Gazelle Guide to Xerte on-line toolkit Connector Pages

Contents

Pre-requisites

This guide is intended for people who already have some experience of authoring projects in Xerte on-line toolkits. To make use of this guide the following needs to apply.

- You have access to a Xerte on-line toolkits installation.

- You are able to create new projects and add pages to the project.

- You are familiar with the use of the pages in the Text Pages menu.

- You are familiar with the Multiple Choice Question page type.

- You are able to save and open files to your local computer.

Introduction

Connector pages open up new possibilities for your projects. This guide will introduce you to the first four of the Connector pages.

- Menu Connector

- Plain Text Connector

- Multiple Choice Connector

- Redirector Connector

On completion of this guide you will know all there is to know about Connector pages.

The additional three Connector pages

- Hotspot Image Connector
- Tabbed Navigator Connector
- Scenario Connector

do not introduce any new Connector related features. However they each have features specific to each page type that warrant them having their own separate guide. Once you understand all the common connector related features introduced in this guide, understanding the rest of what these pages have to offer will be easy.

Lets begin – introducing the Menu Connector Page

1. Open Xerte on-line toolkits (from now on I'll call it XOT).
2. In XOT create a new project.
3. Add to your project the following
   1. A Text / Title Page (call it Title)
   2. A Connectors / Menu Connector Page (call it Menu)
   3. A Text / Orientation Page (call it Orientation)
   4. A Text / Bullets Page (call it Bullets)
   5. Publish your project.

Your project should now look like this.
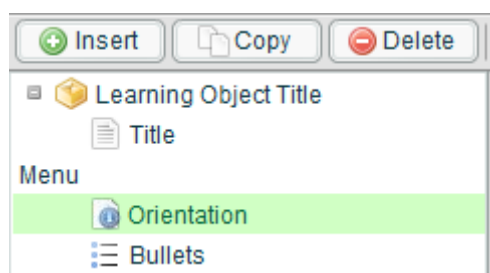
Note: This guide was prepared with the beta release of XOT and the Menu page currently lacks an icon. Once it has an icon the Menu page will line up with the rest of the pages in the project tree.
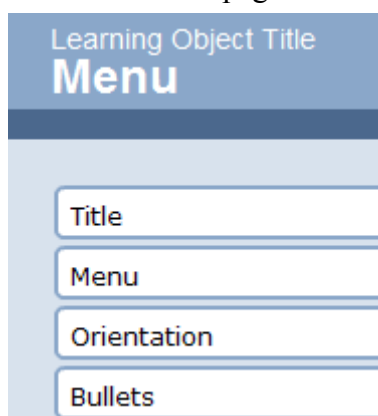
Key point:

- Connector pages are added to your project in the same way as any other page type.

Lets see what we now have

1. Play your project – your project will open at your title page.

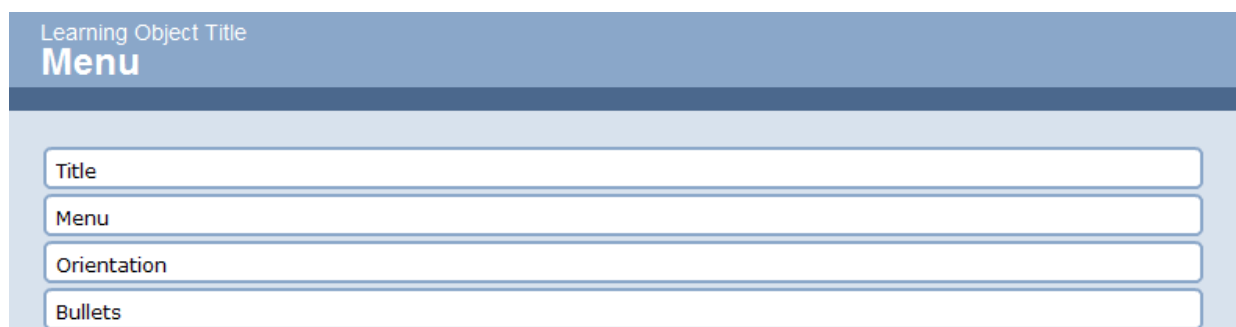2. Go to the next page – you will see the menu page

3. The menu page lists all the pages in your project. Note that the fourth page in your project is the Bullets page and the page before the Bullets page is the Orientation Page. Click on the "Bullets" entry in the menu. - the Bullets page opens.

4. Click on the Back button – you will be taken back to the Menu page and not the Orientation page. The back button works in a similar way to the back button in your web browser and takes you to the last page you visited and not the previous page in the project sequence.

Key points:

- A connection is a link from one page in your project to another page in your project.

- The menu page is the easiest Connector page to use as it sets up links automatically if all you want it to do is provide connections to all the pages in your project.

