Document Description Language

The *Document Description Language* (DDL) is a file format that describes ***Ovation Pro*** documents in textual form. This short appendix describes why the DDL may be useful and when it should be used. However, it does not give full DDL syntax which is beyond the scope of this user guide.

Purpose of the DDL

A document saved in DDL format may be read or altered by loading it into a text editor such as Notepad. One purpose of the DDL format is to allow foreign file format converters to be easily written. So, a foreign file could be converted to DDL format and then loaded into ***Ovation Pro***. Likewise, an ***Ovation Pro*** document could be saved as a DDL file, which could then be converted to another format. Conversion via the DDL is much easier than using the native ***Ovation Pro*** file format (which is compacted and not easily deciphered).

Most of the existing loaders for alien files (e.g. RTF and Impression) work by transparently converting the file to DDL format and getting ***Ovation Pro*** to load it.

Saving in DDL Format

When you save a document or text story, you may choose to save it in DDL format. Once saved, the resulting text file could then be interpreted by a separate program for processing or conversion.

Loading DDL Files

If you double-click on a DDL format document, it will be loaded into ***Ovation Pro*** in the usual way. Alternatively you can load it by using Open on the File menu. If a DDL file just describes a text story, then it may be dragged into an ***Ovation Pro*** text frame or loaded via Import on the File menu.

Native Format Versus DDL Format

In normal circumstances you should save documents in ***Ovation Pro*** format, rather than DDL format. There are three reasons for this:

- ***Ovation Pro*** files are usually more compact.
- ***Ovation Pro*** files contain flow information, which specifies exactly where each line of text appears on the page. This means that they load more quickly than DDL files, which must calculate the flow information during loading.
- ***Ovation Pro*** files contain document view information such as zoom. DDL files do not contain this information, and will use the defaults on loading.

Using DDL on Problem Documents

One side effect of saving a document as DDL and loading a DDL document is that ***Ovation Pro*** is forced to analyse and tidy the structure of the whole document. This means that if you get a document which behaves badly, a possible fix is to save it as DDL and then reload the DDL version.