

# Microcontent-based Content Development Process

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A successful content strategy allows you to plan, manage, and deliver information that is useful or otherwise valuable to defined user groups. Users have very specific questions, needs, and goals, and they expect immediate, focused answers. At the same time, we need to efficiently manage large information sets and reuse content for a wide range of channels and deliverables, from PDF to web, documentation to training to tech support, and often support external systems including chatbots and AI engines. The best solution is a microcontent-based development process.

## Overview

### What is micro content?

"Microcontent should be an ultra-short abstract of its associated microcontent."

- Jakob Nielsen, 1998

### How is micro content different from snippets?

	Snippets	Microcontent
Content types	any	any
Embedded variables/snippets?	yes	yes
Conditions	yes	yes
Reusing	Drag-drop	
Storage: source	HTML files	XML-based Microcontent file(s)
Storage: output	none	HTML files (HTML5 targets)
Primary use	Reuse content inside project	Reuse content externally

### Why is it important?

Short attention spans

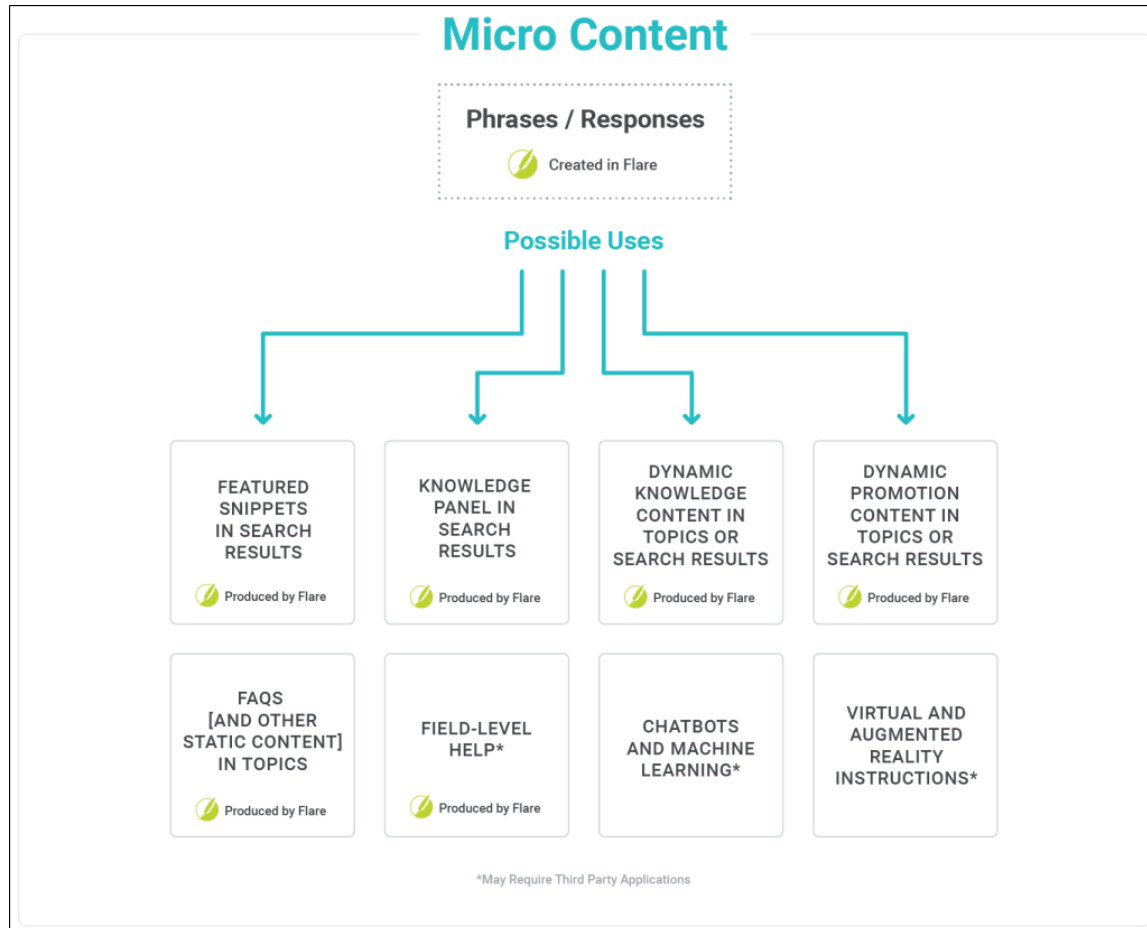
- Targeted
- Focused
- Summarizes/entices
- Reusable and curatable