- Once you start using Connector pages you can break free from having purely sequential projects.

Navigation on Connector Pages

1. If you are not currently in "play" mode and looking at your menu page, then play your project and go to the menu page.

2. Notice that when you are viewing the Menu Connector page the XOT navigation buttons are not displayed. By default most Connector pages turn off the XOT navigation.
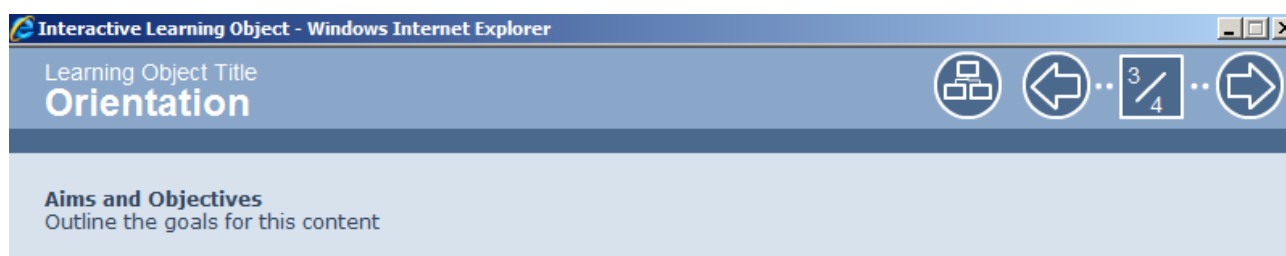

3. Now click on the link in the Menu Page to the Orientation Page.

4. Notice that the XOT navigation buttons are now displayed once more. When a Connector page opens it saves the current navigation settings. When it closes it resets the navigation, so that the buttons are displayed once more.

Key points:

- Connector pages are designed to allow you, the learning object author, to present to the learner a selection of Connections to different pages in your project. Usually when you use a Connector page you will not want your learner to be able to go off some where else in your project, so by default the navigation is turned off.

- When a connection is followed by the learner, the Connector page turns the navigation back to that of the preceding page.

Taking control of the navigation

If you prefer to display any elements of the XOT navigation, whilst your connector page is open, you can easily turn them back on.

1. If you are in play mode, close the play window.

2. In your project view select the Menu page – you will now see the main settings for the menu page.

3. The Navigation on Exit option gives you the choice of setting the navigation back to the settings applying when the previous page opened, or you can select to turn all the navigation options back on. Most of the time the default setting will suffice. When we get to the

Redirector page we will revisit this option.

4. Each of the four Button options control the display of one element of the XOT navigation. Try out the different settings then publish and preview your project.

5. When you have finished trying different settings for the button options, return them to the settings displayed above

Key point:

- Whilst the default navigation settings will usually suffice you can individually control the display of the four components of the XOT navigation whilst your Connector page is displayed.

Identifying specific pages – the Page ID.

With the new release of XOT every page type now has a property (usually optional) of Page ID. Because Page Titles may be subject to change during the development lifetime of the project and in some cases may not even be unique, a new property is required by which to identify pages. Page IDs uniquely identify individual pages in your project, so you should never use the same Page ID for more than one page.

Connector pages identify specific pages in your project by their Page ID. Once you set a Page ID you never need to change it. So even if you later decide to change other aspects of your page e.g. the Page Title, you will not break any Connections set up to other pages.

By default the Menu Connector page can list all the pages in your project even if they lack a Page ID, but if you want to have more control over your menu, or you intend to use other Connector pages you will want to set Page IDs for any page you wish to connect to.
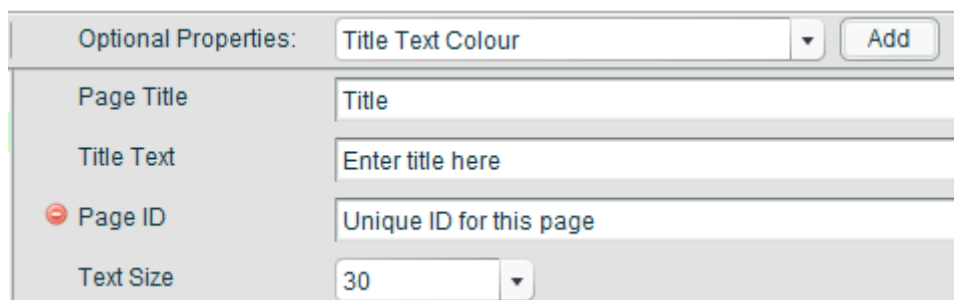
1. If you are currently playing your project, then close the play window.

