A NEW HELP SYSTEM FOR DRUPAL

a cove conversation

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drupalize me





SPECIAL THANKS



Jennifer Hodgdon (jhodgdon) Creator of Help Topics sandbox Mentoring me as new maintainer

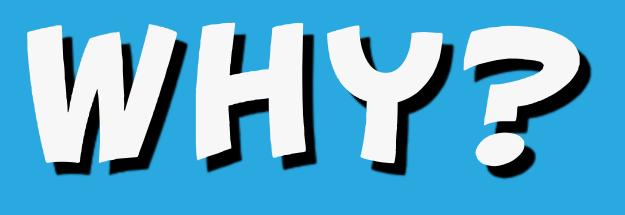
andypost Contributing code and reviews to Help Topics

SPECIAL THANKS



[meta] Help system overhaul drupal.org/project/ideas/ issues/2592487





Improving documentation is a shared concern. Usability testing exposes problems with current help system.

Provides an official way for contrib maintainers to provide better help for modules, themes, and profiles.



Core can provide better help for its own modules, themes, and profiles.



Site builders can provide specific help for custom workflows and processes.



Sites own their configuration. Sites should own the help that describes how to use their custom configuration.

WHY SITE BUILDERS?

Each topic covers a single concept or task

Near the product

Maintainable by stakeholders

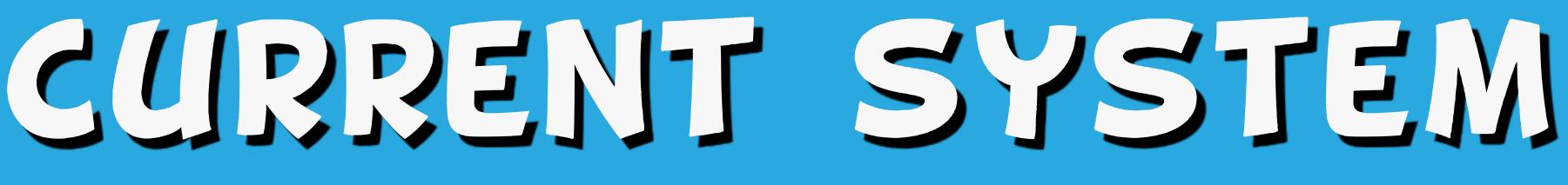


hook_help() hasn't changed much since Drupal 4.6

Only modules can implement

Provide a "module overview"

Provide route-specific help





Finding help Technical implementation Authoring experience Discussion



LIMITATION: NON-TOPICAL



Module overviews are organized by module, alphabetically.

NON-TOPICAL

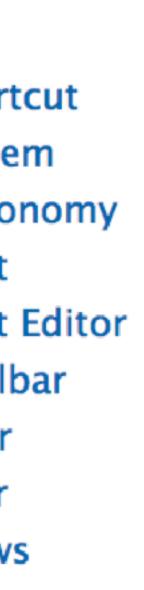
Module overviews

Module overviews are provided by modules. Overviews available for your installed modules:

- Automated Cron
- BigPipe
- Block
- Breakpoint
- CKEditor
- Color
- Comment
- Configuration Manager
- Configuration Translation
- Contact
- Contextual Links
- Custom Block

- Custom Menu I
- Database Loggi
- Datetime
- Field
- Field UI
- File
- Filter
- Help
- Help Topics
- History
- Image
- Interface Trans

Links	 Internal Dynamic Page 	 Shortcut
ging	Cache	 System
Jing		
	 Internal Page Cache 	 Taxonom
	 Language 	• Text
	• Link	 Text Edite
	• Menu UI	 Toolbar
	Node	• Tour
	Options	• User
	• Path	 Views
	Quick Edit	 Views UI
	• RDF	
slation	 Responsive Image 	
	Search	





You need to know what each module does to find help for its functionality.

NON-TOPICAL



Each module can only provide 1 help page linked on admin/help

DESIRED FEATURE: ORGANIZE BY TOPIC

Enable all project types (modules, themes, profiles) to provide multiple help topics.

