XHTML templating

Overview document

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1 The XHTML Templating Concept

There are various approaches to templating within a Lenya publication. The XHTML approach is effective under the following conditions:

- Designers want to edit the layout with their conventional tools.
- The page layout contains large parts of static HTML.
- Pages are typically composed of simple elements.

If these conditions are met, it is possible to define the overall layout of a page in a XHTML document, using tools like Dreamweaver. Special placeholders need to be inserted to indicate where Lenya elements should later be substituted. This can be done by inserting <div id="navigation" /> as the placeholder for the navigation, for instance, or <div id="cmsbody" /> for the body part of a page.

If these XHTML documents are finished, they can then be called from Lenya, and the placeholders be substituted with CMS content. Schematically, this process looks as follows:

1)

XML document (article) ->

XML document (navigation) -> Aggregation to one XML document

XHTML template ->

2)

aggregated XML document -> Processing with XSLT

Step 2) identifies the various placeholders (<div id="navigation" /> and <div id="cmsbody" /> in this example) and applies XSL transformations to substitute the placeholders with the transformed contents of (navigation, article) respectively.

What are the advantages of this approach?

- less XSLT is required, making it easier to delegate design work
- XSLT are easier to understand, as they only affect a small part of a page

What are the pitfalls of this approach?

- it may not be appropriate to put the content (here: article) into the XHTML format
- template reuse may be hampered