Variable Data

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Concept

Variable Data allows you to configure CHILI documents to be manipulated through an input form, rather than through inline editing. Rules can be created in the variable fields to make the user experience as easy as needed, and to force brand protection upon the document.

Configuration of Variable Data usually happens inside the CHILI Editor itself. This allows for very quick configuration and ease of use by administrators.

Creating your first Variable

Open a blank CHILI document using the default (Admin) WorkSpace. Go to "Variable Data" tab in the right tabs, and add a new Variable in the Variable List. In Variable Settings, set its name to "FirstName". No additional settings are required at this point. We do not recommend the use of special characters in variable names (for example, a single quote '), as they can cause errors in some of the Webservice functions. The Display Name can contain special characters.
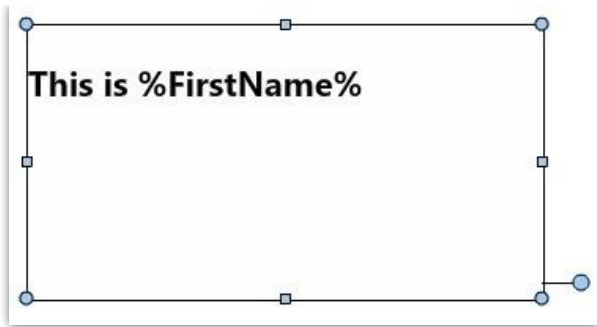
Create a new textframe, and enter some text (e.g.: "This is MY NAME"). Select some of the text (e.g., "MY NAME") and insert the variable tag. This can be done by either double-clicking in the Variable List, or by selecting the Variable there and clicking the "Insert Variable" button. The text is automatically replaced by the tagging for the Variable ("%FirstName%").