### Impact

- Single sourcing
- Integration

- Writing style
- Content architecture

## Uses



## Examples

### HTML5 search results

- [Fitbit help](#)
- [MadCap Flare help](#)
- [Blackbaud help center](#)
- [ClickStart website](#)
- [IBC Service Parts search](#)
- [Gigamon documentation](#)

## Google's structured data page types

- FAQ
- Q&A
- How to
- Learning video

### Google "FAQ" type

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#### Example Site - Frequently Asked Questions(FAQ)

[Your site title here](#) › [support](#) › [answer](#)

Welcome to our support center. Here you can find the most frequently asked questions. If you cannot find an answer below, please call us at 1-800-555-5555.

What is the return policy? ▼

How long does it take to process a refund? ▼

What is the policy for late/non-delivery of items ordered online? ▼

▼ Show more

## Google "Q&A" type

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How do I remove a cable that is stuck in a USB port ...

Example.com > questions

Nov 28, 2012 · 4 answers

I inserted the plug from my USB cable that came with my phone into a USB hub. When I tried to unplug the cable, it seemed impossible ...

✓ **Top answer** · 2 votes

I had a similar issue recently with my phone. The cable wouldn't come out, so I grabbed my utility multi-tool ... [More](#)

0 votes

I used an eyelash better grip on the sticking out [More](#)

## Google "How to" type

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How to Tie a Tie

Example.com > fashion > neckwear

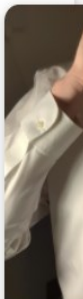
The four-in-hand knot is a great look for any occasion. From formal suits to casual jacket and tie affairs, it's a simple way to quickly look great. Once you have mastered the knot you can tie it in just a minute, so it's also great when you're in a pinch too.



1. Make one end about your neck...



2. Cross the short end over the...



3. Cro your b

## Google "Learning video" type

**How to Ktbl and Ptbl - Knit through back loop & Purl through ...**

YouTube · Knitting with Suzanne Bryan  
Jul 15, 2019

5:01 PREVIEW

6 key moments in this video

- From 00:00: Explanation of using Knit through back...
- From 01:15: examination of normal knit stitches vs....
- From 02:34: turn work - look at stitches
- From 03:24: demonstrate the Ptbl stitch Continental...
- From 03:30: demonstrate the Ptbl stitc throwing

Feedback

## Developing micro content

### Micro content-based authoring

Top-down vs bottom-up process

### Micro content-based authoring process

- Match the user's focus
- Brainstorm questions
- Mine existing content
- Create new micro content
- Research and analytics

### Common types of micro content

- Summary
- Definition
- Procedure
- Flowchart/process
- Labeled diagram
- Tutorial/eLearning video