2. Select the Title page, so that you can see the Title Page Form.

3. Click on the Optional Properties drop down button (shown high-lighted in yellow in the picture below) to drop down the optional properties menu.
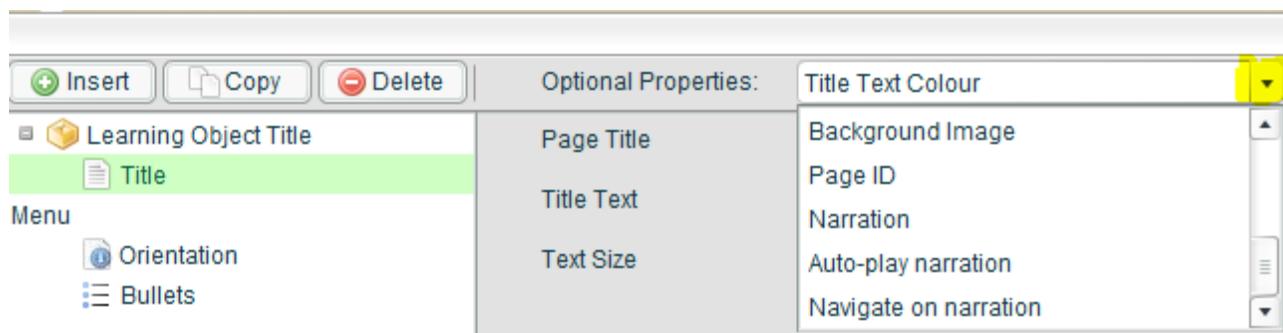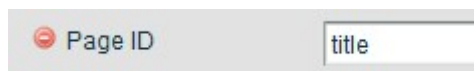

4. You will need to use the scroll bar to scroll the optional properties menu until you find the Page ID property.

5. Click on the Page ID property, then click on the Add button. This will add the optional Page

ID property to your page.

6. Change the entry for Page ID to read "title"

7. In the same way add the Page ID "orientation" to the Orientation Page.

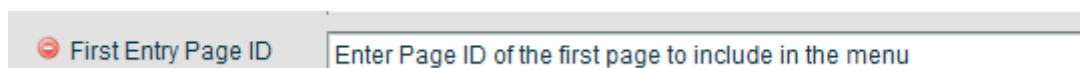8. Then add the Page ID "bullets" to the Bullets page.

Key Points:

- The Page ID property identifies a page in your project, so it must always be unique, within the project.

- For most pages the Page ID property is an optional property.

- Connector pages use the Page ID to establish a connection to another page.

- You only need to add Page IDs to the pages you wish to make a connection to.

Taking control over your menu

The Menu Connector page default of displaying all the pages in your project is convenient and easy to use. However sometimes you may want more control over your menu. With the Menu Connector page you can choose to display a section of the pages in your project or even define a list of specific pages.
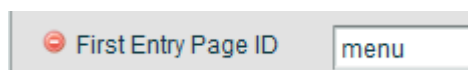
Controlling which page your menu starts at

1. If you are currently playing your project, then close the play window.

2. Select the Menu Page.

3. Note that Connector pages have the Page ID as one of the main properties, so change your menu page's Page ID to "menu".

4. Drop down the Menu page's Optional Properties.

5. Click on the "First Entry Page ID" property and then click the Add button.
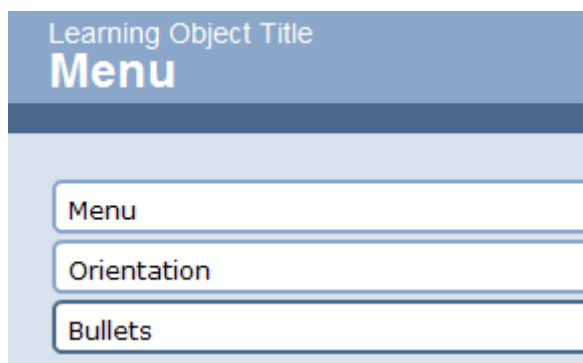
6. Change this to read "menu" (the Page ID of the menu page)

7. Publish your project.

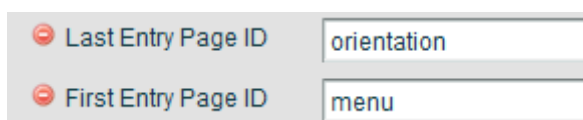8. Play your project and go to the menu page.

9. Notice how the menu now starts at the Menu page and continues to list to the end of the project.

   If you are still seeing the Title page listed as well then either you have not added the page ID to the menu page, or the page ID for the menu page and the page ID value you have specified in the "First Entry Page ID" are not the same. Remember they are case sensitive so "Menu" and "menu" are not the same!

