The Essential Guide to Documentation Metrics

Unlocking Data-Driven Decisions for Product Knowledge Success

Fluid Topics

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INTRODUCTION

Data is everywhere, yet tracking the right metrics to make the most impactful decisions about your documentation remains a challenge. While 76% of company executives name information as "mission critical" and the "company's number one asset", 58% of businesses admit their companies typically make gut-based decisions rather than data-backed ones.

With product and technical documentation teams under pressure to maximize the value of their content and optimize information delivery, it's time to turn to dedicated content metrics. How users access and interact with documentation provides a wealth of data for technical writers to gather and analyze. This information is key for updating content for accuracy, clarity, and overall value for users.

This guide breaks down what to track, why it matters, and how to use that information for continual content improvement — our "Tech Doc Takeaway". Read on to discover how, with the right metrics and tools, technical documentation teams open new opportunities to optimize the user experience and business ROI.

WHAT ARE DOCUMENTATION METRICS AND WHY DO THEY MATTER?

Documentation metrics are a group of quantitative and qualitative measures that provide detailed insights into the performance of a company's content. They monitor content usage, interactions, user engagement, and trends to assess the effectiveness of your documentation and measure ROI. Top-of-the-line solutions allow teams to track metrics at both the documentation and topic levels.

"Documentation metrics provide unparalleled visibility into customer engagement and user needs. Our detailed content analytics help customers make data-driven decisions about how to improve the user experience and optimize their product content."

Teddy Bouziat
Analytics Product Owner | Fluid Topics

Views in November

Document views
6 909 ↗ -15%

Topic views
41 628 ↗ -21%

Most viewed documents

1238	Fluid Topics Configuration and Administration Guide
1157	Fluid Topics API Reference Guide
655	Fluid Topics Designer Guide
346	Fluid Topics User Guide
220	Fluid Topics Release Notes
204	Fluid Topics Quick Start Guide
158	DITA Connector Reference Guide
147	Integrate the Fluid Topics API

View All

Sessions

SESSIONS

6,000

5,000

4,000

3,000

2,000

1,000

0

November 2023 · March 2024 · July 2024 · November 2024 · DATE
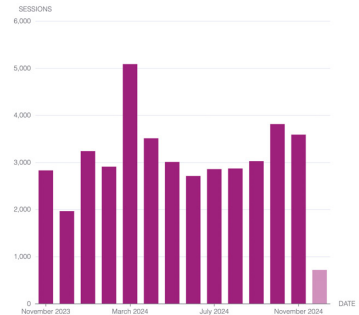
BENEFITS OF TRACKING DOCUMENTATION METRICS

- **Enhancing employee productivity:** Documentation metrics provide clarity around user needs. This allows the team to prioritize high-value tasks on their ever-growing to-do list.

- **Improving customer self-service:** Useful content helps customers autonomously find answers to questions without support agents — something 67% of users prefer. Documentation metrics provide direct user feedback so technical writers can continuously improve content.

- **Optimizing costs:** Advanced content analytics help technical communication teams target inefficiencies in content delivery, pinpoint process improvements, and optimize resource allocation. This streamlines operations and reduces indirect costs. For example, self-service resources empower customers to solve issues on their own, ultimately lowering support expenses.

- **Identifying knowledge gaps:** Analytics highlight specific content issues where users are struggling. Whether the content doesn't exist, or the team needs to add new synonyms or topics, documentation teams can quickly fill in information gaps.

- **Driving business growth:** By analyzing metrics such as the usage of Generative AI (GenAI) applications, chatbots, and other features, companies can develop and justify new pricing models based on access to premium content services.