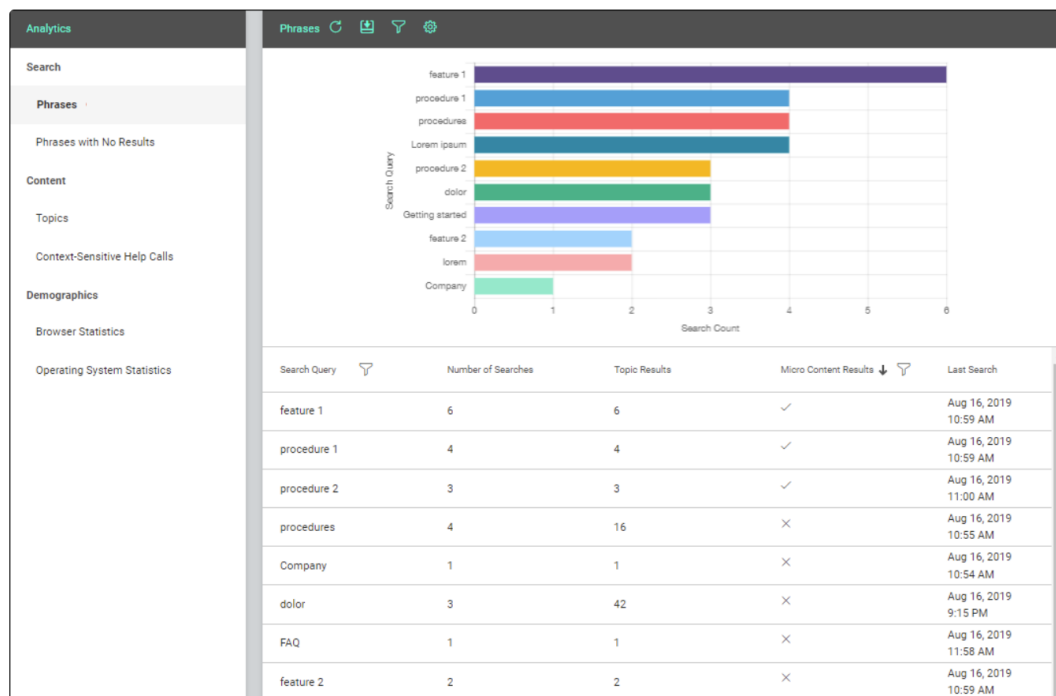
## Glossary

- 1 Open a Glossary file
- 2 Click **New Item**
- 3 Type a **Term**
- 4 Type or select a **Definition**

## Researching micro content

- Customer interaction
- Tech support
- Marketing
- General:  
Google Trends, Quora, Yahoo Answers, Answer the Public, social media
- User analytics:  
Google Analytics, Central analytics
- Interaction analytics: Heap, Mixpanel, Amplitude, Pendo, HotJar

## Researching micro content



## Mining existing content

- 1 Highlight the "response" content in a topic or snippet
- 2 Select **Home > Create Micro Content**
- 3 Type a **Phrase**

## Creating new micro content

- 1 Open a Micro content file
- 2 Type a **Phrase**
- 3 Add the matching content (the "Response")

## Writing micro content

- Review the Schema structured data types, esp. FAQ, Q&A, and How to
- Write the phrase as a question
- Focus on "How," "What," "Why" questions
- Limit answers to 50 words

## Managing micro content

- Grouping: micro content files
- Excluding: conditions
- Finding in topics: Link viewer

## Designing micro content

### Best practices

- Keep it simple for external systems
- Match schema types
- Use style classes to customize/exclude content within search results and/or topics

### Customizing search results

Search results topic

- Which types are included
- Where micro content blocks are positioned

### Customizing search results

Target: Search tab

- Which micro content file(s) to use
- How many micro content results should appear
- Whether glossary results should appear

## Customizing search results

Skin: Styles tab

- Format the micro content blocks in search results and topics

## Including micro content in topics

Template page or topics

- Which types are included
- Where micro content blocks are positioned

## Formatting micro content

The screenshot displays the MadCap Flare application window. The top bar shows the 'madcap FLARE' logo and a search bar containing the text 'inserting videos'. A left-hand navigation pane lists various project components, with 'Project Management' selected at the bottom. The main content area shows search results for the query 'inserting videos', indicating 37 results. A yellow tip box at the top provides advice on using quotes and boolean operators. Below this, a video result is displayed with a thumbnail, title 'Videos in Flare Projects', date 'August 25, 2021', and duration '44:24'. Further down, there are sections for 'Inserting Videos' and 'Deleting Videos From Topics'. On the right side, a 'How to Embed a Video' sidebar lists eight steps for embedding a video into the XML Editor.

madcap  
FLARE

inserting videos

Get Started

What's New?

Key Concepts and Features

Tutorials

Interface and Files

Architecture

Step 1: Starting Projects

Step 2: Adding Content and Features

Step 3: Designing

Step 4: Developing Targets

Step 5: Building and Publishing Output

Learning and Development

Print-Based Output

Project Management

TIP To improve search results, consider using quotes (e.g., "my search term"). Doing this also helps to ignore boolean operators, such as AND, OR, NEAR, NOT, and (). See [Search Methods and Syntax](#).

Your search for "inserting videos" returned 37 result(s).