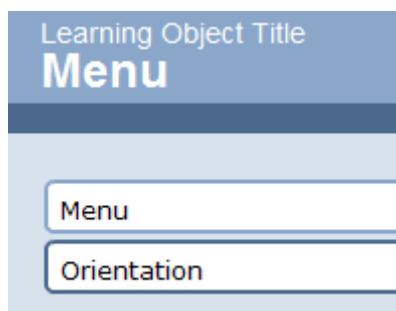## Controlling which page your menu ends at

1. If you are currently playing your project, then close the play window.

2. Select the Menu Page.

3. Add the Optional Property "Last Entry Page ID".

4. Set the value to "orientation".

5. Publish your project.

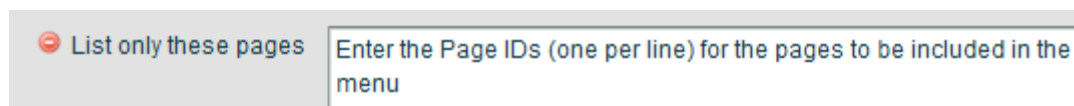6. Play your project and go to the menu page.

7. Notice how your menu now only lists all the pages that fall between the specified First Entry Page ID and the Last Entry Page ID.

   If you are still seeing the Bullets page listed in your menu then either you have not given your Orientation page a Page ID of "orientation" or the Page ID you specified as the Last Entry Page ID is different to the Page ID of the Orientation page.

Defining a list of the pages you want in your menu

1. If you are currently playing your project, then close the play window.

2. Select the Menu Page.

3. Click on the red delete button next to the Last Entry Page ID to delete this optional property.

4. Click on the red delete button next to the First Entry Page ID to delete this optional property.

5. Add the optional property "List only these pages"

6. Delete the prompt text that explains how to use the property and add the following, one entry per line: "title", "orientation"

7. Publish your project.

8. Play your project and go to the Menu page.
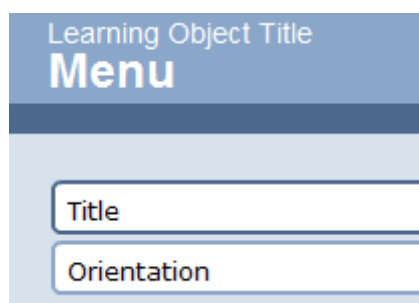
9. Notice how your menu only displays the pages you entered into your list.

If your menu fails to display a page that you included in your list it will be because the Page ID for the page and the Page ID in the list do not match.

Key points:

- By default the menu page will display every page in your project, irrespective of whether they have a Page ID or not.

- You can specify a page from which your menu will start displaying, this page must have a Page ID.

- You can specify a page to be the last entry in your menu, this page must have a Page ID.

- You can specify a list of the only pages to be included in your menu. Every page in the list must have a Page ID.

- You could use a Menu Connector page with First and Last page properties to define the pages in each section of your project and then start your project off with a list based menu that only included the Menu pages for each section.

Page Mode – help with managing those connections

Adding connections can really enhance the user experience of your project. However the more you make use of connections the harder it can be to manage them. To make your life a little easier the connector pages have a property called "Mode". This by default is set to "Development" but once you have finished setting up your page you should set it to "Live"

The features provided by the "Development Mode" are similar across all the connector pages. Some of the more complex pages have additional features.

As many of the connections in the Menu page are made automatically there are fewer Development Mode features than in most of the other pages.

The Check List Report

All Connection pages offer a check list report that details the page number, page name, page ID and Mode (if it has one) of all the pages in the project. This is available as a text report or a html (web page) report. The latter is generally the best option as by using html the report can be in table format.
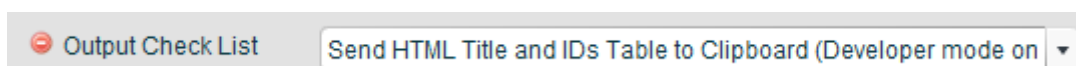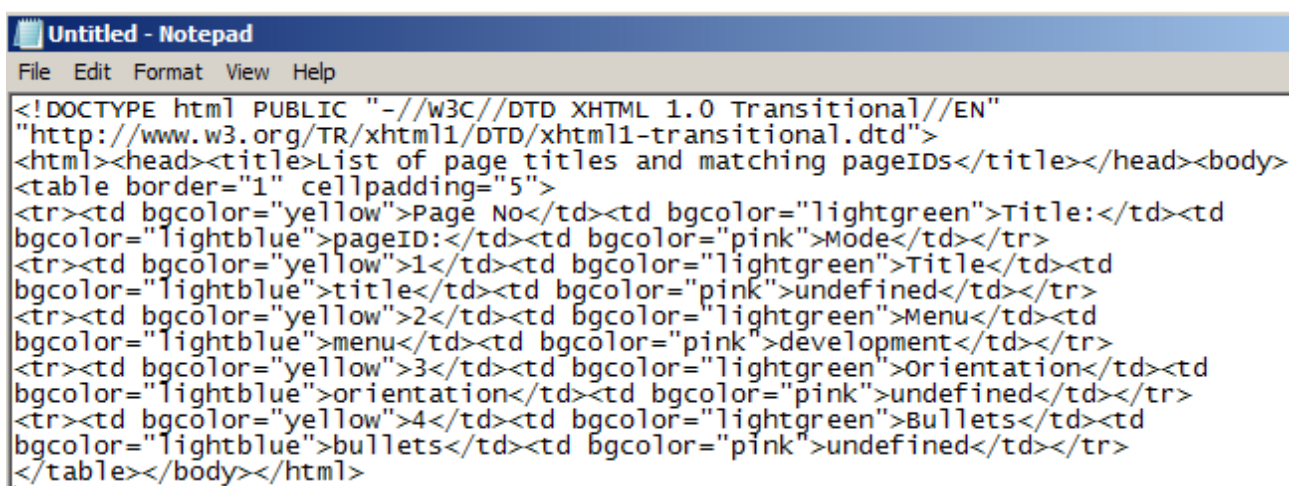
1. If you are currently playing your project, then close the play window.

