



Measuring Success with DITA Production Metrics

Keith Schengili-Roberts, DITA Evangelist, IXIASOFT





Agenda

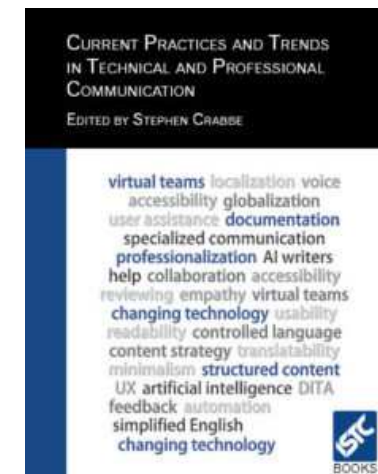
- Introduction
- Why Measure Documentation Production?
- DITA Production Metrics with the IXIASOFT DITA CMS
- Discovering Topic Ratios
- What Were The Costs of Topic Production?
- What is the Content Re-use Rate?
- Q/A



Who's This Guy?

Keith Schengili-Roberts

- Working in Tech Comm since early 1990s
- Working with DITA since 2004
- Maintain an industry blog:
DITAWriter.com
- Market Researcher and DITA Evangelist for IXIASOFT
- Author of four technical titles, contributor to recently-released *Current Practices and Trends in Technical Communication*

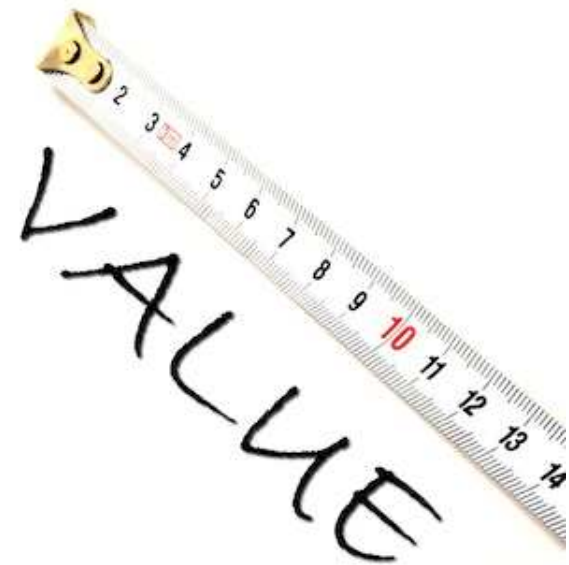




Why Measure Documentation Production?

Provides the ability to:

- Set more accurate project estimates
- Justify need for more resources (tools/people)
- Understand quality of production
- It's an opportunity to measure value
- DITA metrics can be used to guide managers, information architects and writers on how to improve their content





DITA Production Metrics with the IXIASOFT DITA CMS

- DITA CMS captures additional information which can be used for metrics, including:
 - Author information
 - Workflow status
 - How many times a topic has been modified/versioned
 - Topic/map dependencies
 - Word count
 - ...and much more!

Results List page 1 of 2 (1,500/2,710 results found)

Title	Status	Type	Last Mod By	Last Mod Date
Integrate current PDF output in Output Generator	Authoring:work	reference	Jean-Francois Ameye [jean-f	2015-12-18 11:38:57
Exporting the TEXTML Index Definition document	Authoring:work	task	Kathleen Jette [kathleen.jette	2015-12-18 11:24:53
Creating and managing index definitions	Authoring:work	topic	Kathleen Jette [kathleen.jette	2015-12-18 11:14:36
Index Definitions	Authoring:work	referable-cont	Kathleen Jette [kathleen.jette	2015-12-18 11:12:04
CHM output enhancements	Authoring:work	reference	Boris Aguilar [boris.aguilar@	2015-12-18 10:57:12
Attach EFS (Resource) files to PDF Outputs	Authoring:work	reference	Boris Aguilar [boris.aguilar@	2015-12-18 10:57:12
"Insert Variable" action in oXvqen - In phase 1 mar	Authoring:work	reference	Boris Aguilar [boris.aguilar@	2015-12-18 10:57:11



Full List of Additional Search/Metrics Parameters

- Title
- Status
- Last Mod By
- Last Mod Date
- Type
- Version
- Assignment Comments
- Audience
- Authoring Revision
- Creation Date
- Id
- Image Description
- Image Type
- Keyword
- Labels
- Language
- Locked By
- Locked Date
- Needs Translation
- Original Filename
- Platform
- Product
- Reusable Element
- Revision
- System Comment
- User Comment
- Word Count



