# Innovasys Case Study: Dundas

http://www.dundas.com

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# 1 Introduction

Dundas is a market leading component vendor selling a range of data visualization software components. Dundas employs 4 full time technical communications staff who are responsible for several distinct documentation outputs. The fast pace of change and the quantity of documentation present particular challenges to the Dundas technical communications team.

Dundas originally used Visual Studio and VSIP to write their product documentation in Microsoft Help 2.x format. This process required the manual creation of each individual topic, including API documentation. It become quickly apparent that Dundas needed to take advantage of the .NET C# XML source code commenting feature by using some help authoring tool that could automatically generate the language reference documentation. After looking at several available products, Dundas decided that the Innovasys product offering (Document! X and HelpStudio) were the market leaders, hands down.

**Content Migration**

In choosing Document! X and HelpStudio as their documentation toolset, Dundas faced the mammoth task of migrating the existing manually authored content. Innovasys worked closely with Dundas to develop a bespoke migration tool that extracted the API reference content from a large number of existing HTML files into the XML based file format used by Document! X.

The bespoke migration tool provided by Innovasys extracted only the content that could not be automatically generated by Document! X (e.g. descriptions, example code etc.). Once the content was migrated to Document! X the Dundas technical communications team had an authoring environment that enabled them to work in a WYSIWYG view of the generated content, but only required them to complete the sections of the documentation that Document! X could not automatically generate.
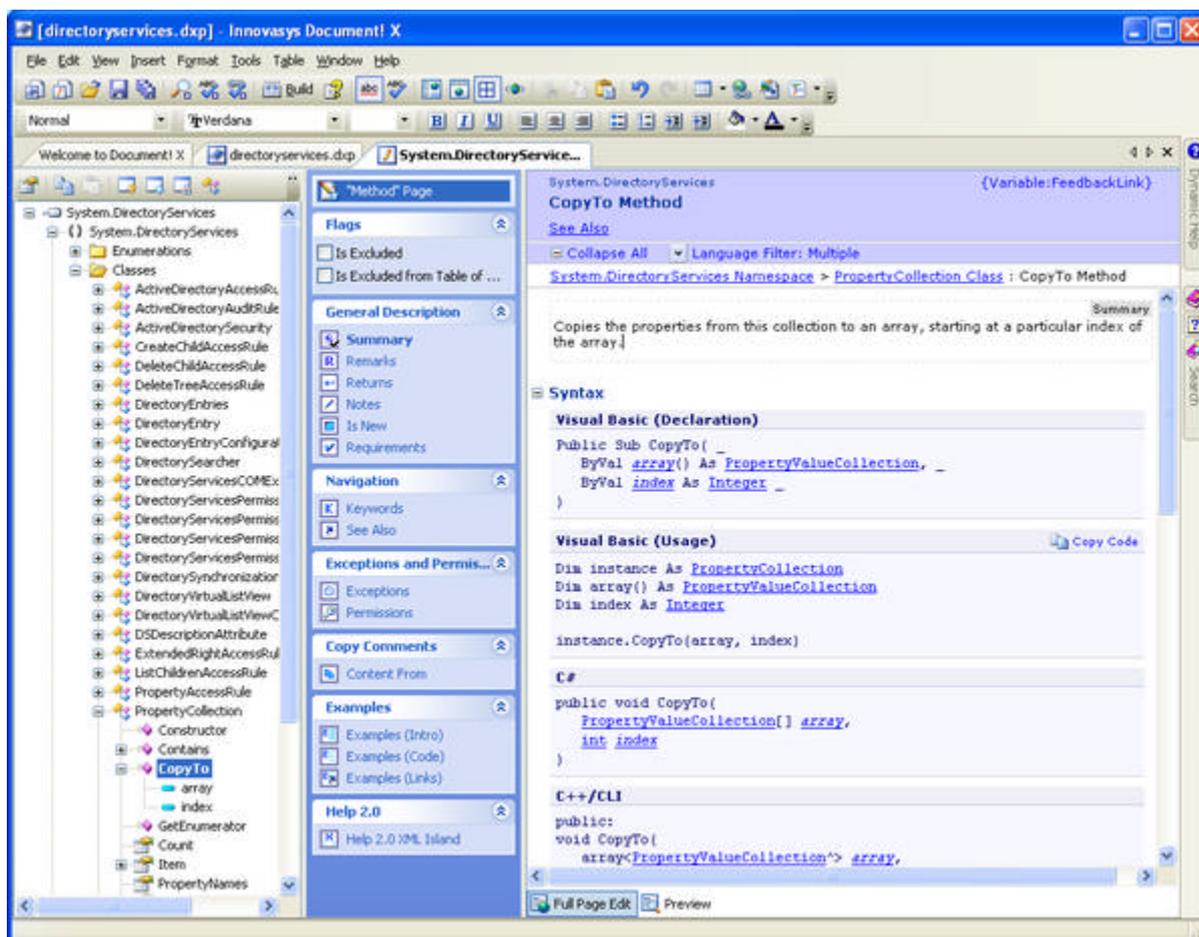


*Document! X Content File Editor*

With Document! X automating the generation of much of the core API reference content, Dundas could have confidence that the output was accurate, up to date and in a wholly consistent style and the technical communications team could concentrate on authoring great help materials.

