RELOAD
Reusable eLearning Object Authoring & Delivery

Reload Editor & Content Packaging: A Quick Start Guide

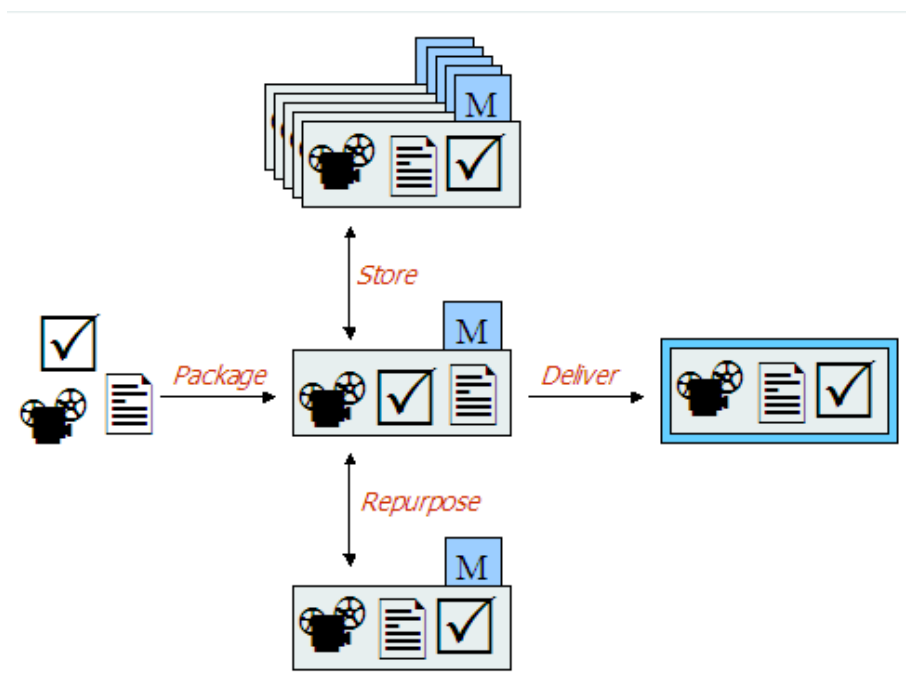**What Does Reload Editor Do?**

RELOAD Editor is a *Content Package* and *Metadata* Editor. If you create or work with educational materials, and want to be able to share or adapt them then the RELOAD Editor is the tool for you.

Why Do We Need Content Packages?

Creating a Content Package is the best way to share educational materials. All the files needed are stored conveniently within a single Zip archive and the standard structure created can be understood by repository software and Managed Learning Environments.

What Use is Metadata?

Metadata describes the contents of the Content Package, and can also provide information about technical requirements, usage restrictions and third party annotations. Adding metadata to describe a resource allows it to be sorted, indexed and retrieved from repositories such as those established by JISC (JORUM) and other bodies.

When To Use Content Packages?

Content Packages are a convenient way to store educational content, especially if you plan to pass it on to someone else – they will immediately be able to utilise the resource because of the way its structure is recorded. Additionally, repositories such as JORUM accept Content Packages – and use Content Packaging as their export format. Managed Learning Environments may also import and export Content Packages.

What Types of Materials Go Into Content Packages?

We say that Content Packages are used to store Educational Content, but of course Educational Content can mean anything – from a single image which may be used for illustration to a full web-based course with video and sound clips, Acrobat files, Java simulations, Flash animations, Word documents and assessment tests. Metadata added to the Content Package allows other users to assess its suitability for their needs.

How does Content Packaging Work?