Concept: Something a user needs to know

Task: Something a user needs to do

Ability to organize hierarchically or by sections

Custom Block	Interface Translation	
 Contextual Links 	• Image	
Contact	 History 	
 Configuration Translation 	 Help Topics 	
 Configuration Manager 	• Help	
Comment	• Filter	

Configured topics

Configured topics can be provided by modules, themes, installation profiles, or site administrators, and they may be organized hierarchically. Top-level help topics configured on your site:

- Building a help system
- Changing basic site settings

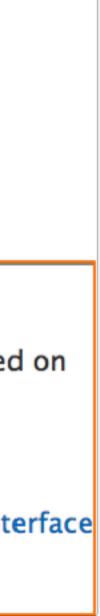
- Defining navigation and URLs
- Defining responsive image styles

- Options
- Path
- Quick Edit
- RDF
- Responsive Image
- Search

- Toolbar
- Tour
- User
- Views
- Views UI

- Maintaining and troubleshooting your site
- Making your site secure

- My awesome help topic
- Using the administrative interface



Related issue: #2516902: Introduce a visual hierarchy to the help page

LIMITATION: NO SEARCH



There is no help.

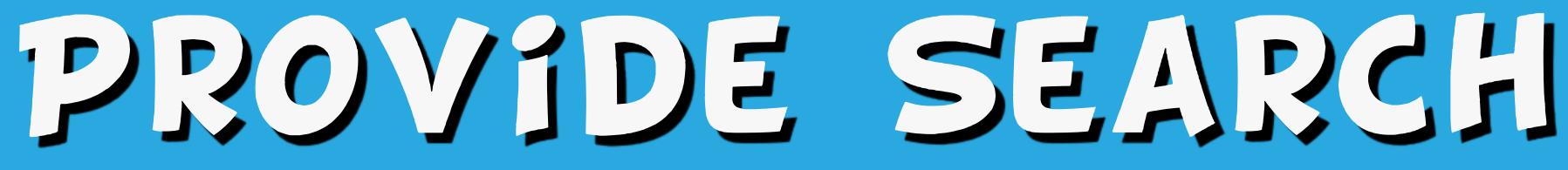
There is no way to search

DESIRED FEATURE: PROVIDE SEARCH

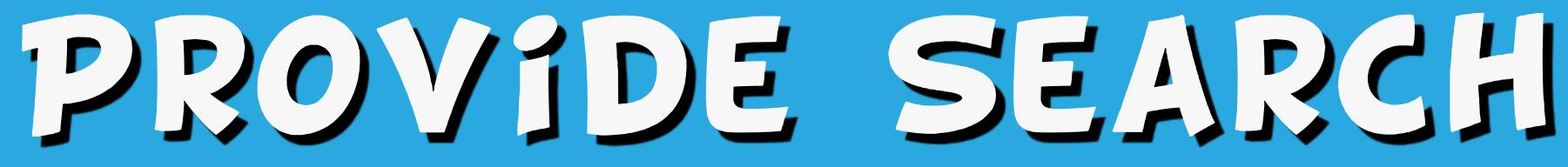
Extend to all admin pages? Extend to non-installed modules, themes, or profiles?



Could be done during Beta phase, after initial experimental module commit and before full release



Issue: #2664830: Add search capability



Other proposal: #102254: Add an administrative search feature

Search admin + help pages

PROVIDE SEARCH

NICE-TO-HAVE: GLOSSARY



Glossary of terms Especially a single, extensible glossary



Filed as a separate issue: #2701289: Glossary to extend the Help system

LIMITATON: MUST ENABLE MODULE TO SEE HELP

Must know what a module does before learning how to use it What if I'm looking for a way to do something that's provided by an uninstalled module?