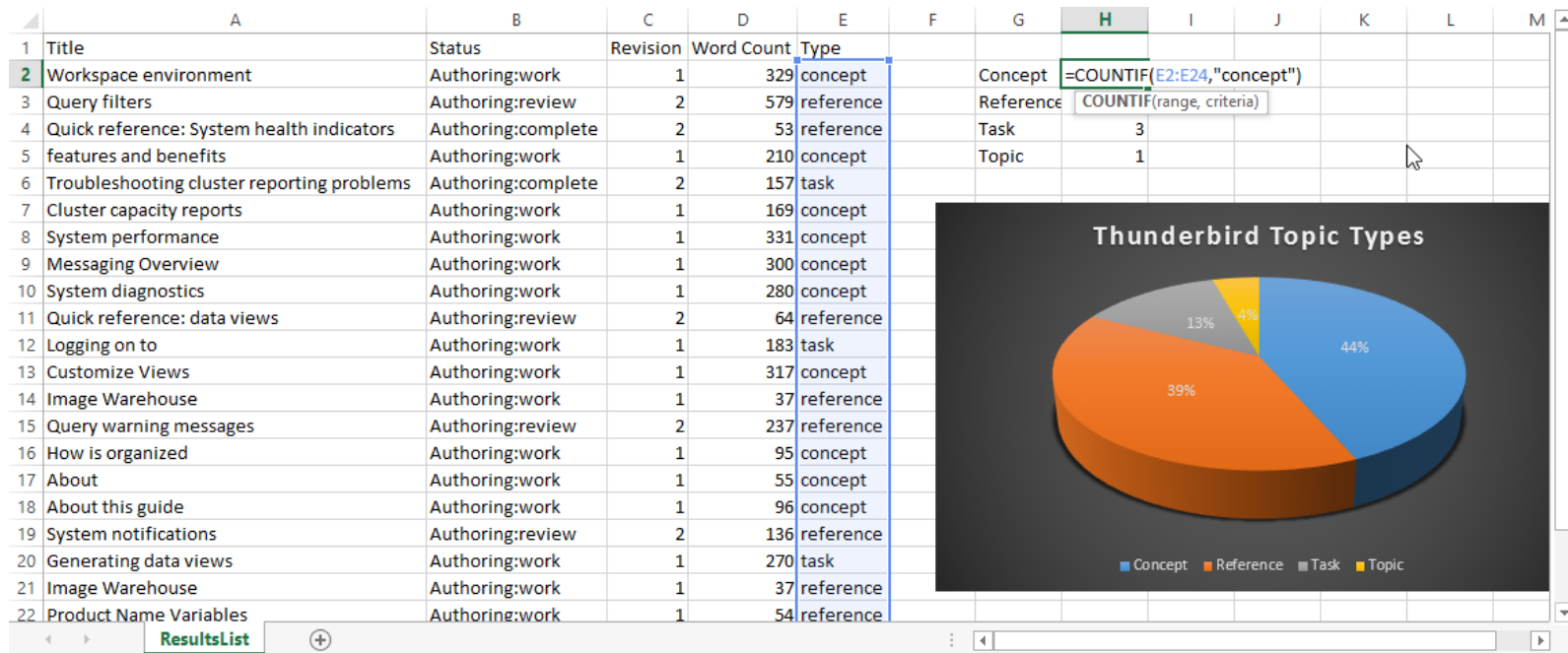
Let's Take a Look at Some Actual Content Production

- I have all the DITA maps, topics, images, etc. created by the IXIASOFT publication team on my notebook from mid-2014 to early 2017
- Let's compare published content between 2015 and 2016...



