Creating a documentation site for users with AsciiDoc and Antora

Alexander Schwartz, Principal IT Consultant
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Motivation

Empower your users with documentation so they get their work done

Keep your content up-to-date

Keep your content consistent

Publish new features for software and documentation in sync
Empower your users with documentation so they get their work done

Why AsciiDoc and Antora

• Online, automated, up-to-date
• Searchable and topic-based
• Navigation and cross references
• Grouped by version and component

Antora Documentation

The Static Site Generator for Tech Writers

This site hosts the technical documentation for Antora. Antora makes it easy for tech writers to create documentation and publish it to the web. As a tech writer, you focus on authoring content in AsciiDoc, Antora’s content markup language. You organize those files into a standard project structure and store them in one or more content (git) repositories. Antora picks up your content from there and transforms it into a website. That's all there is to it!
Antora provides publishing tools and documentation structure

- Structures documentation into components and modules
- Collects AsciiDoc content from multiple Git repositories and branches
- Converts AsciiDoc content to HTML output
- Merges HTML output with UI theme to create a static site

Key benefits:
- Fast conversion built on top of Node.js and minimal dependencies
- Modular and extendible
AsciiDoc is the language, Asciidoctor is a toolchain

**AsciiDoc**
- friction-less writing using plain text
- feature-rich syntax for technical documentation
- 15+ years alive and kicking
- standardization started in 2020 at Eclipse Foundation

**Asciidoctor**
- toolchain to create HTML and other outputs from AsciiDoc
- OpenSource
- runs on Java, Ruby and JavaScript runtimes
- powers Antora’s AsciiDoc to HTML conversion

[AsciiDoc Eclipse Working Group](https://asciidoc.org/)

[Asciidoctor](https://asciidoc.org/)
Writing in the IDE

- stay focused and don’t switch apps
- collaborate using version control
- IntelliJ AsciiDoc plugin provides Antora and AsciiDoc support

List of editors:
https://asciidoctor.org/docs/editing-asciidoc-with-live-preview/
Antora: Structure

- Multiple independent components
- Each component is identified by name and version
- Each component can have multiple modules
- Each module has pre-defined families for pages, images, examples, attachments and partials (content snippets to be included in multiple places)

**Advanced feature:**
A component can be distributed across multiple folders, branches and repositories
Antora: Process

What the user does:
1. Run Antora

What Antora does:
1. Load Antora playbook with list of repositories and branches
2. Clone Git repositories
3. Create HTML output from AsciiDoc
4. Merge with UI theme and UI customizations
5. Optional: Create search index
6. Create output folder with static site
# Antora: Roles

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<td>Web Site Creation</td>
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Antora: First Steps

**Writer:**
1. Create first component folder structure
2. Create `antora.yml` and give the component a name and version
3. Create `index.adoc` in `pages`
4. Create navigation entries in `nav.adoc` and add it to `antora.yml`

**Docu Ops:**
1. Install Antora (either via npm CLI or `package.json` file)
2. Create playbook to generate local preview site for authors
3. Create playbook to publish the site on the Internet

**Web Developer:**
1. Copy the existing UI theme (or create your own)
2. Add UI customizations via supplemental files

Quick Start Guide: https://docs.antora.org/antora/2.3/install-and-run-quickstart/
Demo time

See how this works using the IntelliJ AsciiDoc plugin!

IntelliJ AsciiDoc Plugin

A plugin for the IntelliJ platform (IntelliJ IDEA, RubyMine, etc.) that provides support for the AsciiDoc markup language. It also supports Antora, the documentation CMS build with AsciiDoc.
Why AsciiDoc and Antora

Empower your users with documentation so they get their work done

Keep your content up-to-date
using collaboration as a team using version control

Keep your content consistent
by handling component versions and de-duplication of content

Publish new features for software and documentation in sync
using CI/CD tools to automate publishing
Asciidoctor
https://asciidoctor.org/

IntelliJ Asciidoc Plugin
https://intellij-asciidoc-plugin.ahus1.de/

PlantUML
https://plantuml.com/
https://real-world-plantuml.com/

Antora
https://antora.org/

Videos, slides and examples
https://www.ahus1.de/post/asciidoc-antora-intro-and-deep-dive
https://www.ahus1.de/post/cdc-antora-live

Asciidoctor Kroki extension
https://github.com/Mogztter/asciidoc-kroki
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value – inspired by people