READ HELP ABOUT A INSTALLING IT

HELP FOR ALL MODULES

Filed as a separate issue: #2587469: allow hook_help to run on modules which are not enabled

TECHNICAL IMPLEMENTATION

LIMITATION: MARKUP IN PHP FILE

Markup provided in PHP function hook_help() by concatenating translatable strings with HTML tags

MARKUP IN 2412

MARKUP IN 2412

function big_pipe_help(\$route_name, RouteMatchInterface \$route_match) { switch (\$route name) { case 'help.page.big_pipe': \$output = '<h3>' . t('About') . '</h3>'; \$output .= '' . t('The BigPipe module sends pages with dynamic content in a way that allows browsers to show them much faster. For more information, see the online documentation for the BigPipe module.', [':big pipe-documentation' => 'https://www.drupal.org/documentation/modules/big pipe']) . ''; \$output .= '<h3>' . t('Uses') . '</h3>'; \$output .= '<dl>'; \$output .= '<dt>' . t('Speeding up your site') . '</dt>'; \$output .= '<dd>' . t('The module requires no configuration. Every part of the page contains metadata that allows BigPipe to figure this out on its own.') . '</dd>'; \$output .= '</dl>';

return \$output;



Some folks object to having any markup outside the theme

MARKUP IN 19HP

Help pages need semantic markup like headings, paragraphs, lists, etc. Not unlike body fields in content

MARKUP IN 2412

Having markup in PHP makes it difficult to write help if: You're not a programmer You don't have access to the file

MARKUP IN 2HP

(...more about this later)



To keep in mind: Need "short strings" for translatability's sake

MORE APPROPRIATE PLACE FOR MARKUP

Help topics saved as config entities (YAML) Solves: Markup not in PHP file Solves: Modules, themes and profiles can provide help in config/install or config/ optional

Title *

My awesome help topic

my_awesome_help_topic [Edit]