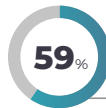**For companies that prioritize data-driven decision-making:**
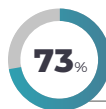
73% improved operational efficiency

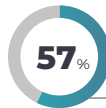*(Source: LeBow College and Precisely)*

62% reduced costs

(Source: LeBow College and Precisely)

59% increased revenue generation

(Source: LeBow College and Precisely)

57% enhanced regulatory compliance

(Source: LeBow College and Precisely)

8 DOCUMENTATION METRICS TO TRACK

1. KNOWLEDGE CONTRIBUTIONS

Products are constantly changing, and new releases are increasingly frequent. For your documentation platform to provide value to users, your content must reflect the latest insights and product updates. Otherwise, your content risks inaccuracies and redundancy. This metric provides a holistic view of how engaged and efficient contributors are at maintaining and updating the company's documentation.
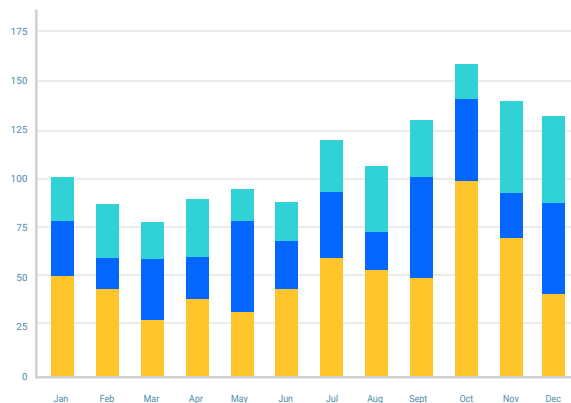
Tech Doc Takeaway
This allows technical communication teams to monitor how quickly they prepare new content and make it available to users. Ensuring a regular flow of new content contributions is necessary for an up-to-date, healthy platform.

Content Inventory
New Additions

— Books — Articles — Topics

8 DOCUMENTATION METRICS TO TRACK
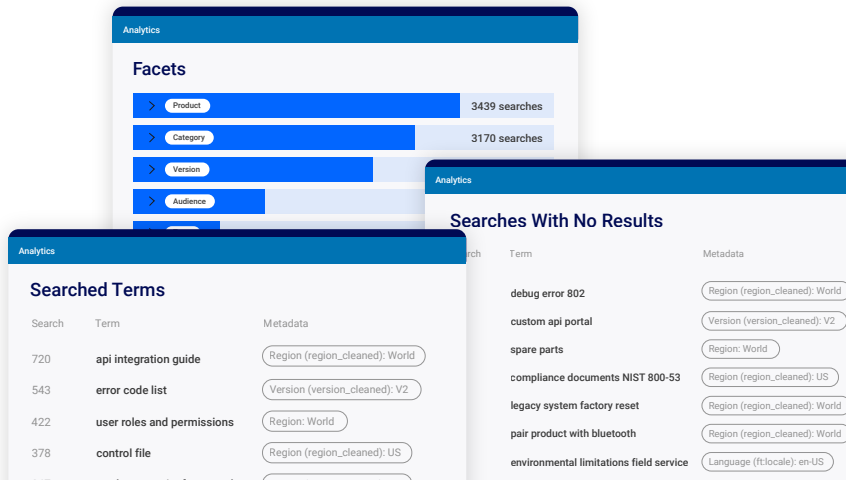
2. SEARCH ENGINE ANALYTICS

A positive product experience relies on findable content. Results with low relevance and low findability lead to user frustration, product downtime, and skyrocketing support costs. To address these challenges, search metrics offer user behavior insights, providing a technical documentation roadmap to craft relevant, up-to-date content experiences.

- **Terms:** Words or phrases that users search for to find an answer or document, often ranked by popularity.

- **Facets:** Filters for search results to narrow down information quickly and only show content with metadata that aligns with that facet.

- **Searches with no results:** Search terms users entered with no matching topic or document results.

Tech Doc Takeaway

With these search analytics, technical documentation teams learn several insights.

