Mass Conversion Case Study

One of the most daunting aspects of migrating to a new authoring tool is the prospect of leaving your existing content out in the cold. Even when you know you need a change, the very *real* possibility of losing years of courseware can be a dealbreaker.

With many other authoring solutions, you're left to solve this problem alone, and your options are slim. Some let you import old content, but it's fully or partially uneditable. In most cases, you would need to recreate your content manually, investing in a time-consuming, labor-intensive process. This typically means a long phase out period as you keep your investment in your old authoring tool for the maintenance and editing of outdated projects until you do a significant overhaul of the content.

This is a story we hear a lot from prospective customers, especially those with a large amount of legacy content, and it's why dominKnow offers custom conversion services that directly address your most common concerns.

Our Solution for Mass Conversion

Our goal for most mass conversion requests is to move legacy content into dominKnow | ONE in a manner that allows a client to update, modify, and reuse it just as easily as a natively-authored project and with a minimal number of manual changes (ideally, zero).

Each mass conversion is unique, but there are a number of general steps to the process.

First, our service team analyzes a representative sample of your legacy content for file format and project features to identify the scope of the work required. We identify any exceptions to the importation process that will require a different approach to the import – areas where existing courseware may not map perfectly to dominKnow's feature sets, as well as potential courseware enhancements that can be automatically applied during the conversion process.

The next step is the development of customized import scripts, which are used to process a representative sample as a prototype.

We collaborate with the client to review the treatments then refine and create additional exceptions or enhancements as appropriate. The import scripts are adjusted, and an updated copy of the prototype is generated for review. This cycle then repeats as necessary.
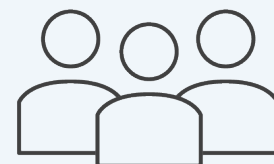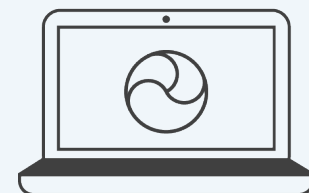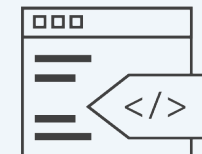
Once a client greenlights mass conversion, the dominKnow team uses the approved process to import all legacy content into a staging platform for review. Some clients prefer a single batch for all content, while others prefer their original library to be divided into multiple batches. Either way, their content is then imported into the client's production environment.

Common treatments and considerations during a mass conversion include:

Conversion of All Content.

Including text, text formatting, hyperlinks, multimedia or document files (attached, embedded, or linked to), alt text, table content, practice and/or test questions, animations, and actions. Converted content is fully editable within dominKnow | ONE.

Mapping of Interactions.

Identifying actions such as click on exercises, animations tied to audio or video playing, and more. Content is mapped to similar interactive capabilities within dominKnow | ONE.

Mapping of Metadata.

To help you take full advantage of dominKnow | ONE's organization and management capabilities, we can dynamically add metadata to imported projects.

Enabling Dynamic Content Reuse.

As an authoring tool that's also an LCMS, our system provides multiple levels of content reuse from individual images to projects, templates, and themes. Dynamic reuse enhances efficiency for both initial creation and later editing. Rather than importing legacy content as a "dumb" (i.e., static) file, we can set items up as dynamically reused content.

Converting Content into New Themes and Templates.

If you're looking for a new look and feel as well as a new authoring tool, we can give old content a facelift by applying dynamic templates and themes of your choosing during conversion. This facilitates a consistent look and feel between legacy content and new projects. Plus, the dynamic nature of themes and templates make redesigns and content reuse easier in the future.

Enhancement of Converted Content.

Additional changes can be made during conversion as needed to bring your legacy content into alignment with dominKnow | ONE's capabilities. For example, we can automatically apply certain settings to legacy elements even if that setting didn't exist in your original software or convert non-responsive content into a responsive design.

Detailed Reporting for Errors That Require Manual Review.

In situations where your case-by-case judgment is necessary, we won't leave you to hunt blindly for problem areas. We'll generate a report of exactly which pages or items might need review.

For a better sense of what we're able to do, let's examine some of our mass-conversion cases.

Case #1: A Large Financial Customer

One large financial customer asked us to convert content they built within a proprietary internal content delivery system they had been using for 10+ years.

Extent of Legacy Content:

More than 200 courses with approximately 150,000 pages. Course length ranged from hours to weeks.

Legacy Format:

standard HTML files

Number of Review Cycles:

about 3

Custom Treatments and Considerations:

Design Service Partnerships. This client was looking for a new, custom look and feel with their tool change. While our service team began their prototyping process, the client worked with one of our design partners to develop a custom library of templates, themes, and baselines to suit their content.

