

*Practical workflow
for
technical documentation*

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Who is Dag Wieërs ?

- Freelance Linux and Open Source consultant
 - Currently at Hewlett-Packard, previously contracted at AXA, EMC², Euroclear and employed at IBM
 - design, automation, integration, maintenance, ...
- Author of various tools
 - dstat, mrepo, proxytunnel, wiipresent, dconf, asciidoc-odf, unoconv, ...
- Involved in various Open Source communities
 - RPMforge, ELRepo, CentOS, syslinux, AsciiDoc, LibreOffice, docbook2odf, Rear, Devops, ...

Goals

From manageable sources to professionally styled documents from the command line

Which basically means ?

- Sources need to be clear text
- Output to various formats (PDF, DOC, HTML)
- Easy to modify style/output (for non-developers)
- Applying styles in the process
- Instruct process from the command line/Makefile
- Make writing documentation **as easy as possible**

Text source format

- No shortage in options
 - Markup languages
 - DocBook / XML, X-HTML, SGML
 - Light-weight markup languages
 - ReStructuredText, Markdown, AsciiDoc, Wiki, ...
- Not everything fits common needs
 - Focus on content, simple to write
 - Easy to version (eg. Git or subversion)
 - Support for advanced “book” features: e.g. inline comments, footnotes, admonitions, positioning, complex nesting, indexes, cross references, ...

AsciiDoc as source format

- Light-weight markup language
 - Simple syntax that reads like ascii text
- Syntax feels natural, even in source format
- Maps 1:1 with “Simplified DocBook”
 - Same functionality as used for e.g. O'Reilly books
- Can be converted to various formats
 - X-HTML, DocBook, HTML, LaTeX, Slidy, Wordpress
- Pluggable config, back-ends, themes and filters
 - e.g. code-highlighting, mathml
 - Lots of filters offer interesting possibilities

AsciiDoc demonstration

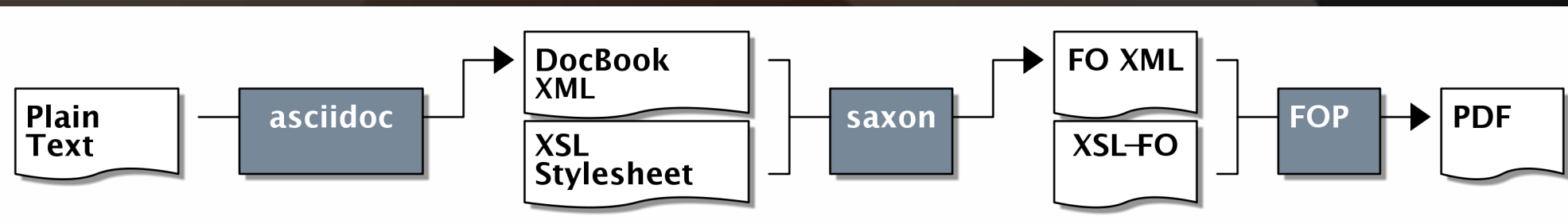
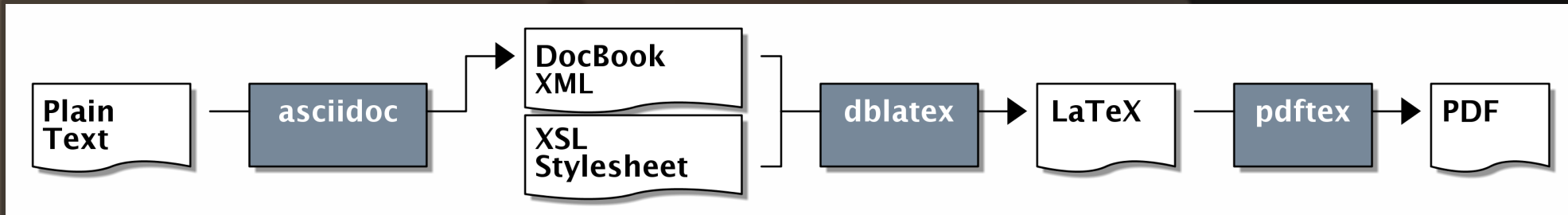
- `vim file.txt`
 - *show AsciiDoc source*
- `asciidoc file.txt`
 - *produces file.html*
- `asciidoc -b docbook file.txt`
 - *produces file.xml*
- `asciidoc -b html -a icons -a toc file.txt`
 - *produces file.html with icons and table-of-contents*

Creating PDF output

- dblatex / pdflatex
 - From DocBook XML to LaTeX to PDF
- FOP
 - From DocBook XML to XSL-FO to PDF
- Firefox
 - From HTML to PDF
- LibreOffice
 - From various formats to PDF