- How they can update existing content copy to align with user needs
- What synonyms they need to add to increase content findability
- Which taxonomies to create to define how categories relate to one another
- Whether content is tagged wrong, making it difficult to find
- Where knowledge gaps exist, and new documents are needed

Analytics

Facets

> Product	3439 searches
> Category	3170 searches
> Version	
> Audience	

Analytics

Searches With No Results

Term	Metadata
debug error 802	Region (region_cleaned): World
custom api portal	Version (version_cleaned): V2
spare parts	Region: World
compliance documents NIST 800-53	Region (region_cleaned): US
legacy system factory reset	Region (region_cleaned): World
pair product with bluetooth	Region (region_cleaned): World
environmental limitations field service	Language (ft:locale): en-US

Analytics

Searched Terms

Search	Term	Metadata
720	api integration guide	Region (region_cleaned): World
543	error code list	Version (version_cleaned): V2
422	user roles and permissions	Region: World
378	control file	Region (region_cleaned): US

8 DOCUMENTATION METRICS TO TRACK
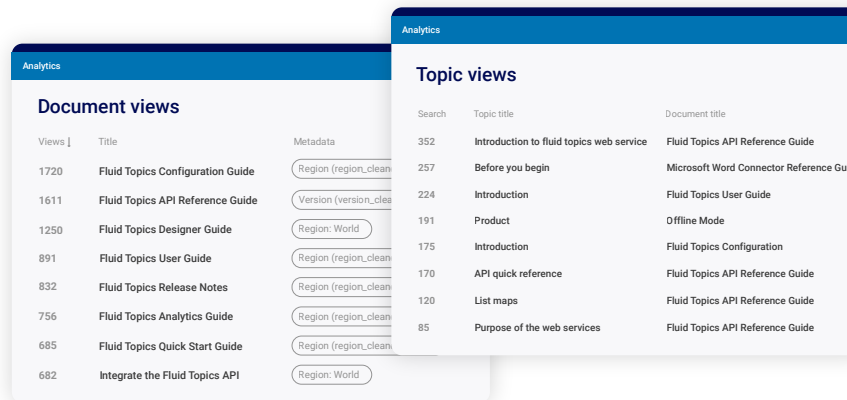
3. USER JOURNEY METRICS

Tracking where users spend their time and how they engage with content helps technical documentation teams gain insights into user trends and needs.

- **Document views:** The number of user visits to a particular document.

- **Topic views:** The number of user visits to a particular topic.

- **Time spent:** How much time users spend engaging with a product or documentation.

- **Active users:** The number of authenticated users who access your portal or a public API.

- **Session Journeys:** Each cluster of events that a single user completes before logging off or going inactive.

Usage metrics highlight how a user engages with a product or documentation portal. Make high traffic content readily available for a smooth, efficient user experience.

Tech Doc Takeaway

Teams can configure their documentation portal or knowledge base homepages to provide quick, direct access to popular content or highlight new content. By collaborating with marketing and customer success teams, they also promote useful content across multiple channels. Finally, session journeys with multiple document and topic views, yet few searches may mean that the desired information is hard to find or dispersed across multiple documents. Teams can therefore update or create new content.

Analytics

Document views

Views ↓	Title	Metadata
1720	Fluid Topics Configuration Guide	Region (region_clean
1611	Fluid Topics API Reference Guide	Version (version_clea
1250	Fluid Topics Designer Guide	Region: World
891	Fluid Topics User Guide	Region (region_clean
832	Fluid Topics Release Notes	Region (region_clean
756	Fluid Topics Analytics Guide	Region (region_clean
685	Fluid Topics Quick Start Guide	Region (region_clean
682	Integrate the Fluid Topics API	Region: World

Analytics

Topic views

Search	Topic title	Document title
352	Introduction to fluid topics web service	Fluid Topics API Reference Guide
257	Before you begin	Microsoft Word Connector Reference Gu
224	Introduction	Fluid Topics User Guide
191	Product	Offline Mode
175	Introduction	Fluid Topics Configuration
170	API quick reference	Fluid Topics API Reference Guide
120	List maps	Fluid Topics API Reference Guide
85	Purpose of the web services	Fluid Topics API Reference Guide

"Fluid Topics Analytics provide great insights that we can use to directly improve the quality of our doc—insights that web analytics alone can't provide. [...] When we see that people spend a lot of time on a particular topic, it raises a flag: it might mean that the documentation needs attention because it's hard to use, or that the product itself needs attention."