Enhancements. Script treatments involved consistent changes so that it would look its best in their new context. This was a tremendous time saver and provided an immediate uplift to the content. We also developed custom treatments to convert content into a true responsive design in line with dominKnow | ONE's mobile-first authoring mode, Flow.

To enable their content to take full advantage of dominKnow | ONE's organizational system, we helped them decide how various organizational components should map in, then created a custom treatment to automatically assign the metadata within our system.

Media/File Treatments and Dynamic Reuse. Since the client wanted to maintain the storage of embedded videos and documents within their own system, we took steps to ensure the reference URLs remained intact.

Additionally, the new custom themes were applied to the content dynamically as it was migrated. Instead of assigning a specific color or font to the content, we assigned the appropriate style class of a specific theme. This will facilitate global style changes in the future and allows content to be reused more easily in projects that have a different look and feel.

Error Reporting for Manual Review. The client's old system allowed for up to 10 answer choices for practice and test questions, but dominKnow's system sets the cap at 8. For questions that exceeded the maximum, we eliminated the final choices then provided an error report so the client could adjust the assessment questions and their answers to fit the design limitations.

Multiple Import Cycles. With the treatment review process behind us, we worked with the client to phase course migration to meet their specific business needs.

Case #2: UL Environment, Health, Safety and Sustainability

UL Environment, Health, Safety and Sustainability (UL EHS Sustainability) needed us to convert courseware they developed using proprietary authoring tool that published Adobe Flash-based content.

Given the waning popularity of Flash and the rising adoption of mobile internet, UL EHS Sustainability wanted to convert their library into a fully HTML5-compliant format for cross-device compatibility. Due to their focus on animation, they chose to convert their files into dominKnow | ONE's fixed-pixel authoring mode, Claro.

EHS SUSTAINABILITY

Extent of Legacy Content:

200 courses with approx.
6,000 pages

Legacy Format:

XML v1.0 files, UTF-8 encoded

Number of Review Cycles:

about 1

Custom Treatments and Considerations:

Formatting. Before conversion and importation began, the client created a custom theme and adjusted existing templates within dominKnow | ONE to suit their needs. We dynamically applied this theme to all content upon import to define font and similar style options.

The client's import structure defined the type of element, order, and sequence of elements on each page, as well as meta information about those elements. They also replaced all inline formatting of text with HTML upon export.

Some formatting used BBCode, which we replaced automatically upon import with HTML.

The original courseware sometimes placed multiple practice questions on one page, which is not an available option in Claro courses. Each question was imported into Claro on a separate page automatically.

Media/File Treatments and Dynamic Reuse. All image and document files were imported for dynamic reuse. Each unique ID was imported once, with each usage pulled from that single location to save storage space and facilitate future updates.

File types that the client intended to phase out due to incompatibility with mobile devices were imported with the understanding that the client would replace these elements later. This included FLV videos and SWF (Flash) files that would be converted to Claro-based animation sequences.

Content Synchronization. Some of UL's pages had multiple short MP3 files where each file corresponded to on-screen content change. We merged the MP3 files into a single AAC audio file per page and synchronized simple transition events, like showing text or images, to the audio file. The file format change allowed the client to keep the same performance results across different devices while addressing the legal requirements of licensing fees to the owners of the MP3 format.

The client agreed to recreate the more elaborate Flash animations in dominKnow | ONE.

In all, an estimated 70-80% of the client's material was converted and catalogued for re-use through the import process. UL's development team was able to edit and tweak the rest with huge savings to time and effort.

Case #3: Seequent

Seequent – a provider of geological modelling and other data visualization software – needed help converting content they developed in MadCap Flare, an online help authoring tool.

Extent of Legacy Content:

6 projects (139 PDF pages total)

Legacy Format:

exported PDFs

Number of Review Cycles:

1-2

Custom Treatments and Considerations:

Format Changes. This client didn't have any legacy content that normally would be considered traditional eLearning. However, they did have help documentation that they wanted to convert into long scrolling responsive courses in the dominKnow | ONE Flow format. This would provide an improved user experience across devices with minimal page loading.

Manual Conversion. The client's legacy content was modest in scope, but their deadlines were tight, and their staff time was limited. In addition to converting legacy content, they needed to develop a template library, update their screenshots, create interactive software lessons with our Capture tool, and author new content.

Due to the limited size of their legacy content, mass conversion via script was not economically practical. Instead, the services team manually transferred legacy text into their newly-created custom templates. This freed up the client's time for the tasks that required their knowledge and our team's expertise enabled an extremely quick conversion time of less than 20 hours.

Case #4: Discover

Discover needed us to convert an extensive number of FrameMaker projects directly into the dominKnow | ONE's fully responsive Flow format.