Counting String Instances in Excel

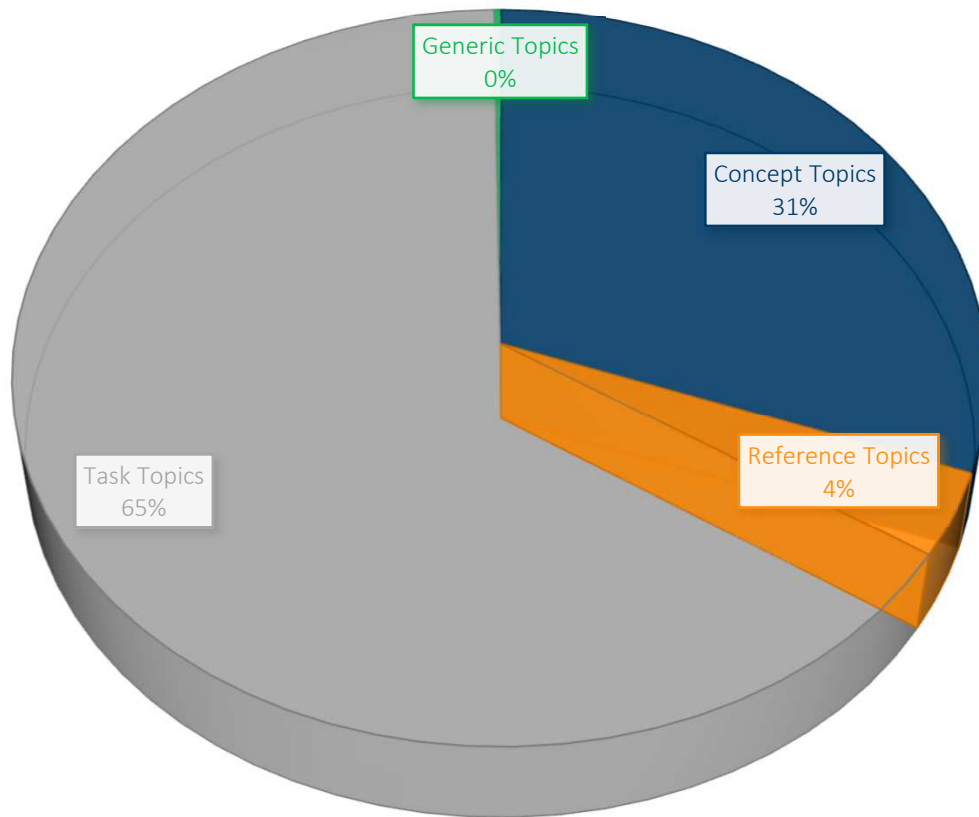
- Simple formula: select column and use COUNTIF with string you are looking for: `=COUNTIF(E1:E24,"concept")`





2015 Published Topics for IXIASOFT

2015 TOPIC COUNTS

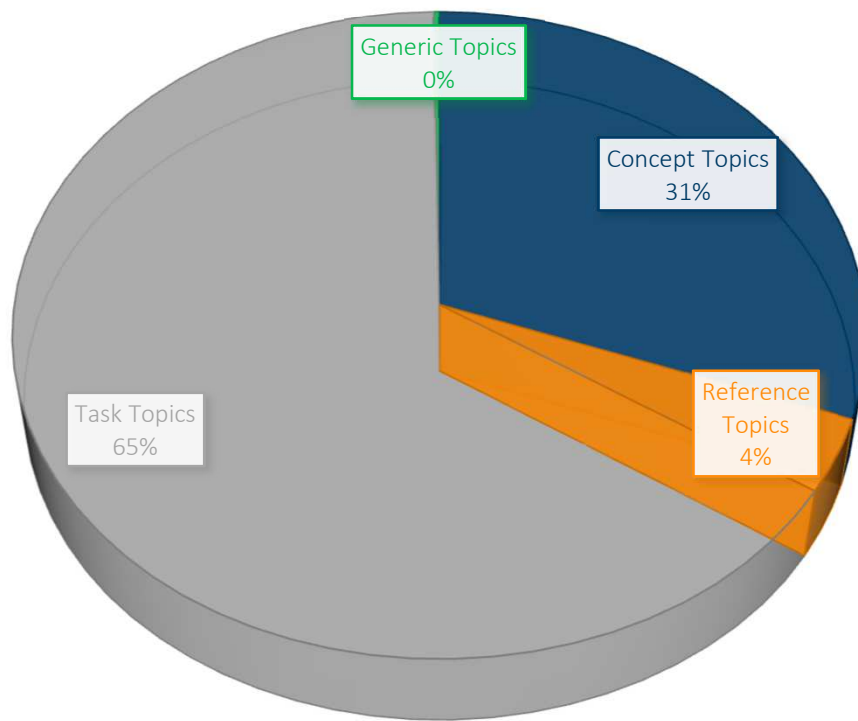


- On the surface, this looks pretty good. We produce manuals for our software, so You would expect a lot of task topics that tell users what to do.
- My question to the doc team back then was: are we describing enough of the conceptual material for our users?