Language

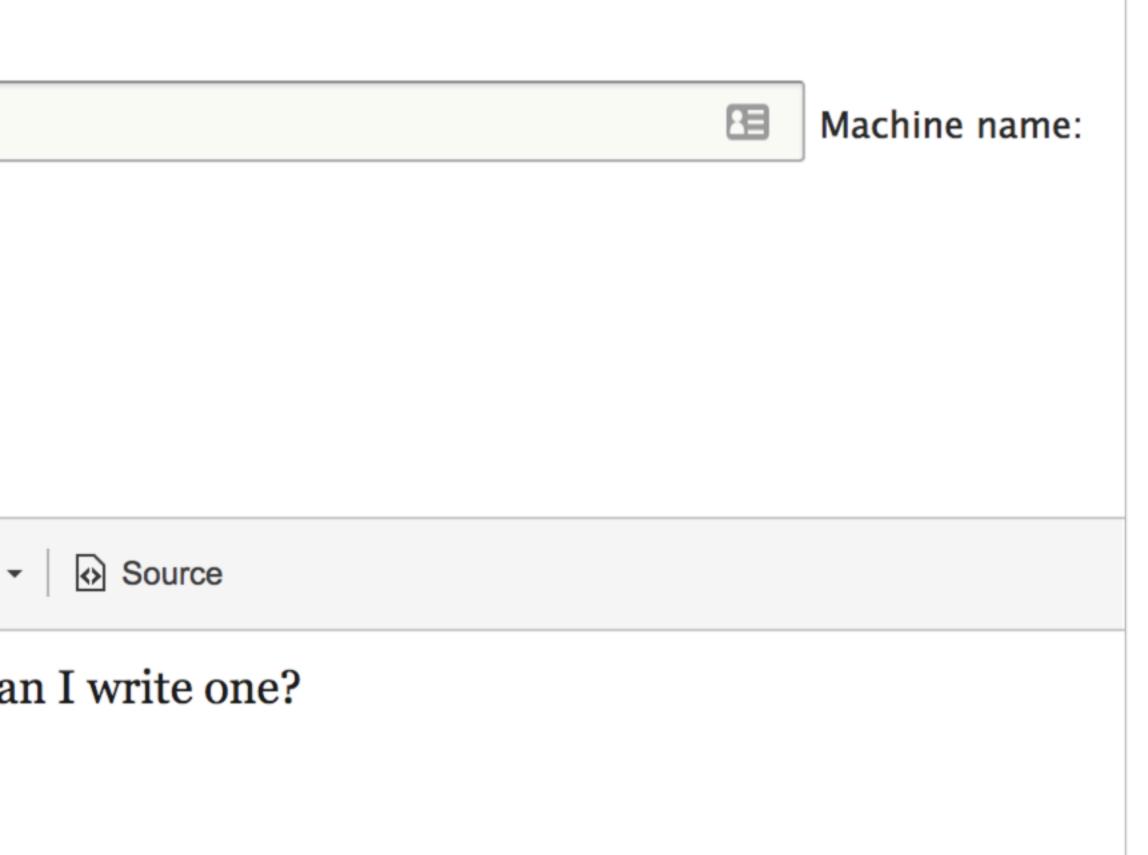
English 🔻

Body

В	Ι	æ	ez	•= •=	1=	,,,	2.4	Format	-
	-		~		2				

What is an awesome help topic and how can I write one?

- 1. Here is step one
- 2. Here is step two
- 3. Here is step three
- 4. Tada!



Configuration type

Help topic

Configuration name

My awesome help topic (my_awesome_help_topic)

Here is your configuration:

label: 'My awesome help topic' top_level: true locked: false related: help_topic_writing list_on: help_system_building body: text: 'What is an awesome help topic and how can I write one?' prefix_tags: '' suffix_tags: '' text: 'Here is step one'

▼

Alternative solutions:

Plugin?

Markdown?

Twig?

Paragraphs?

Other tech implementations might fulfill desired features of resolution (but no patches yet)



Related issue: #2188753: Get rid of hard-coded markup in hook_help implementations Not to the point of a patch yet

Related issue: #1918856: Put each module's help into a separate Twig file Marked as postponed

Related issue: #2820166: Flexible plugin based help system (also proposes to put topics in Twig files) Does this improve UX for help topic writers? What about Twig file access?

What about Markdown-based solution? Is this really better than HTML? What about short strings for translatability?



What about something like Paragraphs module?

First iteration was very similar to

rejected by Usability team.

- Paragraphs. But UI was clunky and

LIMITATION: HOOK_HELP'S CODE

Module overviews created by responding to a fake route which is weird Hooks are outdated in general

Pages now generated by controllers, plugins, or YAML files





The admin/help page now allows other Help providers (such as the Tour module) to list their topics on the Help page

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DESIRED FEATURE: KEEP HOOK_HELP()

Module overviews still have a place/purpose Many (many) modules use hook_help for module overviews

Proposed resolution is complementary to hook_help(), not a wholesale replacement

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Allows logic (because PHP) Can check to see if a module is enabled before displaying a link

Other complicated use cases (which might partially be solved by proposed resolution)

AUTHORING EXPERIENCE

LIMITATION: POOR AUTHORING EXPERIENCE

Current hook_help() syntax may be difficult for documentation writers who are not also PHP programmers





No way for a site builder to add pages to the help system for their own site Except to create a custom module with a hook_help() implementation





Even with hook_help(), site builders could not build help pages because of the limitation of one help page per module (Unless they create multiple modules each with a hook_help() implementation) 🧐



Impacted by "find a more a appropriate place for markup" issue Solution to markup problem should also have positive impact on the authoring experience



BEITTER AUTHORING EXPERIENCE WITH A



Provide a UI that is familiar and easy to learn

Make tokens available for internal routes and links to other topics

Allow limited HTML tags and CKEditor toolbar via text format config

Handle "short strings" for translation behind-the-scenes

Edit My awesome help topic 🕸

	View	Edit	Delete	Translate help topic		
Home » Administration » Configuration » Development » Help topics Title *						
	My awesome help topic					
	Language					
	English	•				
Body						
	B I ⊕ ⊕ 1≣ 1≣ 1≣ 1≣ ⊞ I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I					
	 What is an <i>awesome</i> help topic and <u>how can I write one</u>? 1. Here is step one 2. Here is step two 3. Here is step three 4. Tada! 					
	Text format Help					

8

Machine name: my_awesome_help_topic [Edit]





Provide a UI that is familiar and easy to learn

Make tokens available for internal routes and links to other topics

Allow limited HTML tags and CKEditor toolbar via text format config

Handle "short strings" for translation behind-the-scenes



Proposed UI reviewed by Core UX team and approved



Makes it easier for a non-coder to contribute help topics (i.e. no PHP needed)



Roles can be granted permissions to add/edit/unlock help topics Topics can be locked (read-only) Exportable/Importable/Deployable



LIMITATIONE NO GREAT WAY TO CROSS-LINK TO



Currently this is done with PHP code (to check if the other module is enabled) and placeholders for the URLs.

