

Digital Text Structure

A brief introduction to Markdown

Markdown

- The computer scientist John Gruber conjured the idea of a simple markup language in 2004 after becoming frustrated by writing tedious HTML tags to properly format his content.
- Markdown is a text-to-HTML conversion tool for web writers.
- It is an easy-to-use syntax for quickly styling and structuring all forms of writing on the web. It is often used on GitHub's README files, but it is also usable on other blog services like WordPress. It easily converts to .html, .pdf, and .docx with Pandoc.
- Basically, Markdown is just regular text with a few non-alphabetic characters thrown in, like # or *. So *The Tempest* is rendered as **The Tempest**. If we put # in front of **The Tempest**, it becomes a first-level header.
- Why write a file in Markdown (.md)?

Markdown

- The importance structure and of workflow: not only writing flow, but the flow of a computational pipeline. It is also good for documenting and demoing code.
- In Atom (and other text editors) you can preview your markdown for readability. In Atom, you enter Markdown preview by entering control+shft+m.
- An example—take some plain text such as:

Herman Melville

(1819–1891)

When the author of Moby-Dick died in 1891, he was best known as the author of the adventure story Typee [footnote: Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life was published in 1846 by John Murray in London.]

Markdown

[Herman Melville](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herman_Melville)

(1819–1891)

When the author of *Moby-Dick* died in 1891, he was best known as the author of the adventure story *Typee* ^[*Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life* was published in 1846 by John Murray in London.]

1 [Return to the Home page] ([index.md](#))

2
3
4 # [Herman
• Melville] (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herman_Melville)

5
6 ## (1819–1891)

7 |
8
9 When the author of **Moby-Dick** died in 1891, he was
• best known as the author of the adventure story
• **Typee**^ [**Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life** was
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10
11 ---

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Herman Melville

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1. *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life* was published in 1846 by John Murray in London. ↩

The Philosophy of Markdown.

To quote John Gruber, the creator of Markdown (<https://daringfireball.net/projects/markdown/>):

> The idea for Markdown is to make it easy to read, write, and edit prose. HTML is a **publishing** format; Markdown is a **writing** format. Thus, Markdown's formatting syntax only addresses issues that can be conveyed in plain text.



The Philosophy of Markdown.

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Another example: Our Day 1 Schedule in markdown

Detailed Schedule (Subject to Change)

Day 1 (Monday, 2 July)

Time	Topic	Type
:-----	:-----	:-----
12.30	Registration	
13.00	Senate House Library Talk	Presentation
14.00	Seminar 1: Brief history of Scholarly Editing	Presentation, Discussion
16.00	Seminar 2: Digital Editing Workflow, Transcription; Brief Introduction to XML	Digital lab



Now, in the table rendered in html:

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```
<h2 id="schedule">Schedule</h2>
<h3 id="day-1-monday-2-july">Day 1 (Monday, 2 July)</h3>
<table>
<thead>
<tr><th style="text-align: left">Time</th>
<th style="text-align: left">Topic</th>
<th style="text-align: left">Type</th>
<th> </th> </tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>
```

html to Markdown?

- What if you already have an html file from, say, a web site like Project Gutenberg?
- Use Aaron [Aaron Swartz](http://www.aaronsw.com/2002/html2text/) 's text2html tool:
<http://www.aaronsw.com/2002/html2text/>
- The last word: Ultimately, we write content in markdown or html because it is both easily sharable data and it is non-proprietary.