



XStream RapidShare™ Storyboard Module

Introduction

XStream Software's **RapidShare Storyboard Module** is a web-based visual storyboarding environment that represents a single instructional design project (within the XStream RapidShare enterprise technology) being worked on by the project team members. Using the Storyboard Module, course builders, graphic artists, media producers, instructional designers and subject matter experts (SMEs) can visually outline screens and other assets (video, text, graphics, animations, interactive elements, links to resources, etc.) that will form the basis for the development of online content. This content can include courseware, assessments, presentations, demos, and other types of multimedia content. Each blueprint that is created, refined, and approved becomes the basis for the subsequent development/production process. The storyboard content may be exported for development using either XStream's authoring technologies or third-party technologies.

On the web-enabled, database-driven collaboration platform, each storyboard is created as a secure, interactive shared website with access for authorized team members across the enterprise. Developers, reviewers, and managers can communicate and collaborate to implement the plans, designs, and strategies that will ultimately be developed/produced. The Storyboard Module provides the capability to quickly and easily create effective blueprints that enable organizations to produce quality content and reduce their overall costs.

The various components of the storyboard are accessed from a central tree view, which facilitates a logical flow and easy access to various elements by different team members.



The system provides the flexibility to customize the level of access for each team member working on the storyboard. Each user has defined rights at each level of the storyboard to control what the user has access to and what functions the user can perform at each level. Thus a user

can be provided with full access to oversee and contribute to all components/stages of the storyboard, or the user can be provided only limited access to specific storyboard elements relevant to the user's assigned task(s) or areas of expertise.

Key Features

The key features/components of the Storyboard Module are described below.

1. Welcome Pages

Storyboard Welcome Pages can be used for a variety of purposes, such as to welcome members to the storyboard project, provide an overview and description of the project, specify milestones and deadlines, and more.

2. General Information

General information about the Storyboard may be defined and displayed. This information can include the organization name, project title, start date, finish date, and resource allocation details.

3. Global Properties

Global properties may be optionally defined for the content that is being developed. These types of properties are generally used to define various broad-based display attributes and functionality for the content matter as a whole (rather than just individual frames/screens or objects).

There are predefined global properties that exist for a RapidBuilder simulation/course (which will be created with XStream's RapidBuilder authoring tool) or a RapidExam assessment (which will be created with XStream's RapidExam authoring tool). The user may enter values for these properties if he/she is developing content for a RapidBuilder course or RapidExam assessment. Alternatively, users may define their own custom global properties (by specifying the property name, type, and value). This is useful if the user is developing custom content that will be exported to a third-party tool.

4. Time Sheets

Users may optionally create time sheets to keep track of the time spent on storyboarding tasks. A time sheet entry may be made by specifying the date, start time, end time, and task description. Any user may view and edit a personal consolidated time sheet showing all the entries that have been made for that user. Administrators (with appropriate rights) may view consolidated time sheets for the storyboard project as a whole.

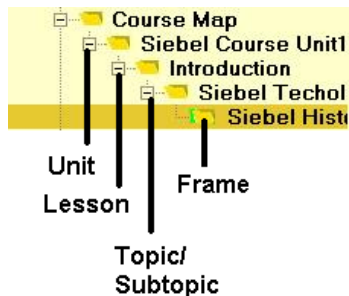
5. Instructional Design Guidelines

Authorized team members may create, post, and view instructional design guidelines for the storyboard. These are meant to furnish designers and developers with direction on the planning and development of the storyboard by providing information on project parameters, prerequisites, design rules, general policies, recommendations, goals, etc.

6. Course Map

The central component of the storyboard is the Course Map, which is a framework (i.e., a set of independent screens/frames) used to visually represent the layout and organization of the learning content. This provides an intuitive outline of the scope and sequence of the content.

As shown below, the course map is created as a logical, hierarchical flow tree with multiple levels. The first level is the main **course/exam unit** (which acts as the top-level container for the course/exam or content module). The second level consists of the individual **lessons** that make up the course unit (or the individual **exams** that make up the exam unit). The third level consists of the **topics/subtopics** that populate each lesson (applies to a course only). The fourth level consists of the individual **frames/screens** that make up each lesson/exam, topic and/or subtopic.