DESIRED FEATURE: CROSS-LINKS TO OTHER HELP TOPICS

List related topics

Topics to list this topic on

Provide relationships to other help topics you wouldn't otherwise edit

CROSS-LINKS

CROSS-LINKS

▼ RELATIONSHIPS AND HIERARCHY

Top-level topic

Check box if this topic should be displayed on the Help page topics list

Topics to list here

help_topic_writing

Topics to list in this topic's Related topics section. Comma-separated list of machine names.

List this topic on

help_system_building

Topics that should have this topic listed in their Related topics sections. Comma-separated list of machine names.

SUMMARY: REQUIREMENTS



Help text needs semantic markup

Desirable to have minimal/no **HTML outside of theme**

Translatable (short strings)

REQUIREMENTS

REQUIREMENTS

Help topics need to be distributable with modules, themes, profiles

Help topics distributed with

be updated

modules, etc. sometimes need to

REQUIREMENTS

Help authoring needs a UI that is familiar/usable to non-programmers Help topics need to be author-able by site builders

SUMMARYS シアのション

Keep hook_help() in place Add a new help system that would co-exist with hook_help() using config entities



Help Topics as config entities **Same as Tours do** Makes updating a bit difficult and some (semantic) markup is outside theme

Each module, theme, or profile can provide multiple topics in config/install or config/optional



Only topics marked as "top level" (a config property) are listed on the help page (admin/ help)



Site builders can create more topics and organize them into a hierarchy



Non-programmers can author and contribute help topics by using the UI and exporting the configuration entities



Short strings for translation are saved in the translatable config entity YAML file in no larger than paragraph-sized chunks



Demo: Show Help Topics listing page, editing Ul and help topic config entity export



OTHER PROPOSALS



Other proposals are not part of this core ideas plan

OTHER PROPOSALS



#402404: Use approach like D7 Advanced Help for the Help module

Module provide help topics in HTML format with a hierarchy file

for translatability desired feature

OTHER PROPOSALS

Resolves some issues, but breaks many strings



#2590319: replace hook_help with Help Plugin

- instead of module-level pages

OTHER PROPOSALS

Proposes to resolve code issue with hook_help

by replacing it with a help Plugin system

These plugins could be topics with titles

- #1918856: Put each module's help into a separate Twig file
 - module topics into Twig templates

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Proposes to resolve markup issue by putting

Might resolve code and authoring issues, too. **Could resolve translatability if done carefully**



#2188753: Get rid of hard-coded markup in hook_help()

Proposes several ideas to resolve markup and authoring issues.

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Not to the point of a patch yet



#2820166: Flexible plugin based help system

Use Plugin system

Put topics in Twig files

Does this improve authoring experience?

OTHER PROPOSALS



Help Topics as content entities Distribution difficult Some markup outside the theme

OTHER PROPOSALS

DISCUSSION

DISCUSSION

Are there features/limitations we've identified that are *unimportant* or we shouldn't try to solve with this system? Are there additional features/limitations we should try to solve?

Does the proposed plan seem acceptable?

Are there any objections to it being committed to Core as an experimental module?

D1SCUSS10N



EXPERIMENTAL MODULE

We propose that Help Topics to be committed to 8.6.x as an Experimental module. **Write help topics**



What do we need to achieve this? Patch reviews + RTBC Release manager review





Issue: #2592487: [meta] Help system

overhaul



First time sprinter workshop

Mentored **Core sprint**

9:00-12:00 Room: Stolz 2

Join us for contribution sprints Friday, April 13, 2018

> 9:00-12:00 Room: Stolz 2

General sprint

9:00-12:00 Room: Stolz 2

#drupalsprint





What did you think?

Feedback survey located on the session page: https://events.drupal.org/nashville2018/sessions/new-help-system-drupal

Conference-wide survey:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DrupalConNashville