In the left tabs, open "Variables". You'll notice that the FirstName variable has been added in the "Variable Input" Panel, and has the initial value of the text you highlighted when inserting the variable (this is only applied if the variable didn't have a value to start with).
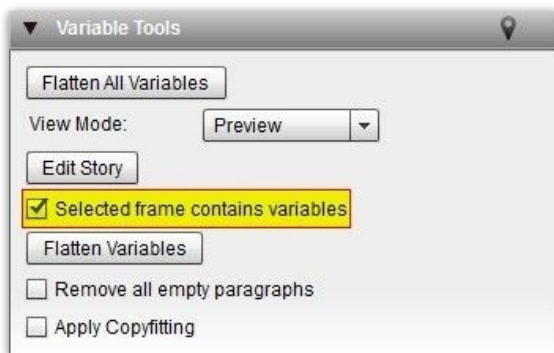
Your text frame now holds the tagging for the variable, but it does not yet display the value. For this, we'll need to specify that the Text Frame holds variable data. The easiest way to do this is by going to "Common Variable Tools" on the right, and selecting "Text Frame contains variables".
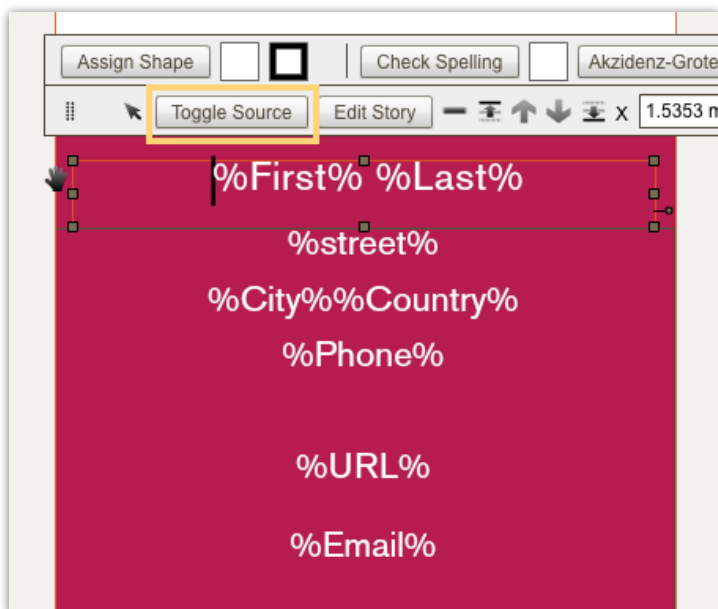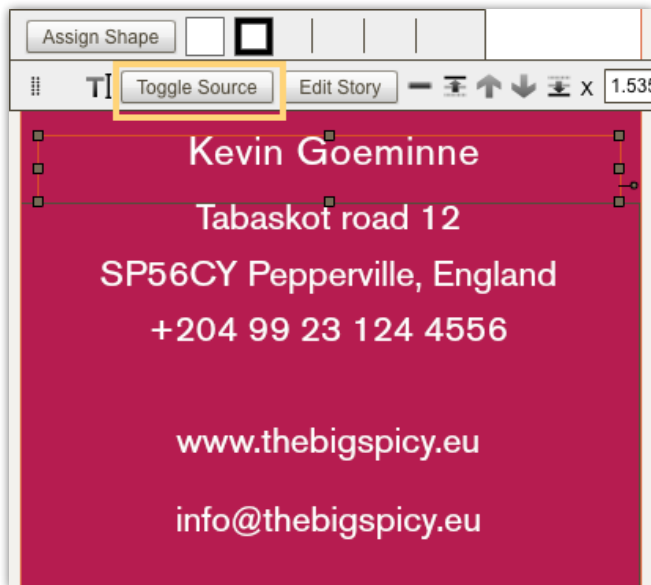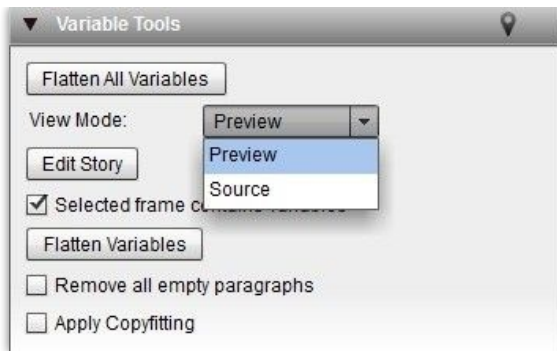

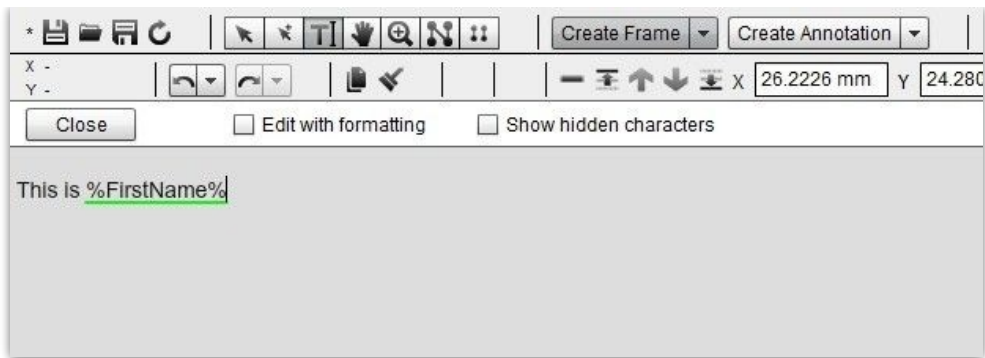> 💡 Congratulations, you've created your first variable!