Lonnye Yancey-Smith
Executive Manager of User Assistance

HEXAGON
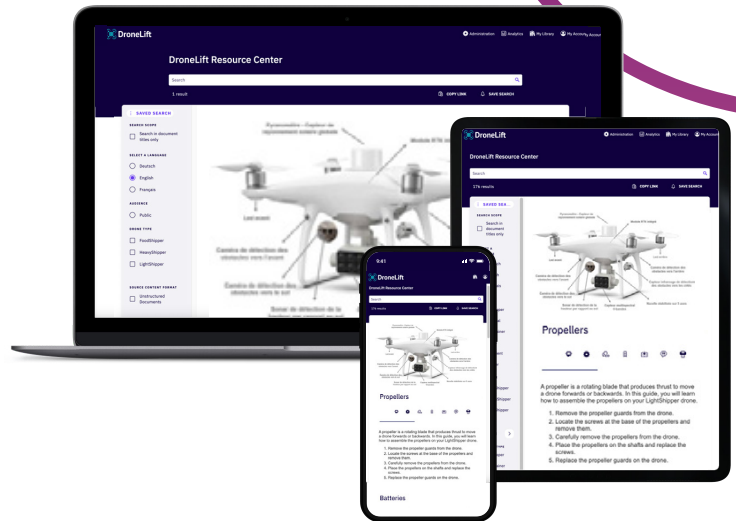
8 DOCUMENTATION METRICS TO TRACK

4. DEVICE TYPES

Not everyone accesses information in the same way. That's why device type metrics are just what they sound like — data around the percentage of display types (desktop, tablet, or mobile) used to access documentation.

Device analytics also provide insights into how to adjust the design and responsiveness of non-textual content for certain devices.

Tech Doc Takeaway

Teams may notice that users access technical documentation portals via mobile devices. Perhaps this is due to the number of field technicians performing onsite maintenance procedures. In that case, technical communication teams can determine which images or diagrams important for field services should be resized for optimized mobile use. They can also reconfigure documentation portal homepages to improve resource prioritization and presentation for mobile devices to enhance the user experience.

99% of field service technicians use mobile devices on the job.

(Source: SightCall)

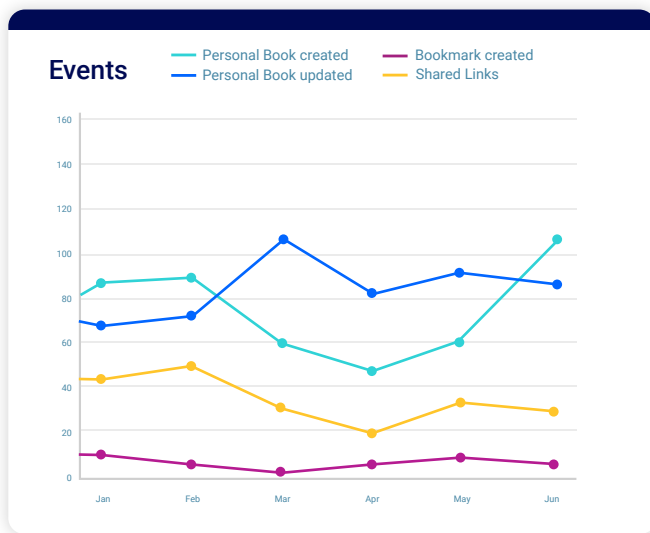# 8 DOCUMENTATION METRICS TO TRACK

5. USER ENGAGEMENT

Beyond knowing which content customers view, your teams need to determine if and how users engage with the content they browse. There are several trackable user interactions that underscore which types of content bring the most value to users.