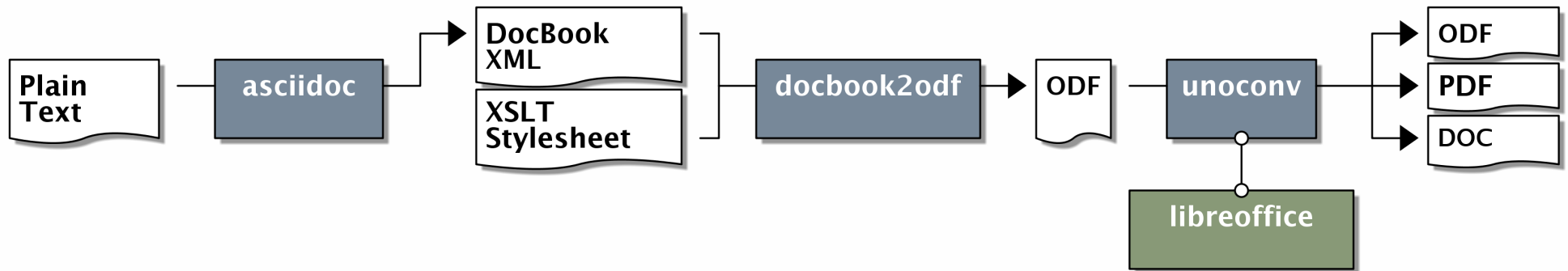
DocBook toolchains

- DocBook output needs additional processing
 - dblatex or FOP requires XSL-FO/XSLT skills
 - XSL-FO and XSLT is programming in XML (ugh)
- If people need to be retrained: FAIL



docbook2odf toolchain

- docbook2odf converts to ODF using XSLT
 - Incomplete implementation
 - Hard to find skilled XSLT people to help
- Use unoconv to produce PDF, DOC, ...
 - Apply ODF style during conversion



unoconv tool

Command line tool to do non-interactive (batch) conversions of documents using LibreOffice import and export plugins.

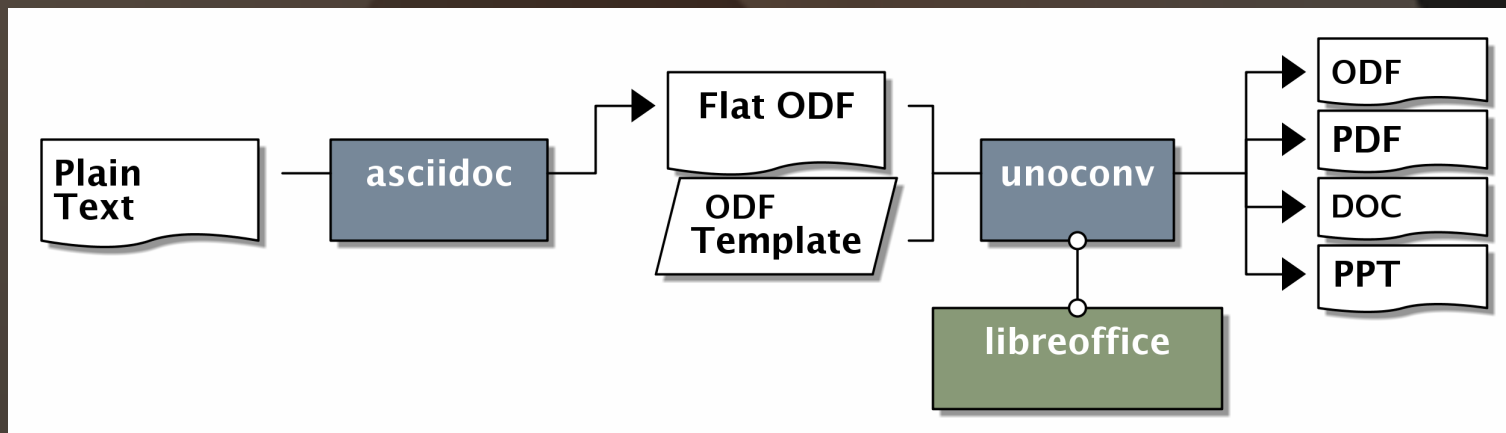
- So in essence, you can use unoconv in Makefiles and scripts to automatically convert files as part of the build-process of your project
- Or use it when doing migrations from MS Office to LibreOffice
- Or as a back-end tool for a conversion application or service

unoconv features

- Supports all import and export filters (+100 formats)
 - Influencing the conversion process through options
- Styles applied during conversion (corporate identity)
 - Either by providing another document or template
- LibreOffice instance is managed by unoconv
 - Using an existing instance or starting a new one
 - Starting a listener on the network is possible too
- Works on Linux, MacOS X and Windows