Source vs. Preview

By default, you are looking at the CHILI document in "Preview" mode. This means that you see the document with the actual Variable Data applied. In the previous walkthrough, we've added a FirstName variable to the text frame. Once we configured the text frame to hold variable data, however, we do see the display value, but are no longer able to edit the text in the frame. There are several ways to accomplish this, all available only for administrators in the document:

- Toggle between Source and Preview mode
- Edit the underlying story of the text frame

Toggling between Source and Preview mode can be done in a number of locations. While working in the "Variable Data" tab on the right, the "Common Variable Tools" Panel contains a "Preview Mode" pulldown. Next to that, an icon is available in the ViewPreferences toolbar item.

Without toggling the preview mode for the entire document, though, it is also possible to edit the source of a single Text Frame though the Story Editor. For Text Frames containing variables, this will always show the source (and because of that is only available for administrators).

Linked Variables

Next to text variables, it is also possible to link variables to certain types of content from within the settings of that content.

Continuing on our blank document, create:

- A blank image frame
- A new page
- A new layer (and add some content like a rectangle on it, as we'll be showing/hiding this layer automatically)
- Three new Variables:
    - "MyImage", of datatype "image"
    - "MyShowPage", of datatype "checkbox"
    - "MyShowLayer", of datatype "checkbox"

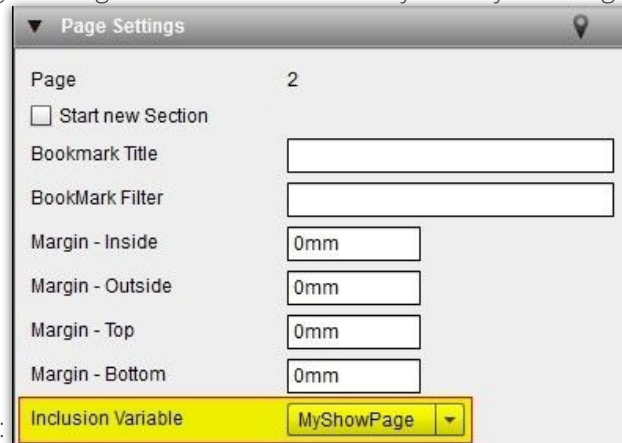You will see the relevant input items appear on the left:

Next, we can assign these variables in the relevant settings panels.

For the image: select the Image Frame and go to "Image Settings" on the right. Select your variable in the newly appeared pulldown:

Select page two and go to Page Settings on the left tabs. Select your "MyShowPage" variable in the

inclusion variable pulldown:

Select your new layer, and in the Layer Settings, assign the "MyShowLayer" variable to the visibility

variable pulldown:

You can now go to the **Variable Input Panel and** play with some different settings for the input.

CopyFitting

Copy fitting can be enabled on a text frame containing variables.
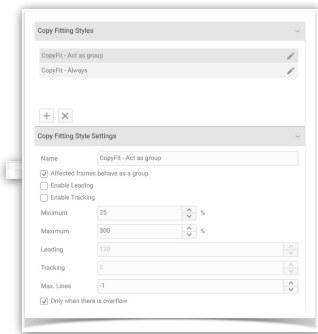
It scales text content down to fit all text in the frame or scales the text content up to fill up empty space in the text frame.

The more text is added, the smaller the size and, vice versa, less text means larger size.

To enable copyfitting go to **Variable Data** tab > **Variable Tools** panel and click "Apply Copyfitting".

Copy fitting parameters can be defined via Copy fitting Styles (**Styles tab**) or a custom setting can be defined on frame level.

- **Style:** select a copy fitting style or define custom settings

- **Between x and x %** : sets lower and upper font size limits after copyfitting is applied.

- **Current:** shows the applied percentage

- **Max. Lines** : sets maximum amount of lines after copyfitting is applied

- **Only when there is overflow:** copy fitting will only be applied if there 's to much text to display in the text frame

- **Affected frames behave as group:** This applies only to frames using the same Copy Fitting Style.

- When this is selected the copy fitting percentages for all frames individually will be compared and the value of the frame that has been copy fitted most is used to apply copy fitting to the other frames as well. See the image below for an example

- **Enable Leading**

- **Enable Tracking**