2. Select the Menu Page.

3. Add the Optional Property "Output Check List" to your menu page.

Output Check List | Send HTML Title and IDs Table to Clipboard (Developer mode on ▾)

4. Confirm that the Mode property is set to "Development".

5. Publish your project.

6. Play your project, and navigate to the Menu page.

7. On your computer open a text editor such as "Notepad". Avoid using a word processor as this may add additional content to the page that will break the html.

   (A text editor is like a very simple word processor – you can write text but there are no text enhancement features e.g. bold, underline, change of font, alignment etc.)

8. In your text editor open a new file.

9. Position the insertion point at the start of your file then select Paste (on a windows PC holding down the CTRL button and pressing the V button will also paste).

10. The report will have been copied to the clip board when you opened the Menu page and should now have been pasted into the text editor.

11. Save the file, with an extension of .htm e.g. report.htm

12. Open your new .htm file in your web browser
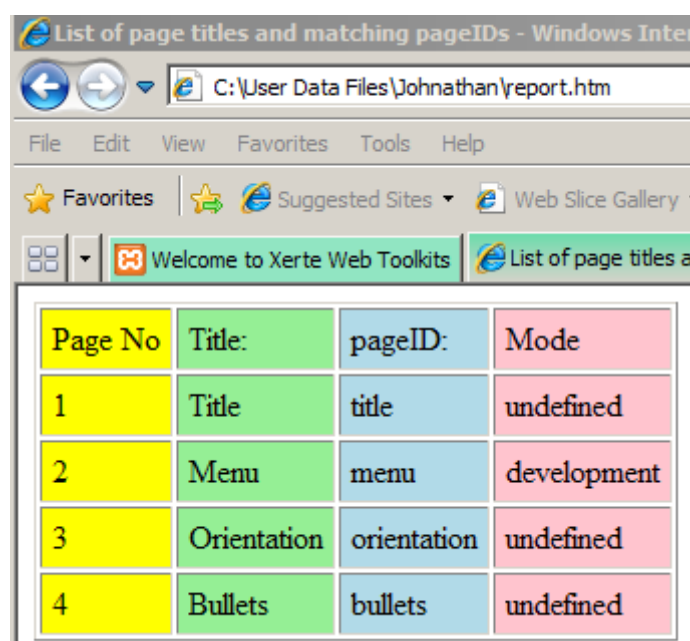
13. This report will help you to match Page Titles, which you can see in your project tree with the Page IDs that you have allocated to each page.

Key Points:

- Development Mode provides a number of aids to help you use the Connector pages.

- The Check List report will help you to keep track of Page IDs and match them to the Page Titles.

Additional features of the Menu Page

We have no covered all the features of the Menu Page that relate to it being a Connector page. However the Menu Page has three optional parameters that you can use to modify the appearance of your menu, these are.

- Vertical Spacing (adjusts the vertical gap between the menu items)

- Horizontal Spacing (adjusts the horizontal gap between the menu items)

- Menu Item Height (adjusts the height of the menu items)

When there are more menu items than will fit in one column on the page, the menu listing will split into as many columns as are required to display the menu. In the event of a page title being to long to fit into the menu item space available, then the title text will automatically be curtailed.

As you are familiar with how to add optional properties to a page you are free to try these features out at your convenience.

Key points:

- The menu page will adjust automatically to accommodate the number of page entries listed.

- The project author can use the available optional properties to "tune" the layout of the menu.