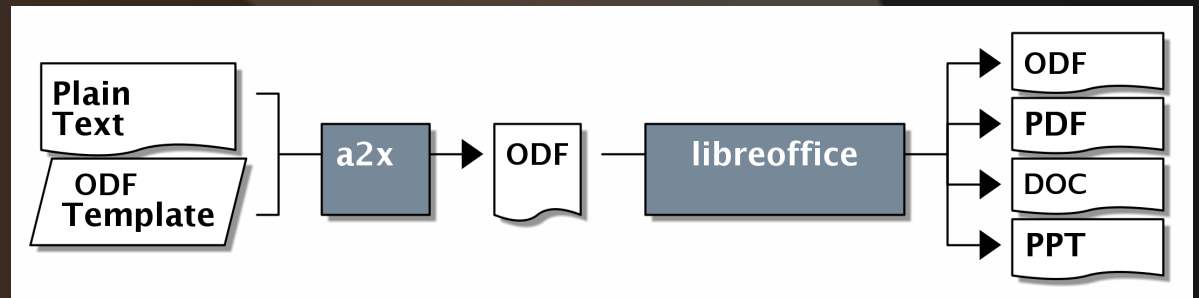
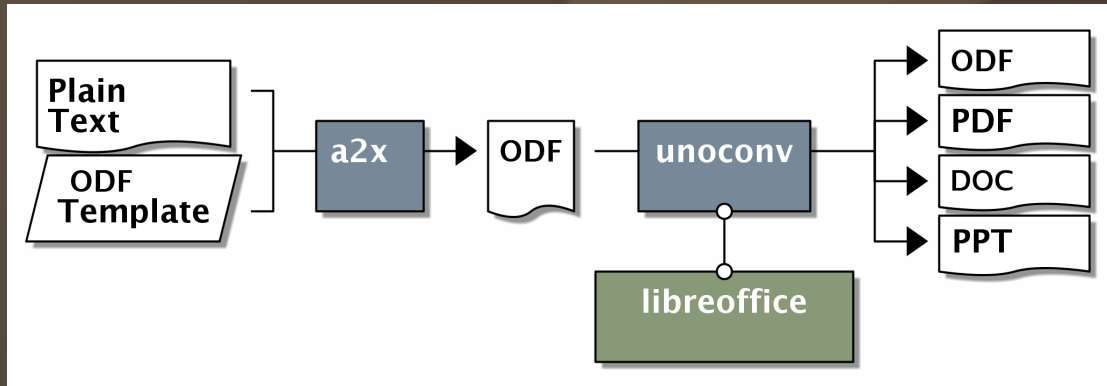
ODF back-end for AsciiDoc

- Directly convert AsciiDoc to ODF
- Apply *corporate identity*
 - Use an ODF *theme* or a styled ODF (LibreOffice)
- LibreOffice can be used to export to PDF, DOC, ...
 - Use unoconv for command line conversion
 - Use soffice.bin –convert-to pdf *file.odf*



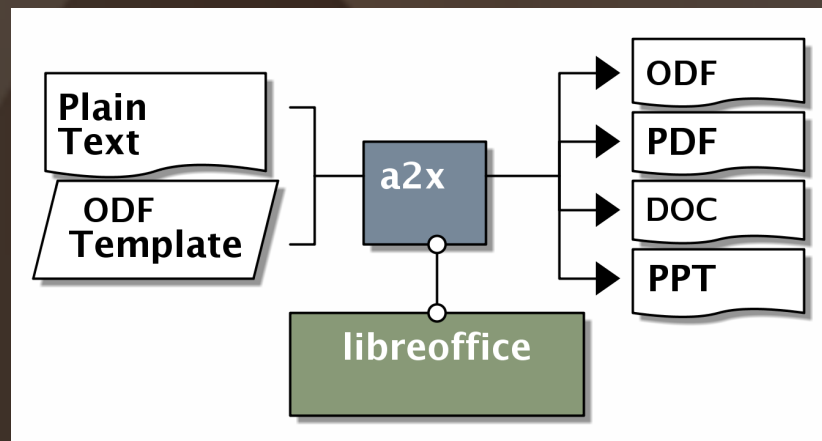
But we're not done yet...

- Integrating into a2x
 - outputs ODF directly
- Improve LibreOffice
 - allow for ODF-styling
 - improve cmdline
 - stabilize
 - get rid of unoconv



Dreams and aspirations

- Creating full-featured ODP files from AsciiDoc
 - With support for custom slides, transitions, etc...
- Filter to create ODG/SVG files from markup/ascii-art
 - With a lot more options than ditaa
- LibreOffice integration into a2x directly



asciidoc-odf project

- Started only 3 months ago
- Implements the basic DocBook constructs
 - Lacks complex tables, ...
 - Default stylesheet is not 100% complete
 - Only basic ODP (presentation) support
- Various limitations to overcome
 - ODP vs other AsciiDoc slide backends
 - ODF vs DocBook constructs

asciidoc-odf demonstration

- `asciidoc -b odt file.txt`
 - *produces file.fodt*

- `a2x -f odt file.txt`
 - *produces file.odt*

Links

- AsciiDoc
 - <http://www.methods.co.nz/asciidoc/>
- asciidoc-odf
 - <http://github.com/dagwieers/asciidoc-odf>
- unoconv:
 - <http://github.com/dagwieers/unoconv>
- Libreoffice:
 - <http://libreoffice.org/>

Thank you for listening

Any questions, ideas, pull-requests ?