

Conditional Text

Using FrameMaker 5.x

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Who is Kathy Ramsey?

- Senior member of the Rocky Mountain Chapter of the STC; also on the Council
- 1993: A hardcopy manual I worked on and published with FrameMaker 4 won the “Best of Show” award (in the Technical Publications Competition)
- Co-manager of the Online Competition and the Online SIG (6 years)
- 15 years industry experience

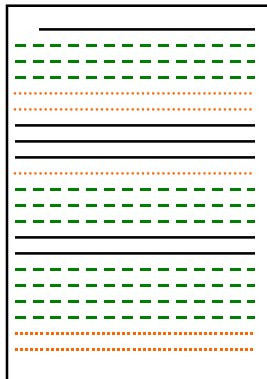
What is Conditional Text?

- Text that can be selectively displayed and/or hidden, as deemed necessary by the author
- Simple, yet with the potential to confuse
- A misnomer—it's not just for text, because anchored frames, special markers, and table rows can also be conditional

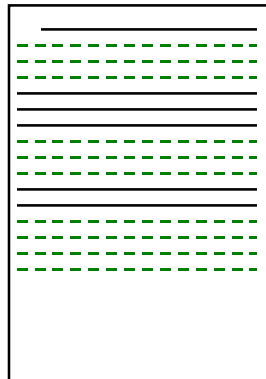
Conditional Text — How To Do It?

— Shared text
- - - Version 1 text
· · · Version 2 text

Source Doc



Version 1 Doc



Version 2 Doc



Possible Applications for Conditional Text

- Versioning: different types of online help deliverables (HTML Help vs. WinHelp), or different versions of documentation for different interfaces of a product (Windows vs. Macintosh vs. UNIX)
- Prompting: embedding questions or comments in a document (for reviewers to respond to)
- Coaching: embedding explanatory instructions inside a boilerplate document/ template that will be used by others

Benefits of Conditional Text

- Forces you to carefully plan your document
- Fewer resources (human and capital) required in the long run
- Reduces document “bloat”
- Saves money over the entire span of the document lifecycle

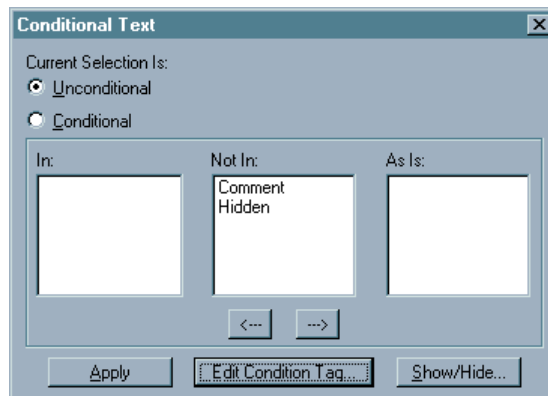
“Costs” of Using Conditional Text

- Takes longer to set up (initially)
- Some writers get confused about what to do and when to do it
- Documents are more complicated when viewing/printing
- FrameMaker books need to be regenerated more often (to keep the pagination and auto-numbering up-to-date)

How To Do It – Three Steps

- Define your conditions
- Choose text overrides for each condition
- Hide/show condition(s) as needed

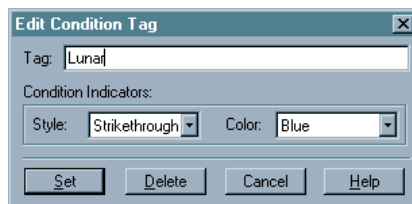
Conditional Text Dialog Box



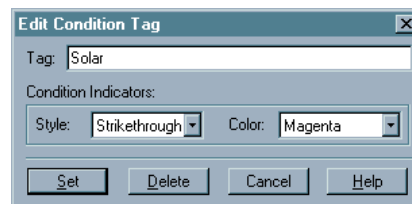
Note: The conditions "Comment" and "Hidden" are provided, by default.

Define Your Conditions

Condition 1 is Lunar



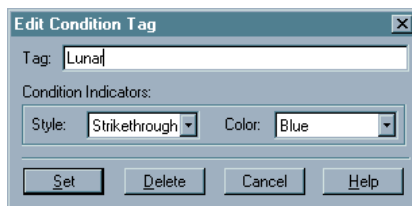
Condition 1 is Solar



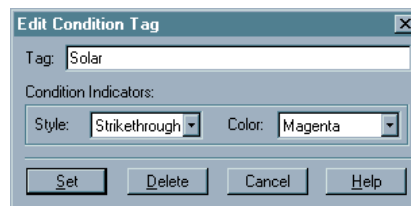
Click Set to define the condition or change its properties.

Choose Text Overrides for Each Condition

Lunar is Blue, Strikethrough



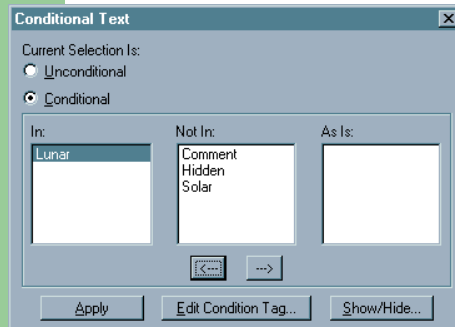
Solar is Magenta, Strikethrough



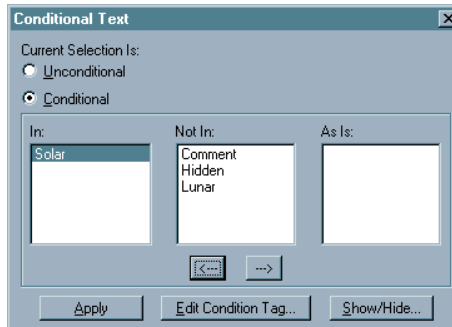
Displaying these visual text overrides is optional.