Extent of Legacy Content:

95 projects

Legacy Format:

FrameMaker, exported as XML and PDF

Number of Review Cycles:

agile approach

Custom Treatments and Considerations:

Formatting. To facilitate a content facelift and future updates, we dynamically applied the client's newly created theme during importation. Per their request, all font and style options were defined at a universal level and header/footer content was ignored, since it was already incorporated into the theme. Page breaks were automatically inserted based on topic levels from the original FrameMaker documents. Project Properties were added automatically at the project level.

Enabling Dynamic Reuse and Updating. As is typical, we imported images for dynamic reuse. The client's projects had a variety of graphic images that were outdated, so during the migration, we dynamically replaced these reused elements with updated versions.

Agile Approach. At the client's request, we took a collaborative sprint approach, in which we worked towards a Milestone and then the client reviewed, gave feedback, and approved. The sprint approach was broken into the following Milestones:

- M1 – Analysis: The client compiled a sample batch of projects with a variety of attributes. During this phase, the client was able to customize the theme, properties, and media for each project. We collaborated with the client to confirm or adjust the parameters for each project. This phase was completed with meetings scheduled based on team availability, with a calendar time of approximately 2-3 months with several working sessions.
- M2 – Migration: The client sent FrameMaker project source files in batches. We migrated these projects based on the agreed upon parameters, then sent each batch to the client for validation.
- M3 – Validation: The client validated each project to ensure all attributes migrated successfully. We worked with them to correct any isolated errors that occurred (e.g.; font styles, headers, question text). The Migration and Validation phases ran concurrently. Altogether, they were completed in 1-2 months.
- M4 – Publication: The client packaged and published web, SCORM, and PDF files for each project to their local storage and LMS. Projects were ready to use upon publication. This phase was completed in approx. 2-3 weeks.

The client was invoiced at each milestone and had the option (never exercised) of requesting a fundamental change to or termination of the project.

Case #5: A Large European Financial Institution

A large European financial institution needed us to convert a catalog of assessments built in a proprietary test question bank into dominKnow | ONE's Claro authoring mode.

Extent of Legacy Content:

761 tests with approximately 3,529 questions

Legacy Format:

Excel spreadsheets with XML data

Number of Review Cycles:

3

Custom Treatments and Considerations:

Assessment Structure. Prior to development of the import script, we worked with the client to plan how the existing assessment structure would map to dominKnow | ONE's structure with the goal of retaining functionality. The client had a number of "question banks" and "categories" in which they organized content and wanted to retain the ability to easily browse and search the question banks for reuse.

Formatting. Before conversion and importation began, the client created their own default themes within dominKnow | ONE's theme designer and default publishing profiles, which determined test behaviors. We applied the same theme and publishing profile to each assessment upon importation, as requested.

The client also provided page layouts with the default positioning, fonts, colors, and the design of page elements. This included an Introduction Page layout, an End of Module Master Page layout, and a page layout for each of the different question types.

Question types included multiple choice single select, multiple choice multiple select, dropdown selection, fill in the blank, and image hotspot. Question attributes like maximum number of selections or hotspot shape were set according to the client's wishes.

Media/File Treatments. Some questions contained an image, which we imported for dynamic reuse. Existing image properties were applied upon import.

Dynamic Reuse. If a question appeared in more than one assessment, it was imported once and dynamically reused.

Mapping of Metadata. For each learning object, metadata was either assigned or imported, per the client's instructions. For example, the pass mark and language code were not imported but, rather, universally set to a pre-determined value whereas categories, collections, keywords, and metadata were dynamically matched or created upon import.

What is Cloud-based Content Authoring?

Cloud-based content authoring is elearning authoring that is free from the constraints of typical desktop or template-based solutions. Authors collaborate in realtime, share and reuse resources, and engage an unlimited number of reviewers — no matter where they are located. Software is accessed over the Internet and a secure, affordable hosted system is provided — with no worries about software set-up, IT configurations, desktop installs, or missing software licenses.

Benefits

- No duplication of work
- No lost content
- No out of date learning
- No software to install or configure
- Cross platform compatibility
- The ability to share content and media resources across all projects
- Real-time collaboration with built-in review
- Automatic file management, back-up, and versioning control
- Access anytime, anywhere
- One-click publishing for delivery to any desktop, tablet or mobile device

Let's Talk About Your Unique Mass Conversion Needs

These are a few examples of the conversion challenges that we've helped our clients overcome. If your circumstances differ, don't assume your case is hopeless! We're happy to work with you and find a tailored solution to bring your legacy content into dominKnow | ONE for a new lease on life.

Let's talk about it!

dominKnow|:::
connect the thoughts

For more information, call (613) 800-8733, email info@dominKnow.com or visit www.dominknow.com