Analyzing OHCO Model

OHCO model demonstrates the following:

- Content Objects (Para, quotations, phrase, notes) are presented in hierarchical structure
- Text structure is hierarchical because they reside inside one another
- Objects share linear relationship
- Content objects are structured forming a model of hierarchical text structure
- Content and elements are the essence of this model

Is the OHCO model has any relevance today?

- OHCO model is still “real” in today’s authoring environment where authoring tools (structured) insist on structural representation of text. Example - Epic Editor, Structured FrameMaker 7.0 and above.
- The model advocates separation of Content and presentation. This approach is in the heart of XML-based publishing where styling information is part of DTD and content is part of .xml document.
- OHCO model also prescribes SGML. It provides markup definition of document structure in plain text. The concept is truly used by XML-based authoring environment
- Documents contain only structured data and have no information about “rendition”. This concept is being used for developing the idea of DTD, CSS, and XSLT where styling and rendering information is stored in another document.
  *As Lars Johnsen mentions in Document (re)Presentation: Object-orientation, Visual Language, and XML that “Styling—more generally, information design—is best seen as an activity separate from writing and one that is accomplished through the use of style sheets.”*
- Text model created using OHCO contain marked up structured data in plain text. These texts are platform-independent and flexible for file transfer across system. Therefore it’s easily shared by authors independent of the platform. XML documents are platform independent.
- Structural representation of text is consistent. This ensures consistency.
- When content is separate from style “content reuse” is easier. Example - Two information products developed using XML can share chapters, sections, tables, etc.
- Locating a particular content object is easier since the content is ordered. Therefore, Hierarchical structure of text facilitates retrieval.
Critical Analysis:
- OHCO model is more oriented to information architect, type architect.
- Author has to compromise on the natural flow of the writing in order to follow hierarchical structure of the text. Author barely has any freedom on the structure of the information.
- Might not be useful for drafting letters, memos, articles, and reports where structural representation of text is not always necessary and individual preference is important.
- Some content is best presented by implementing visual language; example brochure can be customized for different customers. Therefore, maintaining strict hierarchy can make the brochure more generalized.
- Good for larger projects where information products are spread across multiple authors and documents have similar content. Example documentation for Product Suite (Adobe Professional, MS Office, etc).

Analysis of Alternate Text Models: Text as Page Layout Model

Features:
- The model of text is not hierarchical.
- This model is used by authoring tools, which supports unstructured textual model, example FrameMaker (unstructured version) which is used for unstructured writing.
- This model can be effective for small documents. Example: memo, letter, book

Problems:
Without proper hierarchy text can be differentiated by using style. This may lead to:

- Inconsistency
- Difficulty in searching similar content objects scattered throughout the document
- Formatting becomes tedious
- Multiple copies of same information