## 2 Metrics

Dundas currently publish a large volume of user assistance materials using Document! X and HelpStudio:

- 5 different products
- Compressed .hxs (Help 2.x) files total > 75MB
- Help is output to .hxs (Help 2.x) format for installed help and HTML (for online help)
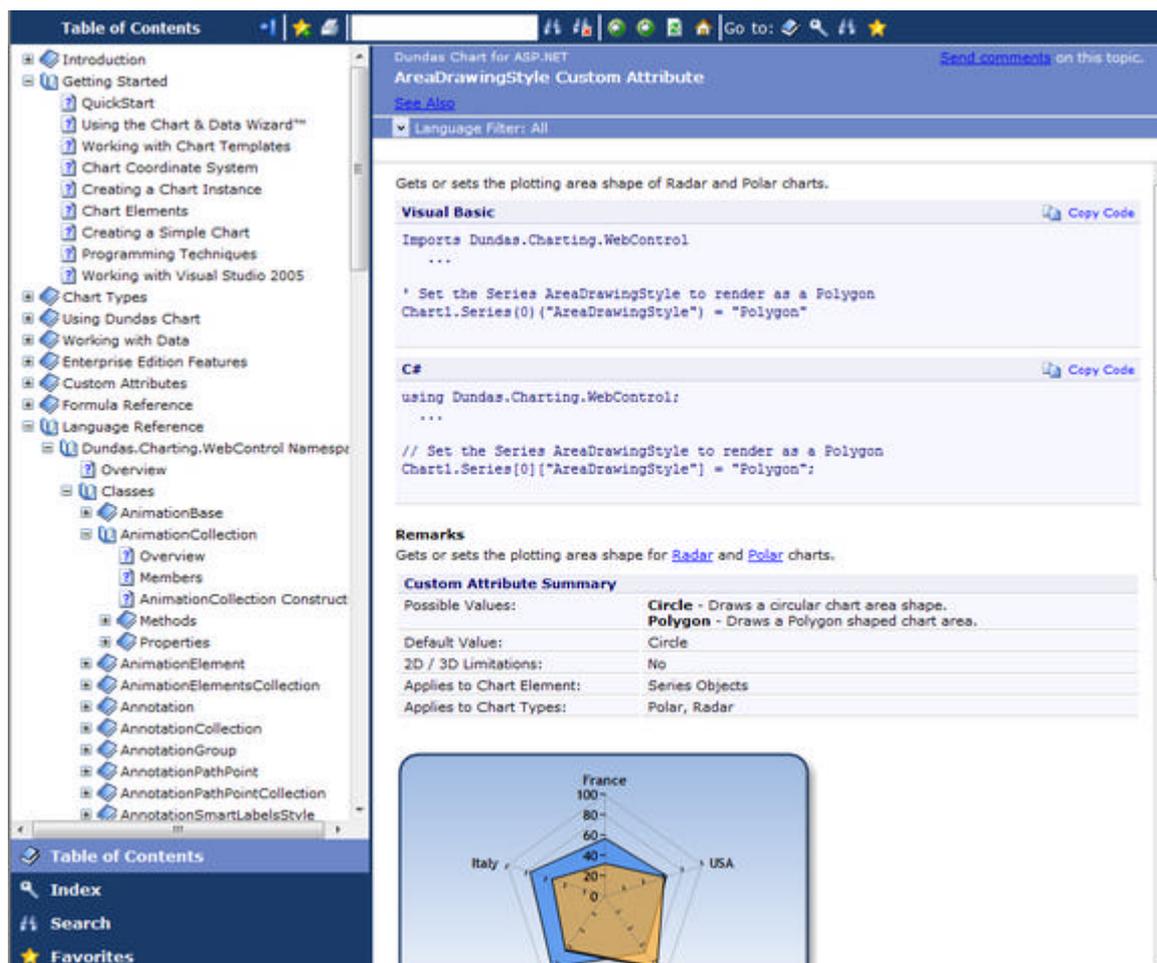


*Example Dundas help content: web output*

## 3    Benefits

- With the assistance of Innovasys, Dundas were able to migrate API reference content from existing manually authored documentation into Document! X, removing the requirement for extensive rework of existing core content.

- By moving from manually authored topics to the template based configuration of Document! X and HelpStudio, Dundas were able to create a consistent and branded template to set the look and feel to the generated output without requiring rework of the actual content.

- Document! X was able to link to pages in the base class documentation for inherited members instead of generating secondary pages in the implementing class documentation, removing duplication and minimizing the size of the generated output.

- The generated output automatically implements the F1 and Dynamic help support within Visual Studio, ensuring that users of Dundas products always have quick access to help materials.

- Dundas are able to produce multiple versions of the help using single-sourcing (build flag) capabilities.

- Dundas generates HTML output from the same project as their compiled help, and they use this HTML output to provide online help on their web site.

- The user-friendliness of HelpStudio allows for a quick ramp-up period for any new hires to the Technical Communications team who may be experienced in using other popular help authoring tools.