- **Bookmarks:** A bookmark is a saved shortcut that allows users to instantly access their most important topics.

- **Personal Books:** Personal books allow authenticated users to personalize documentation. Users can mix and match their most relevant topics to create custom documents that include the information they require, without any unnecessary content.

- **Shared Links:** This metric tracks how many users shared a specific document or topic.

Tech Doc Takeaway

Tracking how users interact with and save content for frequent use helps documentation teams understand which information is the most important. By confirming the value of existing content, technical writers can prioritize updates to these frequently accessed and shared topics.

Documentation teams can also reevaluate documentation visibility and add content shortcuts to documents and topics that are harder to find.

Events

— Personal Book created   — Bookmark created
— Personal Book updated   — Shared Links

8 DOCUMENTATION METRICS TO TRACK

6. RATINGS AND FEEDBACK

User ratings highlight the effectiveness of content at the topic and the document level. They may be in the form of awarding a number of stars out of five or as simple as choosing a thumbs up or thumbs down.

Alternatively, your team can enable users to submit written feedback on topics or documents. Open-ended comments may contain valuable suggestions, positive feedback, or questions.

Tech Doc Takeaway

These metrics bring immense value because they remove the guess work for technical documentation teams seeking to interpret how users feel about documentation. Ratings and feedback provide direct communication on how effective content is at answering questions. This filters technical writer priorities around which content to modify or promote.

Document Ratings

ID	Document	Status	Average Rating
1771	Maintenance Guide	↗	★★★★★
1062	API Doc	↗	★★★★★
783	User Manual	↗	★★★★★
166	User Tips Lightshipper	↗	★★★★★
567	Propeller Replacement	↗	★★★★
1306	Discover DroneLift	↘	★★★★
1076	App Guide	↗	★★★★
1606	Delivery Safety Guide	↘	★★★★

● **Topic Feedback**   13min ago

"This piece of content is very helpful, but could use more diagrams for installation steps."

8 DOCUMENTATION METRICS TO TRACK

7. GENERATIVE AI PROFILE ACTIVITY

[89% of AI decision-makers](#) report their companies are expanding, experimenting with, or exploring the use of Generative AI. When it comes to product documentation, companies are designing new engaging AI content experiences for users:

- Summarize documents or topics
- Create a list of tools and parts needed for a maintenance procedure
- Get an explanation of the purpose of a chunk of code
- Get a step-by-step list of instructions
- Other GenAI content experiences

As teams integrate these applications into their user journeys, it's important to track how often users engage with new AI tools.

Tech Doc Takeaway

Track GenAI content experiences to learn about user needs. Are they mostly accessing documentation for field services and therefore they use GenAI to extract the tools and parts they need from a repair manual? Maybe developers are confused and need the GenAI code explainer to better understand how to render a product interoperable. Or perhaps product installation is complex, leading to a spike in generated lists of step-by-step instructions.
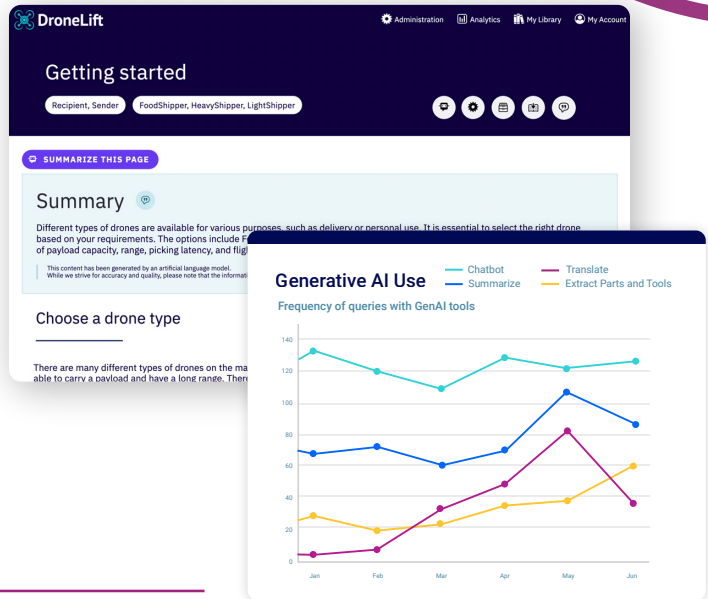
"These new content analytics have helped to challenge long-standing beliefs about how content was used. Now, the team can easily understand what users have searched for and for how long or if, for example, there are topics that have never been visited. We use these insights to drive our documentation effort."

