Adobe Tech Comm Survey 2017 - 2018 Findings

Explore key trends shaping the Technical Communication industry
The 2017 - 2018 edition of the world’s biggest Tech Comm survey is powered by 2000+ respondents from 30+ countries working in small, medium and large enterprises across 30+ industry verticals. Our participants represent a good mix of technical writers, documentation managers, information developers, IT managers and other roles.

- **2000+** Respondents
- **30+** Countries
- **30+** Industry Verticals

**Technical Writers:** 30%

**Information Developers and Architects:** 11%

**Technical Documentation Managers:** 10%

**Executives (Directors & Vice Presidents):** 10%

**eLearning Specialists:** 9%

**UI / UX Designers & Marketing Professionals:** 8%

**IT Managers:** 7%

**Self Employed:** 5%

**Others:** 10%
Structured authoring adoption hit the halfway mark in 2017.

Grew from 20% to 50% over the last 5 years

Organizations with 1000+ employees have larger adoption of structured authoring as compared to unstructured.
DITA takes the lead

44% of respondents currently use DITA while 31% plan to do so. Custom XML is the second most popular choice at 41%.
Change management makes it easier

From conversion of existing content to training and demonstrating ROI, change management plays a critical role while migrating to structured authoring.

**Content Conversion**
- Educate the staff
- Familiarity
- Clean up and make it as structured as possible
- Automation / Scripts / Outsource
- Way more time consuming than all estimates

**Content Standardization**
- Set up rules across organization
- Buy-in from all writers
- Naming conventions need to be organized
- Re-use easier said than done

**Learning Structured Authoring Tools**
- Trainer
- Tools are more powerful now
- Learn and practice is the key

**Business Case to Management**
- Demonstrate ROI/cost savings
- Time savings with content re-use
- Initial investment very high

**XML Understanding**
- Working knowledge very helpful
- Internet / YouTube / training videos helpful
Structured authoring advantages

The many benefits of making the move to structured

Content consistency, ease of content updation, and content reuse are the top benefits realized by adopters of structured authoring.

- Document consistency
- Ease of updating/maintenance of content
- Content re-use
- Easier publishing to multiple formats
- Reduced content errors
- Savings in content development time
- Savings in DTP (Desktop Publishing) costs
- Translations costs savings
Desktops, the first choice of content creators

While the world consumes content on a range of devices, desktops remain the top choice for creation.

Platform preference

Adobe Tech Comm Survey 2017 - 2018 Findings
Everyone still loves PDF

Over 90% of people choose PDF as the publishing format of choice followed by HTML5 which is fast becoming a favorite.
HTML5 is the format of choice for mobile

With over 54% share, HTML5 clearly dominates when it comes to content experiences on mobile devices, followed by Mobile Apps at 30%. 

[Chart showing the percentage of content experiences on mobile devices from 2013 to 2016.]
Minimal chatter when it comes to chatbots

While chatbots have become a buzzword in almost every industry, they are yet to make any significant inroads when it comes to technical communication.

Adobe Tech Comm Survey 2017 - 2018 Findings
Full of potential, but still early days

Most respondents were of the opinion that Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning are still in an experimental/learning stage.

What some of the respondents had to say about AI / ML:

- Hope to provide self-service wizards in a few years. Building ground up with open source.
- Initial research few years back was not helpful.
- Trying chatbot for our KB portal / FAQs. Support tickets.
- Working on some tagging based on machine learning but very rudimentary.
- In infancy. Long way to go. Probably few years down the line.
The top three uses for CMSs are as a shared repository, for version control and publishing

A notable finding is that the percentage of people using a CMS picks up from 70% to 78% if they author structured content.
Future of content

Marketing and technical content are coming together

Content reuse, sharing of common assets, better search integration and a common taxonomy are the biggest drivers.

- Content reuse across both: 19%
- Sharing of common assets: 18%
- Better search integration across both content: 18%
- Common taxonomy across technical and marketing content: 14%
- None applicable: 9%
- Integrated analytics: 9%
- Integrated view to show both technical and marketing content together: 2%
- Others: 11%
For any queries, please reach out to us at
techcomm@adobe.com