Introducing the Plain Text Connector Page

The Plain Text Connector page is different from all the other Connector pages as it is the only one in which you have to define your connections as part of a valid html statement. However this is much easier than it might at first seem and the page includes an example which you can cut and paste.

1. If you are currently playing your project, then close the play window.

2. Select the Menu Page.

3. Remove any optional parameters that will restrict the pages it will list.

4. Append a new page to your project Connectors / Plain Text Connector.

5. Change the Page Title to "Plain Text Connector".

6. Change the Page ID to "cPlainText".

7. Your project page should look like this.
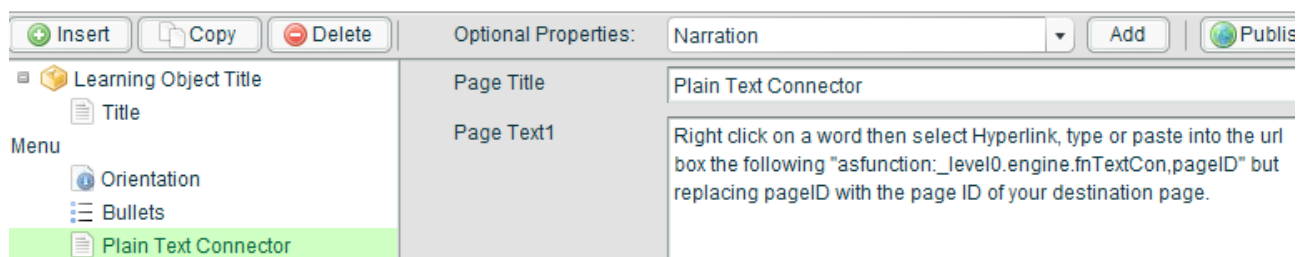
8. To use the Plain Text Connector just add your text to the Page Text box, just as you would an ordinary Text page. You may find it a good idea to leave the default text in place until you have finished adding your own text. That way you can copy the sample link whenever you need it and then delete the default text before finally saving your page.

9. To add a link to a page in your text do the following.

   1. Make a note of the page ID of the page you want to link to – in this example we'll use the Menu Page which has a page ID of "menu".

   2. Enter your text including the text that will be the hyperlink.

   3. Select (high-light) the sample hyperlink text from the default text, excluding the inverted commas.

   4. Use your computers short-cut key combination for "Copy", on a windows PC you hold the CTRL key down and then press the C key. This will copy the default hyperlink text

      asfunction:_level0.engine.fnTextCon,pageID

      to the clipboard.

   5. Select (high-light) the text that will be the hyper-link and right click on it. In the resulting menu select "Hyper-link". The Enter URL box will open.

   6. In the Enter URL box paste the copied default hyper-link text. On a windows computer hold down the CTRL key then press the V key.

Enter URL

ı:_level0.engine.fnTextCon,pageID

OK | Cancel

7. Replace the text "pageID" in the Enter URL box with the pageID of your page.

Enter URL

ı:_level0.engine.fnTextCon,menu

OK | Cancel

8. Click the OK button.

9. Your hyper-link will appear in your entered text.

> Right click on a word then select Hyperlink, type or paste into the url box the following "asfunction:_level0.engine.fnTextCon,pageID" but replacing pageID with the page ID of your destination page.
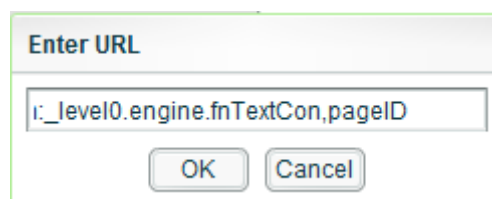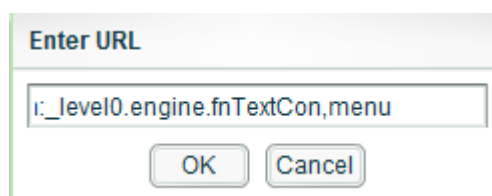>
> For a complete list of pages go to the Menu page

10. Continue editing your text. Because the hyper-link text can be a bit confusing to read, you may prefer leaving the adding of your hyper-links to last.

11. When you have finished adding your hyperlinks, delete the sample text, so that your own text starts the text block.

> For a complete list of pages go to the Menu page
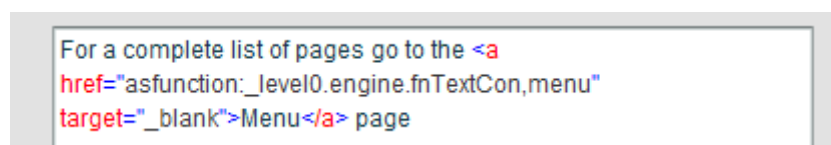
12. Publish your project and then preview your Plain Text Connector page.