Beth McFadden
Technical Project Manager for Content Operations

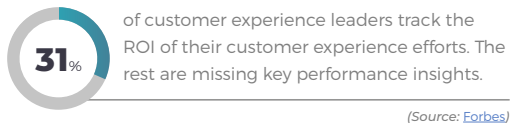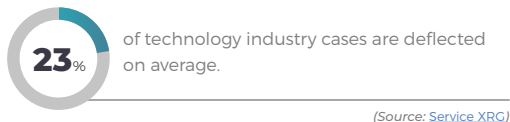teradata.

8 DOCUMENTATION METRICS TO TRACK

8. CASE DEFLECTION

Case deflection, or ticket deflection, is a customer support strategy aiming to reduce the volume of support requests by helping customers autonomously find answers through self-service channels.

Companies often implement case deflection widgets in customer portals or knowledge bases. These widgets recommend self-service content tailored to the user's specific issue. Users can explore these resources and try to resolve the problem on their own. When the content is helpful, the user may avoid submitting a support ticket.

Tech Doc Takeaway

By tracking case deflection, companies can evaluate the ROI of their self-service tools. This is done by calculating the support costs saved through deflected cases - essentially, the number of cases avoided multiplied by the cost of handling a support ticket. This demonstrates the value of product content in assisting users and reduces support costs by empowering customers to resolve issues independently. For technical writers, these metrics illustrate how well their content provides clear, actionable solutions to users.
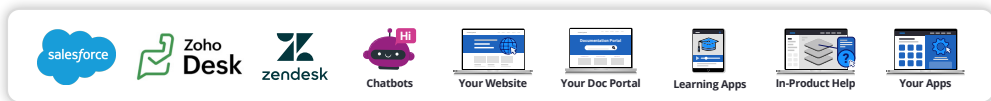
23% of technology industry cases are deflected on average.

(Source: Service XRG)

31% of customer experience leaders track the ROI of their customer experience efforts. The rest are missing key performance insights.

(Source: Forbes)

Discover how **swissqprint** reduced their support tickets by 34% after launching a self-service portal available 24/7 for all internal and external users. Then, learn how they moved from a traditional user support culture to one focused on information self-service.
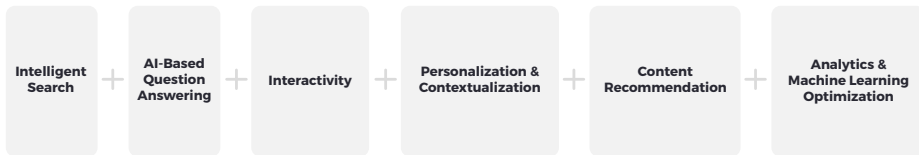
Read the case study

HOW CAN FLUID TOPICS SUPPORT YOUR ANALYTICS NEEDS?

