Redirect Help wiki’s main page to new browser-based help


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status:</th>
<th>In Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Priority:</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignee:</td>
<td>Olivier Hallot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target version:</td>
<td>Q1/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start date:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due date:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Done:</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Description
Since many users are still stuck with obsolete help content.

History

#1 - 2019-04-16 01:25 - Guilhem Moulin
- Status changed from New to Feedback
- Assignee set to Guilhem Moulin

Adolfo Jayme Barrientos wrote:

Since many users are still stuck with obsolete help content.

"Many users"? Do you have any data to back that statement? That page has about 400 hits per day, from about 300 unique IPs. That's <0.5% of unique visitors…

Also there are good reasons to land onto that page: if I visit the old help and I click on “Main Page” or the logo, I expect to be sent to the wikihelp's home page, not the new help. More generally, excluding hits where the referrer starts with "https://help.libreoffice.org/" I count <70 hits per day, so under 0.1% of unique visitors. So AFAICT the redirection would cause more harm than good. IMHO it's more useful to chase links to https://help.libreoffice.org/Main_Page and replace them with https://help.libreoffice.org (this in turns redirects to the new help content — using the root rather than /latest/index.html in anchors is more future-proof).

#2 - 2019-05-08 15:46 - Florian Effenberger
I think the difference between old and new help is on purpose, depending on the program version
Adding Olivier to Cc
Olivier, can you let us know? :)

#3 - 2019-05-08 16:07 - Adolfo Jayme Barrientos

Obviously you guys are not doing tech support on Twitter…. There have been repeated questions about people landing on old, UNMAINTAINED wiki pages (since these are what Google indexes) and they getting confused due to no-longer-applicable instructions or plain-wrong content which receives no maintenance or translation updates. I am a documentation writer, and it is in my interest to provide up-to-date content to users; no need to be condescending, Guilhem.

Florian, I have argued in the past why I think having obsolete content around is doing LibreOffice more harm than good, and the above is one reason, but since it is something I have already put forward in the past, I am not repeating it in the risk of sounding like a broken record.

#4 - 2019-05-08 16:12 - Florian Effenberger

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Florian, I have argued in the past why I think having obsolete content around is doing LibreOffice more harm than good, and the above is one reason, but since it is something I have already put forward in the past, I am not repeating it in the risk of sounding like a broken record.

Would the problem be solved by

1. having a proper robots.txt in place, stopping indexing
2. Adding a note in the page header that this is help for older versions, and the new version is available at another URL?

Would that fix the problems you are describing?

#5 - 2019-05-08 16:25 - Olivier Hallot

Florian Effenberger wrote:

I think the difference between old and new help is on purpose, depending on the program version
Adding Olivier to Cc
Olivier, can you let us know? :)

LO users that hit Help button in dialogs or F1 should be directed to the correct Help release. Before 6.0, the online help was under wiki support.
Typing help.libreoffice.org in the browser will redirect to the latest Help online available.

#6 - 2019-05-08 16:46 - Adolfo Jayme Barrientos

Would the problem be solved by [...]?

Yes, those would be good measures to take, although the banner is more of a band-aid that would need to be translated and such. Also, I (and nobody else in the Doc team) can't edit that wiki; I would've done that a long time ago.

LO users that hit Help button in dialogs or F1 should be directed to the correct Help release. Before 6.0, the online help was under wiki support.

Exactly, which my proposed redirect wouldn't affect. Past LO versions would still be able to access that content.

#7 - 2019-05-08 16:50 - Guilhem Moulin

Adolfo Jayme Barrientos wrote:

There have been repeated questions about people landing on old, UNMAINTAINED wiki pages

And how about redirecting /Main_page to the new help will prevent that? A banner at the top of each page, with some text indicating deprecation and a link the new help is IMHO more helpful, and won't affect users trying to browse help for versions that are not in the new help.

FWIW we do have a bunch of hits for <5.3 pages, still. While the raw metrics don't say whether the request comes from someone lured by a search engine, or someone looking for the old help, it's fair to assume not everyone is in the first category. The update pings have its for old versions, too.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>1.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>0.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>1.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>0.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>0.87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

That's way more hits than /Main_Page (resp. ~130k for 3.x and ~100k for 4.x), from more unique users also.

no need to be condescending, Guilhem.

Sorry it came across as such.

#8 - 2019-05-08 17:46 - Guilhem Moulin

Adolfo Jayme Barrientos wrote:

LO users that hit Help button in dialogs or F1 should be directed to the correct Help release. Before 6.0, the online help was under wiki support.

Exactly, which my proposed redirect wouldn't affect. Past LO versions would still be able to access that content.

It might however affect users trying to browse the old help. The vast majority (85%) of requests to /Main_Page have a referrer starting with
In 20% of these the Referrer clearly indicates the user clicked on a /Main_Page link from a 3.x or 4.x page. (For the remaining 80% the request either comes from non-versioned pages, or the Referrer doesn't contain the full path.)

I agree with Florian that the banner and the robots.txt is the right approach here, along with chasing links to the old help from our own pages. Is there any reason why https://www.libreoffice.org/get-help/community-support/ links to the old help for help, for instance?

I agree with Florian that the banner and the robots.txt is the right approach here, along with chasing links to the old help from our own pages.

Adolfo, would that satisfy your request then if we proceed as such?

I agree with Florian that the banner and the robots.txt is the right approach here, along with chasing links to the old help from our own pages.

Adolfo, would that satisfy your request then if we proceed as such?

I still think the wiki’s main page should be redirected, it has old and misleading information such as those long-ditched plans to convert helpcontent2 to wikitext and make it editable, which never came to fruition.

Non-versioned help pages should also be redirected to the new backend, old info such as menu paths and obsolete features really hurt those of us who give free support.

To move this forward, Olivier, is this something you can talk through in the next doc call and push forward together with infra?

1. having a proper robots.txt in place, stopping indexing
2. adding a note in the page header that this is help for older versions, and the new version is available at another URL?

Any feedback from the documentation call?

We have implemented a red banner in the old help wiki pages, so user landing in any page there is warned on the existence of the new Help.

Warning: This Help page is relevant to LibreOffice up to version 6.0. For updated Help pages, visit https://help.libreoffice.org.

I think this address the the demand and the constrain on legacy versions.
The old pages still show up in Google.

#16 - 2020-01-14 15:16 - Florian Effenberger
- Status changed from Resolved to In Progress
- Target version changed from Q4/2019 to Q1/2020

Olivier, does it make sense to hide it (e.g. via robots.txt) from Google to enfore showing the new content? Guilhem can help with adding robots.txt

#17 - 2020-01-14 15:31 - Olivier Hallot
Sure.

#18 - 2020-01-14 16:01 - Florian Effenberger
Ok, can you coordinate with Guilhem on this?

#19 - 2020-09-14 21:56 - Olivier Hallot
The old page shows in Google because of the organic indexing, started a decade ago. We have refactored the help website to generate sitemaps.
There are still a large avenue of investigation on SEO based on schema.org and multi-language website (hreflang), in the hope to improve search results.

https://schema.org/

https://support.google.com/webmasters/answer/189077?hl=en

There is no way that I know to force Google to "forget" its organic indexing.

#20 - 2020-09-15 09:04 - Florian Effenberger

There is no way that I know to force Google to "forget" its organic indexing.

Something like
https://support.google.com/webmasters/answer/9689846?hl=en could help?