Apply the Various Conditions (one at a time)

Selected text is set to “Lunar”



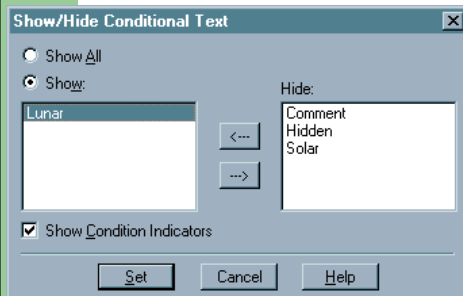
Selected text is set to “Solar”



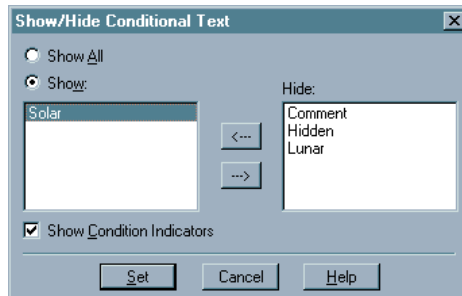
Click Apply to change the condition of what you have highlighted.

Hide/Show Condition(s) as Needed

Lunar is shown; Solar is hidden

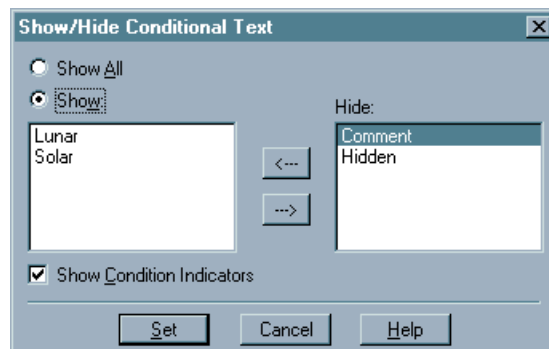


Solar is shown; Lunar is hidden



Hide/Show Condition(s) as Needed, continued

You can work with both conditions displayed, which is what I prefer to do. I also keep my text symbols turned on.

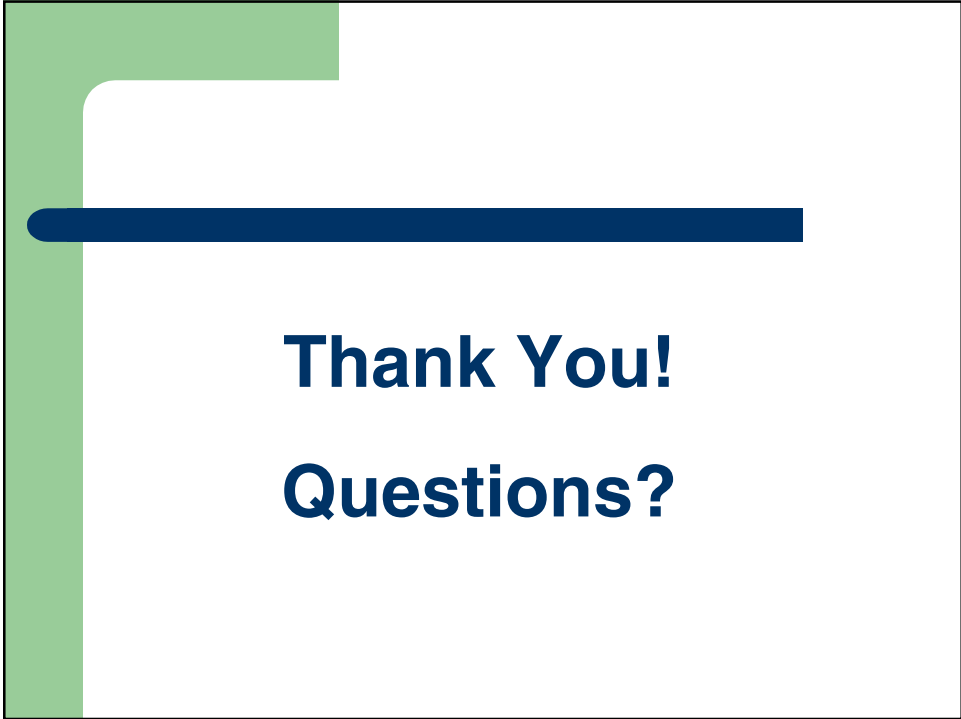


Practical Tips

- The different colors (Blue and Magenta) help you to differentiate the two conditions on-screen, even though they might be displayed together side-by-side
- Don't go overboard with conditions—it's hard to manage more than 4–5 different conditions
- Be meticulous as you work

Using Conditional Text with ForeHelp (to create online help)

- Works well
- ForeHelp “honors” the conditions you have defined in FrameMaker
- You can also define additional conditions in ForeHelp, if you wish
- You have different build options, depending on what “mode” you are in (HTML, WinHelp, etc.)



Thank You!
Questions?