Improving the user experience and achieving corporate KPIs has never been easier with documentation metrics. Fluid Topics' AI-powered Enterprise Knowledge Platform enhances data tracking by centralizing all business content — not just technical documentation — from various sources and formats to provide a holistic view of your organization's knowledge. It offers a central administrative hub that captures the precise details and context of each user interaction and search query to track all the analytics listed in this guide. With next-level, content-centric, and user-focused analytics, your technical documentation teams will be equipped to make data-driven decisions.
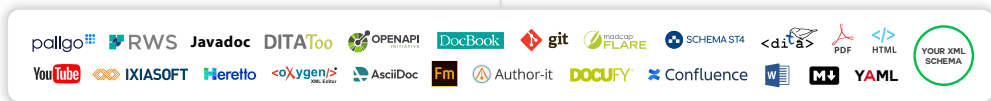
AI & Enterprise Applications

| salesforce | Zoho Desk | zendesk | Chatbots | Your Website | Your Doc Portal | Learning Apps | In-Product Help | Your Apps |

Integration

Fluid Topics
AI-Powered Enterprise Knowledge Platform

| Intelligent Search | + | AI-Based Question Answering | + | Interactivity | + | Personalization & Contextualization | + | Content Recommendation | + | Analytics & Machine Learning Optimization |

Security & Governance

Unified Knowledge & Enrichment

Content Sources & Formats

| paligo | RWS | Javadoc | DITAToo | OPENAPI | DocBook | git | madcap FLARE | SCHEMA ST4 | <dita> | PDF | HTML | YOUR XML SCHEMA |
| YouTube | IXIASOFT | Heretto | oXygen XML Editor | AsciiDoc | Fm | Author-it | DOCUFY | Confluence | W | M↓ | YAML | |

FLUID TOPICS FAQ

1. What is Fluid Topics?

Fluid Topics is a full-fledged AI-powered Enterprise Knowledge Platform that ingests and unifies product information – from manuals to API docs to support articles – no matter the initial source and format. Our solution then delivers the most relevant and personalized content to any digital channel (like a documentation portal), device, and application, in context with the users' needs and environment. As a SaaS solution, the Fluid Topics Platform is designed to integrate with your existing infrastructure and tools to enable dynamic publishing without disrupting your writing process. Fluid Topics tracks the specific details of each user integration to offer dedicated content metrics from a centralized administrative portal.

2. Can an EKP also integrate with Google Analytics?

Yes, EKPs like Fluid Topics seamlessly integrate with any analytics system such as Google Analytics enabling your team to track all the necessary data.

3. Can EKPs track our offline events?

Yes, leading EKPs, like Fluid Topics, log events even when a user accesses the application in Offline mode. Offline accessibility to your content is essential to a smooth user experience. Using a sync capacity for when connectivity is reestablished, your teams don't miss any offline analytics events.

f Fluid Topics

AI-powered Documentation Portals

The 2024 Handbook

Download eBook
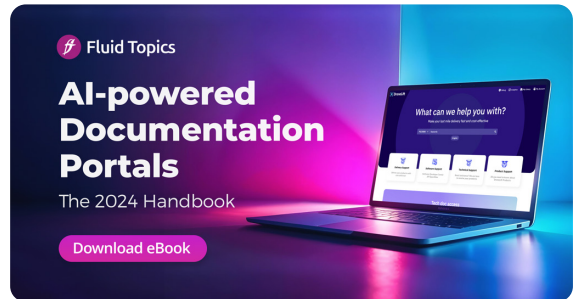
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www.fluidtopics.com

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www.fluidtopics.com/blog

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About Fluid Topics

Fluid Topics' AI-powered Enterprise Knowledge Platform is a software solution that collects and unifies all types of documentation, no matter the initial source and format. It then feeds the relevant content to any digital channel, device, and application, including Fluid Topics' native customizable customer portal, in context with the users' needs and environment.

Fluid Topics

Access our on-demand demo library for self-guided videos

See Fluid Topics in Action

Trusted by Industry Leaders

SIEMENS   dayforce   Johnson Controls   LIEBHERR   Genetec   HEXAGON   darwinbox

BLUECAT   OMERS   swissqprint   precisely   teradata.   VAISALA   KONE

JFrog   HPS /   EASY MILE   FLEXKIDS   Mediametrie   napa:tech;   ATEME Captivate your audience