

What is Up with the Documentation of FreeBSD?

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What is the Status of the Documentation?

There are different categories of documentation in the Project at the moment.

- ▶ Manual pages
- ▶ Web pages
- ▶ Books, articles
- ▶ Translations

Many pages of text requiring many hands. They are mostly trying to follow the software they document. FreeBSD is very famous from its documentation!



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How We Could Maintain the Progress?



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Do We Need Technology?

Using (better) tools might help to defeat problems, but not all of them. However...

- ▶ Some parts of the documentation simply moved to the FreeBSD wiki these days, which is great for sketching up things because of its ease of use.
- ▶ Tracking changes in the sources and ports sometimes hard for humans, automated notifications are useful.
- ▶ Writing news entries should be easier, so anybody (from anywhere) could add them.



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Do We Need Content?

More content is always welcome, independently of the technology we use.

- ▶ Content is developed by humans. Although it is *easy to code* documentation, *writing* documentation is more than that.
- ▶ Writing and communication skills, knowledge of the language, finding ways of expressing content in a friendly but technical manner, taste in making illustrations, typography, and typesetting.
Last but not least: knowledge of FreeBSD.
- ▶ It is not very common to have all these skills in one person. Should we share the job instead?



Do We Need Motivation?

Human resources can be focused by different means.

- ▶ *A common goal, cohesion.* Finding a goal that is worth fighting for definitely helps to make people work as a team.
- ▶ *Funding, projects.* There is more guarantee for long-term projects if they are managed as smaller projects and are funded. And many things can be done only that way.
- ▶ *Teaching, encouraging, helping.* Being nice to potential contributors always pays off. Motivate people on the mailing lists, on the IRC channels.



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Conclusion

A few thoughts for discussion.

- ▶ Can we handle the documentation efficiently currently?
- ▶ Whether documentation writers should be paid?
- ▶ Whether outdated documentation is better than a non-existing one?
- ▶ How to make writing documentation more appealing?
- ▶ Where the FreeBSD Documentation Project is heading?



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Thank you for your attention!



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