmeta>
  </topicref>
</map>

Comment by Carlos Evia on 5 December 2016
Next example will show how to use keys and other attributes in XDITA.
4.2 HDITA

HDITA is an authoring mode of Lightweight DITA that uses HTML5 to structure information. It also uses custom data attributes to provide interoperability with DITA.

4.2.1 Audience for HDITA

HDITA is designed to be used by individuals who want to author structured content using tools that are designed for HTML authoring.

Example of potential users of HDITA include the following:

- Marketing writers who want to contribute to DITA-based product documentation without using an XML editor
- Software developers who want to contribute to documentation using tools for authoring HTML content
- Teachers and trainers who want to create course content for a website or Learning Management System
- Web authors
- Bloggers
- Content strategists

Comment by Kristen J Eberlein on 24 November 2016

Lots more needed here; this constituency is not one that I am familiar with.

Comment by Carlos Evia on 30 November 2016

Added a few audience types we would need to expand/explain.

4.2.2 Example of an HDITA topic

An HDITA topic is authored in HTML5. It also includes custom data attributes to enable interoperability with DITA.

```html
<!DOCTYPE html>
<meta name="author" content="Kevin Lewis">
<h1>Installing and Setting up Remote Lighting</h1>
<article id="install-and-setup">
  <p data-hd-class="shortdesc">Installation of your lighting kit includes installing the light bulbs into light fixtures, preparing the remote control, and programming lighting groups.</p>
  <h2>Steps</h2>
  <ul>
    <li><p>Install light bulbs.</p></li>
    <li><p>Prepare remote control.</p></li>
    <li><p>Program lighting groups.</p></li>
  </ul>
  <h2>Example</h2>
  <p>The following video demonstrates a recommended installation:</p>
  <video src="remote.mp4" controls poster="remote.png" />
</article>
```
4.2.3 Example of an HDITA map

An HDITA map is authored in HTML5

```html
<nav>
  <h1>Remote Lighting Network</h1>
  <ul>
    <li><a href="introduction.html">Introduction</a></li>
    <li><a href="alternatives.html">Alternative lighting setups</a></li>
    <li><a href="low-power.html">Low power installation</a></li>
    <li><a href="high-power.html">High power installation</a></li>
  </ul>
</nav>
```

Comment by Carlos Evia on 5 December 2016

Next example will show how to use keys and other attributes in HDITA

4.3 MDITA

MDITA is the authoring mode of Lightweight DITA that uses Markdown to structure information.

4.3.1 Audience for MDITA

MDITA is designed to be used by individuals who want to author structured content with the minimum of overhead.

Example of potential users of MDITA include the following:

- Software developers who want to contribute to DITA-based product documentation without using an XML editor
- Software developers who want to contribute to product documentation using the tools and markup of their choice
- Individuals authoring content using a platform, such as a mobile device, that does not support an XML editor
- Individuals authoring content quickly that must be later refactored as structured content

4.3.2 Example of an MDITA topic

An MDITA topic is authored in Markdown; it also uses YAML front matter blocks for prolog information and HDITA and XDITA elements to enable fuller interoperability with the other LwDITA authoring modes.

Comment by Kristen J Eberlein on 24 November 2016

I commented out the paragraph below. I think the content is now covered in adequately elsewhere – and I think we need to cover the scenarios of building MDITA topics into larger aggregations of content elsewhere.

The following topic contains simple, straight-forward information structures that are readily available in Markdown:
# Installing and Setting up Remote Lighting

Installation of your lighting kit includes installing the light bulbs into light fixtures, preparing the remote control, and programming lighting groups.

## Steps

1. Install light bulbs.
2. Prepare remote control.
3. Program lighting groups.

## Example

The following video demonstrates a recommended installation:

```html
<video src="remote.mp4" controls poster="remote.png" />
```

In the second version of the topic, we add additional markup (indicated in bold text) to enable interoperability with other LwDITA authoring modes and full DITA XML:

- A YAML header. This YAML header both supplies a value for the `@id` attribute that is required on the root element of a DITA topic; it also supplies prolog metadata about who authored the DITA topic.
- An HDITA element that supplies the short description for the topic.
- An XDITA element that enables the topic to reference a video.