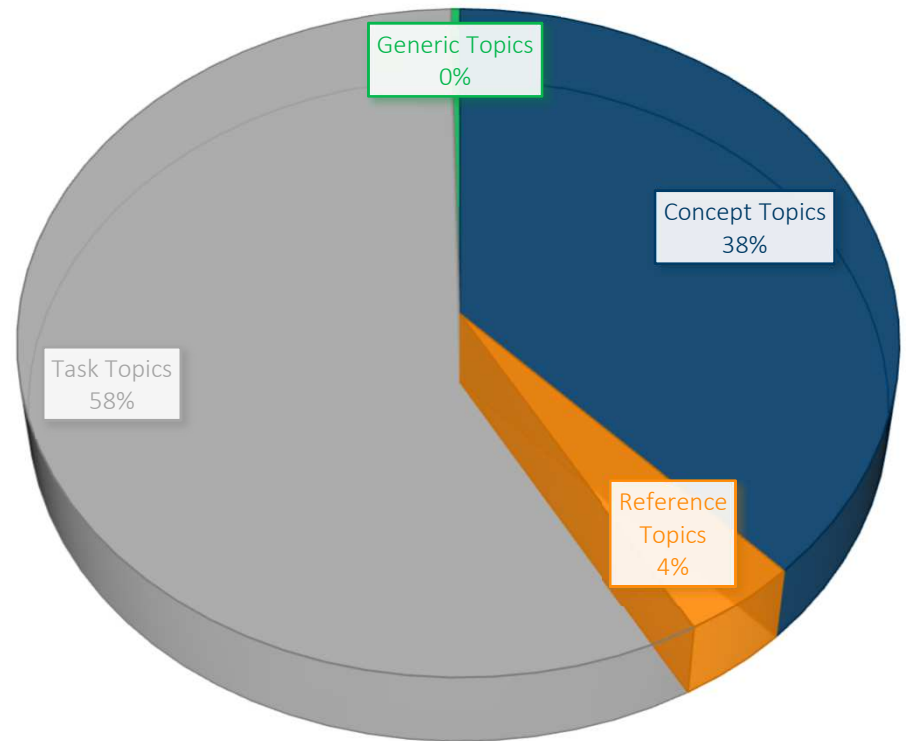


2015 and 2016 Published Topics for IXIASOFT

2015 TOPIC COUNTS



2016 TOPIC COUNTS



Clearly the IXIASOFT tech docs team took my advice to heart. This shows how measuring topic production can improve content for users.



What is the Cost of Topic Production?

- I have the total number of topics produced, so how much did it cost to produce them? Formula: $\# \text{ Topics} / (\text{Annual Wages} \times \# \text{ Writers})$
- I don't know how much our writers are paid, so I went to Indeed.ca and figured out the average wage for senior technical writers = \$72K (Cdn)

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indeed

what: senior technical writer
job title, keywords or company

where: canada
city or province

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senior technical writer jobs in Canada

Jobs 1 to 20 of 109

My recent searches
senior technical writer
» clear searches

Sort by: relevance - date

Salary Estimate

\$60,000 (90)	} Avg. \$72K (Cdn)
\$80,000 (41)	
\$100,000 (15)	
\$120,000 (3)	
\$170,000 (2)	

Job Type

Upload your resume - Let employers find you

Crystal Report Writer (#1229-MH2444)
Moorecrocft Systems Inc. - Toronto, ON
Crystal Reports, Report Writer, Crystal Report Writer, Technical, Development, JDE, JD Edwards. Crystal Report Writer Please Note:....
Sponsored by Dice - save job

Senior Technical Writer
Juventus consulting - Toronto, ON
Writing Skill - To Write in a clear and concise manner and to be able to convey information appropriately for a variety of audiences. To write clear
Sponsored by Jobillico - save job

Senior Manager, Global External Communications

- During this period IXIASOFT had two full-time technical writers...