Video

[Videos in Flare Projects](#)

August 25, 2021  
44:24

[View Other Videos About MadCap Flare Features](#)

Inserting Videos

Inserting YouTube and Vimeo Videos Inserting YouTube and Vimeo Videos Options: Embedded You can use Insert > Multimedia to embed the video in the content file...

Flare/Multimedia/Videos/Main-Activities/Inserting-Videos-Flare.htm

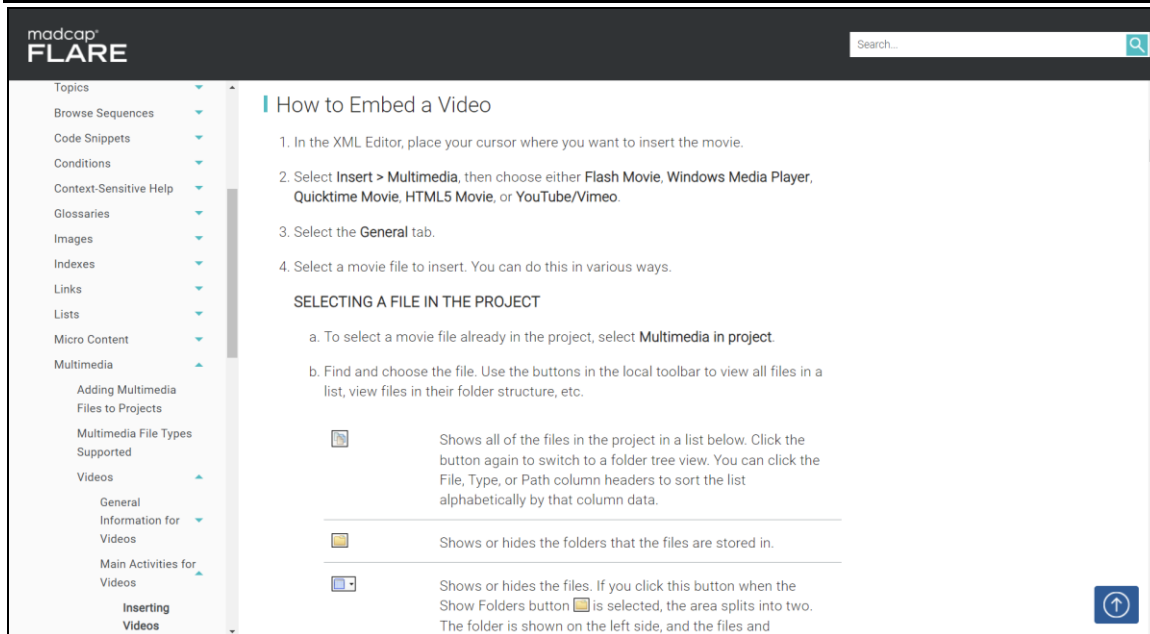
Deleting Videos From Topics

How to Embed a Video

1. In the XML Editor, place your cursor where you want to insert the movie.
2. Select **Insert > Multimedia**, then choose either **Flash Movie**, **Windows Media Player**, **Quicktime Movie**, **HTML5 Movie**, or **YouTube/Vimeo**.
3. Select the **General** tab.
4. Select a movie file to insert.
5. (Optional) If you want to apply a specific [style class](#) to the movie, you can select it from the **Style Class** field.
6. (Optional) In the **Screen Tip** field, you can type a phrase that will appear when the end user hovers over the movie link in the output.
7. (Optional) In the **Alternate Text** field, you can type alternate text to display when the movie is not available, such as when a disabled individual is using a screen reader.
8. (Optional) Select the **Advanced** tab and complete the options as necessary. The options shown depend on the type of movie.



## Formatting micro content



## Formatting micro content

Search results: featured snippet(s)

div.featured-snippets-container

Search results: knowledge panel

div#knowledge-panel

## About the presenter

Scott DeLoach is the CEO of Click**Start**, an STC Fellow, and an ATD Certified Professional in Talent Development (CPTD). He has over 30 years of experience as a content strategist, technical writer, instructional designer, trainer, and UX architect. At Click**Start**, Scott provides content strategy development, design, consulting, and training services for technical documentation, P&P, knowledgebase, and eLearning projects using MadCap Flare.

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