---

id: install-and-setup
author: Kevin Lewis
---

# Installing and Setting up Remote Lighting

Installation of your lighting kit includes installing the light bulbs into light fixtures, preparing the remote control, and programming lighting groups.

## Steps

1. Install light bulbs.
2. Prepare remote control.
3. Program lighting groups.

## Example

The following video demonstrates a recommended installation:

```html
<video src="remote.mp4" controls poster="remote.png" />
```

4.3.3 Example of an MDITA map

An MDITA map is authored in Markdown.

```markdown
# Remote Lighting Network
- [Introduction](introduction.md)
```
Comment by Carlos Evia on 5 December 2016

Next example will show how to use keys and other attributes in MDITA
# 5 Lightweight DITA specialization model

**Comment by Kristen J Eberlein on 1 December 2016**

This topic (or set of topics) needs to cover the following:

- Description of the template-based specialization mechanism
- Acknowledgement? Coverage? of the attributes added to LwDITA to enable the template-based specialization mechanism
- Example of a (simple) LwDITA topic that would be input to a tool that generates the specialization
- Example of the generated grammar file
- A general description of the algorithm that a tool uses to construct the grammar file for the specialization.

**Important:** The actual LwDITA spec will require a algorithm that is sufficiently precise that an implementer can build a conforming application using ONLY the content of the LwDITA specification.

**Comment by Carlos Evia on 1 December 2016**

Raw paste of content from the LwDITA GitHub repo

- Create an instance of of parent type
- Annotate the instance to define model
- Generate new elements
- Reuse across specializations with mechanisms like `<conref>`

**Structural specialization**

- **outputclass attribute**
  - the target element name
- **specmodel attribute**
  - allows the author to define a sequence, define a choice group, or let the content model be the same as the current (unspecialized) element
- **importance attribute**
  - specifies whether the element is required or optional in its current context (defaults to required in a sequence; optional in a choice group)

**Attribute and domain specialization**

- **specmeta element**
  - data or ph or specatt elements (any number); data and ph can be annotated (with outputclass, etc.) to define domain specializations
- **specatt element**
  - defines specializations of the props attribute
Single-sourcing

specrole attribute

Specifies whether the content of an element is intended to be generated by the transform, editable by the author, an editor prompt, documentation, or used for content modeling purposes only (or any mix of the above); if unset, element content is editable by author (part of the template)
6 Lightweight DITA tools

Several tools already exist to support organizations who want to explore using Lightweight DITA.

To be covered here:

- Plug-in created and maintained by Jarno Elovirta: https://github.com/jelovirt/dita-ot-markdown
- Tool in-progress by Tim Grantham for the Lightweight DITA subcommittee
- oXygen XML Author 18.1

The DITA Technical Committee expects that the release of Lightweight DITA as an OASIS standard will lead to a rapid increase in the number of commercial and open-source tools that provide support for Lightweight DITA.
Appendix A Lightweight DITA elements and attributes

This section lists the elements and attributes that are available in Lightweight DITA.

Appendix A.1 LwDITA elements

This topic lists the elements that are available in Lightweight DITA.

Comment by Kristen J Eberlein on 1 December 2016

The following table is based on a spreadsheet that Carlos Evia e-mailed me and Bob Thomas on 21 October 2016. I suspect that it needs to be updated.

Do the following elements need to be added?