Cost of IXIASOFT Topic Production for 2015 - 2016

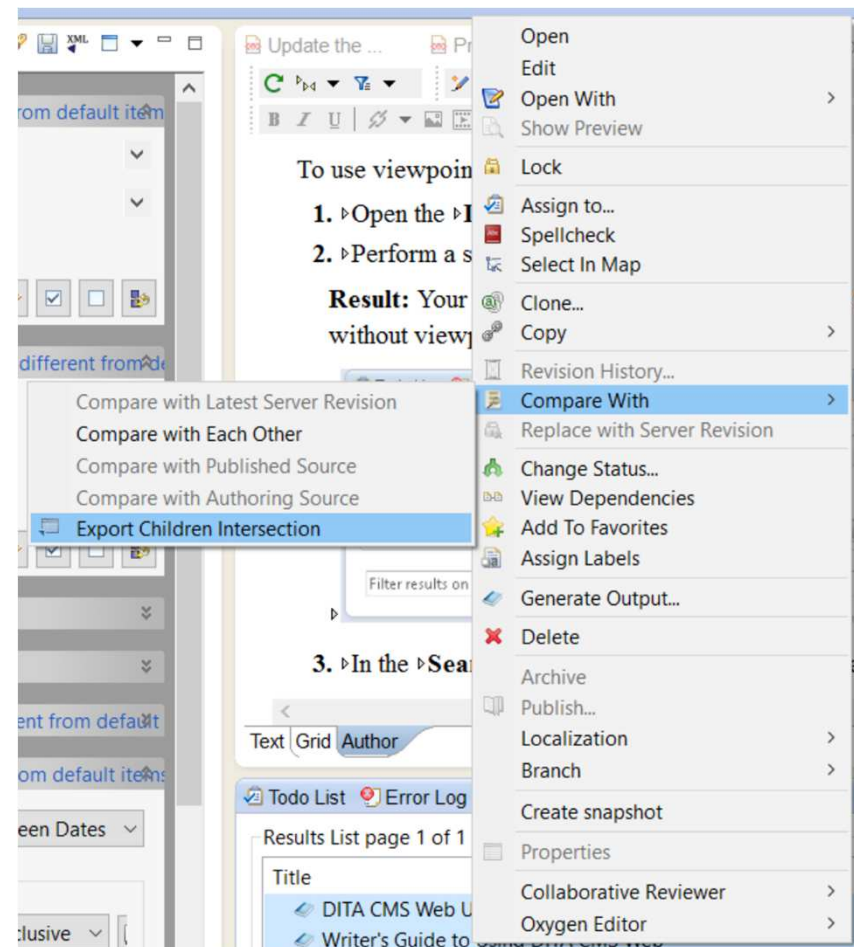
	2015	2016
Wages Paid (Est. \$CDN)	\$144,000.00	\$144,000.00
Topic Produced by Tech Docs	2564	2755
Avg Cost Per Topic (\$CDN)	\$56.16	\$52.27

- Simply divide the total wages by the number of topics produced
- Ideally, more published topics should be produced over time, so the average cost of producing a topic should fall (and that's what we see here!)



Comparing Content Reuse Across Maps

- Within the IXIASOFT DITA CMS select two maps you want to compare, right-click and select Compare With > Export Children Intersection
- This outputs a file that shows all matching and non-matching objects in those two maps





Comparing Reuse Rates for IXIASOFT Docs 2015-2016

Title [ID]	Type	2016 Published Topics	2015 Published Topics
Upgrade the CMS Application Server [lar1405970975018]	task	Yes	Yes
Exporting the system folder and Index Definition document [ljq1450454375247]	task	Yes	No
Restarting the Web Author components [lar1398872488481]	task	Yes	Yes
Add new index definitions for roles in the DITA CMS [per1389986393438]	task	Yes	Yes
Configuring roles: <role> element [per1389986412640]	concept	Yes	No
Determine the platform of the browser [per1389986399791]	task	Yes	Yes
Allowing users to change the status of their topics [lar1406575952295]	concept	Yes	No
Enable the Insert image option in the web.author.roles.xml file [chi1438702071049]	task	Yes	No
Upgrade the online help [lar1406040586942]	task	Yes	Yes
Configure the Create Topic command [lar1398781609749]	task	Yes	No
Configuring the Web Author startup page [chi1441310744932]	concept	Yes	No
Copyright notice [per1389985728738]	reference	Yes	No
Typical Web Author scenarios [per1389986412864]	concept	Yes	No
Overview of the web.author.roles.xml file [per1389986413410]	concept	Yes	No
Download and extract the Web Author package [per1389986382707]	task	Yes	Yes
Add a new role [per1389986414361]	task	Yes	No
Allowing users to create new topics [lar1398193600296]	concept	Yes	No
Create and configure a user [per1389986343622]	task	Yes	Yes
Set up Web Author user assignments [per1389986409852]	concept	Yes	No
Adding your specializations to the Web Author [per1389986398319]	concept	Yes	Yes
Managing and troubleshooting the Web Author [lar1398872392625]	concept	Yes	Yes
Change status [per1389986116670]	task	Yes	Yes
Overview of the statusChangeConfig.xml file [lar1406649484819]	concept	Yes	No
Assign roles to a user [per1389986345294]	task	Yes	Yes
Delete existing logs and capture new ones for troubleshooting [per1389986400332]	task	Yes	Yes
Troubleshooting: The TEXTML Server crashed and the CMS Application Server cannot be restarted [lar1398873347426]	reference	Yes	Yes

- Take raw data, process it, then compare matches between 2015 and 2016 content
- All objects (including images)=73.51%; All topics (no images)=68.20%



DITA-based Documentation and The Road Ahead



- DITA and the IXIASOFT DITA CMS provides an opportunity to actively measure quantity- and quality-related metrics



Q/A



IXIASOFT

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IXIASOFT DITA CMS Users LinkedIn group:

[linkedin.com/groups?gid=3820030](https://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=3820030)