Content Packaging is really very simple: All the content needed to make up a piece of educational material are collected together. A special file, *the manifest* (which must be called imsmanifest.xml) is then created. The manifest stores information about the resource in a very specific agreed format laid down by a group called IMS. The manifest is like a packing slip attached to the side of a parcel or package.
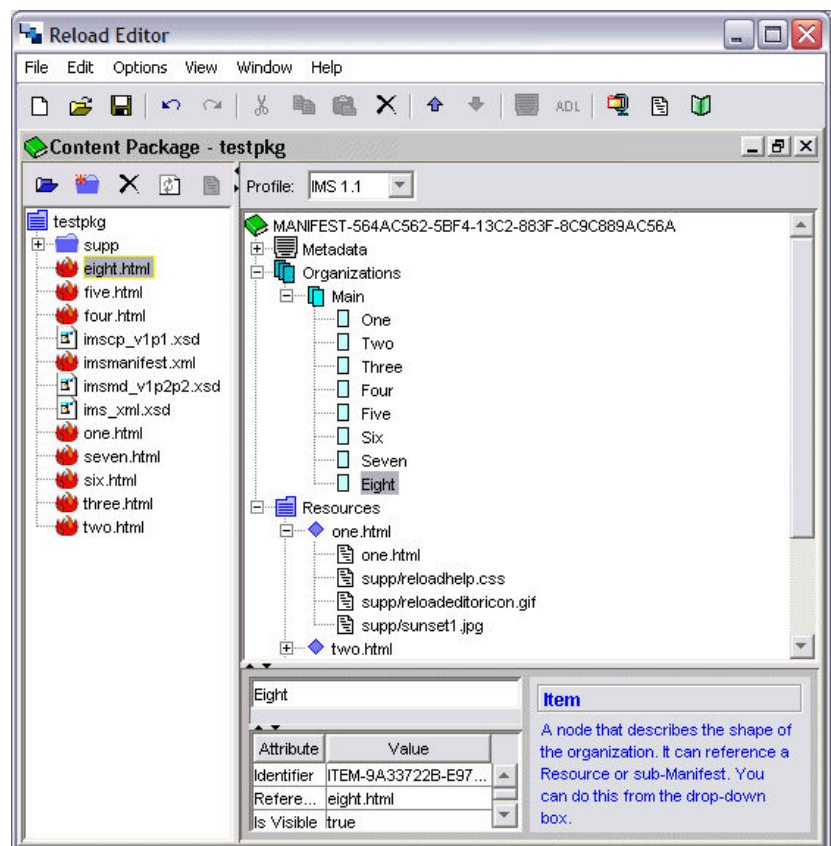
The manifest contains the following information:

- **Metadata:** about the content, stored for the resource as a whole, or for individual files.
- **Resources:** what files are needed and where they reside in the content package. This section also records dependencies (for instance, that a web page requires a style sheet and some images to display properly).
- **Organizations:** which describe how the individual resources inter-relate - information needed by any person or software package which may utilize the Package. Alternative organisations can be provided.

For convenience, Content Packages are usually stored as Zip archives. In this case, the important imsmanifest.xml file must be in the base directory of the zip file so that it can be easily found by any software that needs to utilise it.

How does RELOAD Editor Help?

Creating the manifest file involves creating a file in the format XML. Although similar to HTML, XML is much more complex and therefore less easy to work with. By providing a visual User Interface (shown right) for the manifest creation task, RELOAD Editor provides a very simple way of creating Content Packages and Metadata just by dragging files around a file browser and typing information into fields in forms. RELOAD Editor also allows you to easily preview your Content Packages to check that they behave in the way you expect.

Further Resources

- **RELOAD Web Site:** *http://www.reload.ac.uk/*
- **CETIS Web Site:** *http://www.cetis.ac.uk/*
- **IMS Web Site:** *http://www.imsglobal.org/*
- **What is … IMS Content Packaging?** *(CETIS Breifing): http://www.cetis.ac.uk/lib/media/CPbrief.pdf*
- **Exemplar Content Package:** *http://www.reload.ac.uk/ex/test-pkg.zip*
- **Download Reload Editor:** *http://www.reload.ac.uk/guide.html*
- **Reload Editor Manual:** *http://www.reload.ac.uk/guide.html*