- <fallback>
- <controls>
- <source>
- <track>

Would it make most sense to have two tables, one for elements that exist in DITA 1.3 and the other table for the new elements?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>XDITA</th>
<th>HDITA</th>
<th>MDITA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alternate text</td>
<td>&lt;alt&gt;</td>
<td>Attribute on &lt;img&gt;</td>
<td>[text]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio</td>
<td>&lt;audio&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;audio&gt;</td>
<td>Not applicable or direct HTML5 element</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body</td>
<td>&lt;body&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;body&gt;</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bold</td>
<td>&lt;b&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;strong&gt;</td>
<td>** or __</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross reference</td>
<td>&lt;xref&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;href&gt;</td>
<td>[link]!/URI &quot;title&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data</td>
<td>&lt;data&gt;</td>
<td>Provided in YAML header</td>
<td>Provided in YAML header</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition description</td>
<td>&lt;dd&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;dd&gt;</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition list entry</td>
<td>&lt;dlentry&gt;</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition term</td>
<td>&lt;dt&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;dt&gt;</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition list</td>
<td>&lt;dl&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;dl&gt;</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>&lt;fig&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;figure&gt;</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footnote</td>
<td>&lt;fn&gt;</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image</td>
<td>&lt;image&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;img&gt;</td>
<td><img src="images/image_name.jpg" alt="alt text for an image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Component</td>
<td>XDITA</td>
<td>HDITA</td>
<td>MDITA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italics</td>
<td>&lt;i&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;em&gt;</td>
<td>* or _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List item</td>
<td>&lt;li&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;li&gt;</td>
<td>' -, +, or * for ul, and 0-9 and . or ) for ol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map</td>
<td>&lt;map&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;nav&gt;</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note</td>
<td>&lt;note&gt;</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordered list</td>
<td>&lt;ol&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;ol&gt;</td>
<td>See list item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph</td>
<td>&lt;p&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;p&gt;</td>
<td>Two carriage returns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phrase</td>
<td>&lt;ph&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;span&gt;</td>
<td>Not applicable or &lt;ph&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Provided in YAML header</td>
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<td>&lt;section&gt;</td>
<td>##</td>
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| Simple table       | &lt;simpletable&gt; | &lt;table&gt; | You can create tables by assembling a list of words and dividing them with hyphens - (for the first row), and then separating each column with a pipe | |
| Simple table entry | &lt;stentry&gt; | &lt;td&gt; | See simple table |
| Simple table row   | &lt;strow&gt; | &lt;tr&gt; | See simple table |
| Subscript          | &lt;sub&gt; | &lt;sub&gt; | Not applicable or &lt;sub&gt; |
| Superscript        | &lt;sup&gt; | &lt;sup&gt; | Not applicable or &lt;sup&gt; |
| Table header       | &lt;theader&gt; | &lt;th&gt; | See simple table |
| Title              | &lt;title&gt; | &lt;h1&gt; for topic | # for topic |
|                    |         | &lt;h2&gt; for section | ## for section |
| Topic              | &lt;topic&gt; | &lt;article&gt; | Not applicable |
| Underline          | &lt;u&gt; | Not applicable | Not applicable |
| Unordered list     | &lt;ul&gt; | &lt;ul&gt; | See list item   |
| Video              | &lt;video&gt; | &lt;video&gt; | Not applicable or direct HTML element |
### Appendix A.2 LwDITA attributes

This topic lists the attributes that are available in Lightweight DITA.

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>XDITA</th>
<th>HDITA</th>
<th>MDITA</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</table>
Appendix B Acknowledgments

The following individuals participated in the creation of this document and are gratefully acknowledged.

Kristen James Eberlein, Eberlein Consulting LLC
Carlos Evia, Virginia Tech
Michael Priestley, IBM

In addition, the OASIS DITA Technical Committee also would like to recognize the following people for their insights and support:

Kevin Lewis, Virginia Tech
Appendix C Revision history

The following table contains information about revisions to this document.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revision</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Editor</th>
<th>Description of changes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>5 November 2016</td>
<td>Carlos Evia</td>
<td>Created stub files for working draft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>17 November 2016</td>
<td>Carlos Evia</td>
<td>Updates to structure of working draft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>21 and 22 November 2016</td>
<td>Carlos Evia</td>
<td>Added content, examples, and information about YAML.</td>
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</table>
| 04       | 24 November 2016      | Kristen James Eberlein     | • Added table to revision history  
• Corrected front matter metadata  
• Added terminology topic  
• General edits for clarity and adherence to IBM style  
• Reworked XDITA, HDITA, and MDITA topic clusters |
| 05       | 30 November 2016      | Kristen James Eberlein     | • Updated cover page metadata to match OASIS template  
• General edits for clarity and adherence to IBM style  
• General reorganization |
| 06       | 01 December 2016      | Kristen James Eberlein     | • Added content to Appendix A  
• Added draft comments throughout  
• Added items to "References" topic |
| 07       | 01 December 2016      | Kristen James Eberlein     | • Added initial content to "Stricter content model" topic  
• Added initial content to "Subset of reuse mechanisms" topic |
| 08       | 05 December 2016      | Carlos Evia                 | Added initial examples for maps in XDITA, HDITA, and MDITA                             |
| 09       | 06 December 2016      | Kristen James Eberlein     | Generated working draft 01                                                             |