> Learning Object Title
> **Plain Text Connector**
> For a complete list of pages go to the Menu page
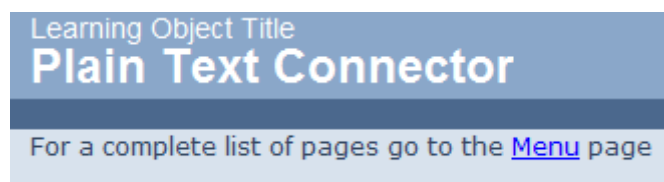
13. Click on your hyper-link to test the Connection.

Key Points:

- You can add as many hyper-links to your text as you wish.

- Every page you Connect to must have a page ID.

Navigation Settings of the Plain Text Page

The same options are available for the control of what navigation buttons are displayed in a Plain Text Connector page as are available for the Menu Connector page. Please refer to the Menu Connector page for details of this.

Setting the Navigation on destination pages

The main Navigation on Exit settings for the Plain Text Page are identical to those of the Menu Page. That is you can have the connected to page open up with the same navigation as the previous page, or you can turn on all navigation buttons.

However the Plain Text page gives you a little more control should you require it. Unlike the Menu Connector page it has some Optional Properties, which if used will over-ride the main setting.

The following optional parameters are available.

- Destination Contents Button

- Destination Progress Button

- Destination Back Button

- Destination Next Button

You can use these to hide or show specific buttons for all pages that are Connected to from your Plain Text Page.

Most of the time you won't want to use this feature, but it is there should you need it.

Key Point:

- Should you need it you can over-ride the main navigation settings for the destination page(s).

The Multiple Choice Connector Page

The Multiple Choice Connector page is based on the Multiple Choice Question page type, so features common to these two pages will not be examined in detail here. The Multiple Choice Connector also shares many features with the other Connector pages so we will focus here on the additional features that this page has and consider how this page might be used.

1. If you are currently playing your project, then close the play window.

2. Insert a new Connector / Multiple Choice Connector page.

3. Enter a page title of "Multiple Choice Connector".

4. Enter a page ID of "cMCQ"

5. Your project should look as follows.

6. Publish your project

Page pre-requisites and Display Text

1. Play your project and go to the Multiple Choice Connector page.

2. You will see something similar to the above. Nothing has gone wrong. Some pages need a minimum amount of information before they will display correctly. In this case the page needs two sets of data adding: Some options added to the question and a Display Text section.

3. Close the play window.

4. Select the Multiple Choice Connector page in the project window.

5. Click on "New Display Text" to add a Display Text section.

6. With this release of XOT much work has taken place to ensure that all text that the learner can see is accessible so that the Author can change it if they wish. This is partly a result of the steps that have been taken to support the availability of XOT in languages other than

English. Additionally it enables the Author to make their own adjustments to pages, so that they can better target them at particular audiences, or just to create a little more variety across the pages. Many Authors may just settle for creating the Display Text block and leaving it at that. The top four entries relate to the display the learner sees. The rest relate to Development mode output.

Key Points:

- Some pages have pre-requisites that must be configured before they will display correctly.

- Display text sections can be added and then left, unless you want to modify any of the settings to suit your target audience.

Setting up the connections

1. In the project tree click on the Multiple Choice Connector entry to return to the main form for the Multiple Choice Connector page. The rest of the page functions just like a normal Multiple Choice Question page.

2. Enter in the Prompt box "What page would you like to go to?"

3. Click on "New Option" to add a new option.

1. Option title is not displayed on the page but is displayed in the project tree to help you manage your page. Set Option Title to menu

2. Option is a response to the question that you asked in the Prompt box of the main form. Enter in this box "I would like to go to the menu"

3. Go to Page Named (this will be changed to Destination Page ID in the final release) is the Page ID that the learner will be taken to if they select this option. Enter in this box the page ID "menu".

4. Enter a second option with the following details

    1. bullets
    2. I would like to go to the Bullet page
    3. bullet

Option Title	bullet
Option	I would like to go to the Bullet page
Go to Page Named	bullet

5. Publish your project.
6. Play your project and navigate to the Multiple Choice Connector page.

Learning Object Title
Multiple Choice Connector

What page would you like to go to?

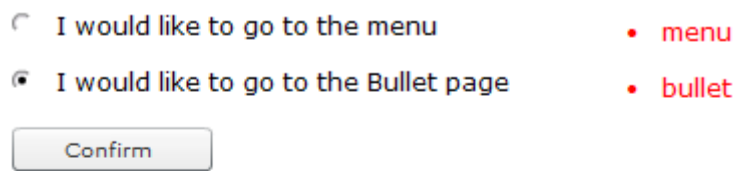○   I would like to go to the menu   • menu

○   I would like to go to the Bullet page   • bullet

Confirm

7.   The red bullet points are part of the Developer mode information, they show you what Page ID you have specified for each link. Once the Mode setting is changed to "Live" this helpful information will no longer be displayed.
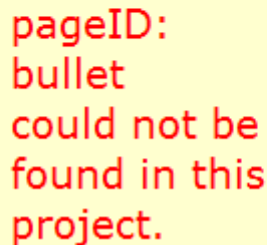8. Test both your connections.

