

Document Your World With Markdown

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Slides online at

<http://seanboisen.com/talks/2015/markdown> (eventually)

Introduction

- About me
- Goals for this talk
 - *What is Markdown and why should I use it?*
 - *How do I create Markdown?*
 - *What can I do with Markdown?*

What is Markdown?

- Markdown is
 - *a simple system*
 - *for structuring plain text*
 - *that covers just enough to meet the most common needs.*

“A designer knows he has achieved perfection not when there is nothing left to add, but when there is nothing left to take away.” – Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

Why Markdown?

- Text is the universal format.
- There is power in simplicity.
- Markdown emphasizes content and writing, with “just enough” formatting to avoid distraction.
- Creating with Markdown harnesses the value of a simple core + powerful transformations

Markdown Example

Markdown is **great** for

- text and code formatting
- lists, links, images, and more

John Gruber says:

“The overriding design goal for Markdown’s formatting syntax is to make it as readable as possible.”

Markdown Example (Revealed)

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More Markdown Example (Revealed)

Using Markdown typically involves *both*:

1. Authoring text in a specific format
2. Converting Markdown to other formats

There's detailed [syntax documentation on the web](#).



Caption

Using Markdown typically involves ***both***:

1. Authoring text in a specific format
2. Converting Markdown to other formats

More Markdown Details

Alternative syntax:

```
## Atx-style headers
```

```
Setext-style Headers look underlined (= or -)
```

```
=====
```

```
Emphasis and strong can use *asterisks* or _underscores_
```

```
Lists can use * or -
```

Hyperlinks:

```
[An inline link](http://lnfw.org "LinuxFest") with title
```

```
-----
```

Tools for Writing Markdown

- Your favorite text editor
- OS X:
 - Long list at Slant: “*What is the best Markdown editor for OS X?*”
 - My current favorite is *Lightpaper* from *ashokgelal.com*:
WYSIWYG styling, preview pane
- Emacs: some styling, display as HTML

What You Can Make with It

- Single-page HTML
- Blog posts (Movable Type, BBEdit, Blossom)
- Other formats: PDF, .docx, Open Document, man page, LaTeX, and many more
- HTML for presentations (Slide, S5, others)
- Static web sites

Tools for Converting Markdown

- Gruber's Markdown script (Perl)
- Python Markdown
- **pandoc**: the “universal document converter”

Create a Presentation

- [HTML Slidy](#): a W3C tool using HTML+Javascript for presentations
- Javascript controls to display one slide at a time
- 2nd-level headings become individual slides
- CSS styling can be customized
- This presentation was made from Markdown!
`pandoc -s -S -t slidy -o markdown.html Markdown-talk.md`

“The secret of concentration is elimination.” – Howard Hendricks

Create a Website

- Make the structure yourself and convert pages from Markdown to HTML
- [jekyll](#) (ruby): free hosting with Github Pages
- [PyKwiki](#): blogging platform with searching

“A great man is one sentence.” – Clare Boothe

Make an eBook

- ePub is just a container with content, styling, TOC, etc.
- Substitute your own stylesheet, cover image, metadata, fonts
- Creating an ebook with pandoc shows how to generate an ePub for Pro Git

What's Missing

- Tables
- Centering
- Fine control over size, layout

“There is nothing so useless as doing efficiently that which should not be done at all.” – Peter Drucker

Variants and Relatives

- **MultiMarkdown** adds support for metadata, table, and more.
- **AsciiDoc**: looks less like plain text, and is less broadly used
- Wiki markup
- **reStructuredText**: popular for Python documentation

For The Hardcore Geek

- Python Markdown has an extensions API
- pandoc (Haskell)

Wrapping Up

- Simple core + powerful transformations = Win!

“Besides the noble art of getting things done, there is the noble art of leaving things undone. The wisdom of life consists in the elimination of nonessentials.” – Lin Yutang

More about me

- Twitter: [seanboisen](#)
- Websites: [SemanticBible](#), [SeanBoisen.com](#)
- Previous LinuxFest talks:
 - *From 0 to Website in 60 Minutes - With Django (2010)*
 - *Natural Language Processing in Python using NLTK (2008)*