Key features of the Course Map include the following:

- Provides the learner with a visual representation of the course/content structure. This may include such elements as units, lessons, exams, pre-tests, post-tests, menus, overviews, etc. For each screen/frame that is part of the Course Map, the developer may create multiple learning assets/objects and customize a variety of options/properties for these assets.
- With visual authoring capabilities of the built-in Flash Editor, all assets appear in their native form – text, graphics, audio, video, etc. Project team members don't need to envision how scripts will translate to screen. They can use the drag-and-drop interface of the editor to directly create and modify screen layouts and populate them with multimedia objects. Thus multimedia content can be previewed directly in the storyboard.
- Provides complete flexibility to create storyboards with as much or as little detail as required. Developers may choose to simply create a basic course or exam shell (with a defined branching layout of empty lessons, exams, topics, and/or subtopics), which will subsequently be exported out to an authoring technology to be populated with content. Alternatively, developers may choose to drill down and further flesh out the storyboard

content prior to exporting by adding and sequencing frames/screens, adding assets/objects to screens, defining properties for screens and assets, etc.

- d. Shows the learning dependencies (if any) that are part of the learning content. If there is a section of content that must be accessed/learned prior to accessing another section, this dependency can be shown on the course map. Thus the order/sequence of the content can be developed logically and intuitively.
- e. Helps to organize the workflow and production responsibilities during course/content development. Production team members can gauge the amount of work they are doing and how it fits in to the entire development cycle.

7. Media Repository

Each storyboard includes a built-in repository of media files, including audio, video, images, icons, cursors, RapidBuilder (RBX) files, RapidExam (EXM) files, Performance Analyzer (RPE) files, and other types of content files. The repository is used to retrieve and manage media files and associate them with specific screens/frames and learning assets/objects. All media files are managed from one central location, which eliminates the cumbersome process of distributing/e-mailing these elements separately among different team members.

8. Announcements and Notes

- a. Public announcements can be posted to inform team members about any relevant information related to the project, such as progress updates, upcoming deadlines, policy changes, management decisions, etc.
- b. Members can post and view notes/comments anytime using built-in posting options. Comments can appear at any level of the storyboard – unit, lesson, screen, etc.
- c. Automatic “Notify Me” capability allows members to keep track of changes/revisions occurring within the storyboard. Each member is given the capability and the rights to enable “Notify Me” at any node level. A member may choose to be automatically notified (by e-mail) as soon as a change occurs in a selected storyboard component, or he/she may choose to receive a daily summary of all changes made to a selected storyboard component or all changes made to the complete storyboard.

9. Sign Off Authority

Designated project leaders can be given administrative authority to electronically sign off on a storyboard once they have reviewed and approved it. This allows leaders to control the transition from storyboarding to production.

10. Export to XML for Development/Production

Once completed, storyboard content can be easily exported to XML format and then imported into an XStream authoring technology or third-party authoring technology for the development/production phase. Exporting to XML format is a great time-saving feature since it enables developers to enhance and build upon the pre-developed storyboard content instead of having to embark on the development process from scratch.

The exported XML file for a course or exam can be imported into XStream's RapidBuilder or RapidExam technology for development. The exported XML file for other custom content can be used within third-party technologies as appropriate (i.e., the specific application and use of the .XML file within a third-party technology is determined by the developer).

11. Optional Communication/Collaboration Capabilities

Optional communication and collaboration capabilities may be provided as part of the Storyboard Module. These include threaded discussion forums, interactive chat sessions, e-mailing capabilities, and more.

These communication/collaboration capabilities enable users to effectively collaborate on all stages of development, and they allow for important client feedback. Clients can review proposed content online and provide feedback that is immediately sent to the project manager or content developers. Developers can meet with a client online and perform real-time updates as the client is providing input on the storyboard.

Advantages of the Storyboard Module

The Storyboard Module provides many advantages. Some of the main ones include:

- Secure SSL or HTTPS access.
- 508 Accessibility Compliance enabling full access to all users, including users with disabilities.
- Full Unicode and Multi-Language Support.
- Comprehensive full text search capabilities (at all levels of the storyboard module) to easily and efficiently locate the desired components or information within the storyboard module.
- E-mail notification capability enabling storyboard project members to be automatically notified of storyboard revisions and changes occurring on a regular basis.
- Flexibility to define administrator and user access rights at all levels of the storyboard module.
- Significant time savings (resulting in efficiency and overall productivity increase) in developing storyboards using this module versus developing storyboards manually.

- Capability to collaborate before finalizing the individual storyboard screens.
- Maintaining centralized repository of media resources as well as storyboard elements.
- Ability to centrally organize all elements/components related to the entire instructional design project.
- Complete time sheet management capability to track time spent by individuals working on the storyboard module.
- Flexibility to develop basic storyboards (with minimal details) or comprehensive storyboards (with maximum details or information).

Contact Information

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