9. The menu connection should have worked, but the Bullet page connection should have failed. Many of the Connector pages will help you when a connection fails by indicating the nature of the error. The problem in this case is that you specified a page ID of "bullet". If you check back with your project you will find the page ID is "bullets". This error feature is also a Development mode that ceases to operate when the page mode is set to "Live".

10. Change the page ID for the second option to "bullets" and try again.

11. The Multiple Choice Connector goes one better than the Plain Text Connector in that for each individual option you have optional properties available to force the setting of each individual navigation button on the destination Connection page.

Key Points:

- Development mode support can, with many of the connector pages help you to debug errors you may make in setting your connections.

- The Multiple Choice Connector page gives you individual control, if you need to use it, of the navigation buttons that will be available to the connected page when it opens.

The Redirector Connector

The best way to understand the use of the redirector connector page is to understand the context in which it is intended to be used..

One use of a Multiple Choice Connector page could be to ask a question and then to take the user to some pages that explain why they are wrong if they get the answer wrong. However if they get the answer right they would want to bypass those pages. With several options available this situation could scale up e.g. consider a project with the following pages.

1. Multiple Choice Question Connector with options A going to 2, B going to 5 and C (right answer) going to 8.

2. Wrong answer A first page (any none connector type of page)

3. Wrong answer A second page (any none connector page type)

4. Redirector Connector page (ending this section A and taking your to either page 1 to try again or to page 8 depending on the author's choice.)

5. Wrong answer B first page (any none connector type of page)

6. Wrong answer B second page (any none connector page type)

7. Redirector Connector page (ending this section B and taking your to either page 1 to try again or to page 8 depending on the author's choice.)

8. Confirmation of right answer

Lets try putting this into practice.

1. Using what you now know of the Connector pages try setting the above situation up in a new project. To keep things simple use one word page titles and use the same value for the page title and the page ID.
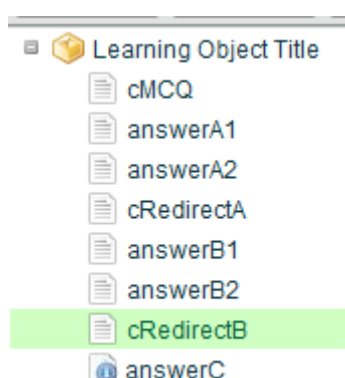
2. Set up the connections with the following options for the wrong answers

3. The above settings will ensure that when the Learner is taken to page answerA1 that they are not offered either the table of contents or the progress button or back buttons. This situation will persist as they step through the sequence that will illustrate why their answer is incorrect.

4. When they get to the Redirector Connector page this will reset the navigation before

directing them back to the question page. As shown in the settings for the Redirector Connector page below. Note the setting for Navigation on Exit.

Page Title	cRedirectA
Page ID	cRedirectA
Destination Page ID	cMCQ
Instructions / Message	You have completed this section A.
Min Text Width	Narrow
Align Text	Left
Mode	Development
Navigation on Exit	Show all navigation buttons

5. If you restrict the navigation to the Learner during the sequence as in the example above you also need to remove the navigation whilst the Redirector page is displayed, so that the Learner must use the "Continue" button and not exit the page any other way. Exiting the page by other means would prevent the Redirector from resetting the navigation.

Next / Continue Button	Hide Next and Continue Buttons
Back Button	Hide Back Button
Progress Button	Hide Progress Button
Contents Button	Hide Table of Contents

Key points:

-   If you decide to restrict the navigation available to the learner during a sequence of none Connector pages use the Redirector Connector page to reset the navigation on exiting the sequence.

-   Do not enable any navigation whilst the Redirector page is being displayed

Brightening up your Redirector Connector page.

The Redirector page includes optional parameters to add an image and narration should you wish to

add these features. In common with all the Connector pages the optional parameter to "navigate on narration" is not available as it would make no sense to move to the next page in the project sequence, a situation in which you are able to specify a specific destination to go to. Further auto navigate would prevent the page from resetting any page navigation as this happens when the Connection is followed.

Summary

The connector pages make possible a wide range of new possibilities. Most of the time you can use the default settings for navigation as the Connector pages will reset the navigation on exit. A little more care needs to be taken if you choose to turn of any navigation options when the Learner is viewing none Connector pages.