

Guiding users to content - any help or...



AmandaS 59 posts since

May 26, 2007

Hello -

Our deployment of Clearspace is a few months old now and more users are migrating into the system from our previous wiki/discussions/blogs platform.

Our users like many things about Clearspace but we've had some pretty strong criticisms about the lack of structure. We've explained how we are using tags, tag groups and a feature called "Topics" that we developed, to apply metadata and use the metadata to generate different views/slices of content.

What we are finding though is that users aren't married to structure and hierarchy just because they are familiar with it. Rather, they want ways to guide users to specific content vs. just "recent" or "popular" content. Here is an example:

Team X is a core project team and the work they do in their space is consumed by many other teams across the company. To an extent those other teams also collaborate on the content, but in many ways they just consume it and use it in their own projects. Team X wants a way to direct their many disparate users (some very casual, some more regular) to content that they need to see. Understand that the consumers don't necessarily know what they need to see - doing a search isn't the answer because they don't know what to search on.

Team X wants to have sections on their Overview page for things like "Start Here", "How to Get More Involved", "Current Work", "FAQ" etc. as well as ways to promote specific subject areas and provide an organized drill into content (e.g. is this content just a proposal or is it something the team has decided to do?).

They want to make their project more friendly and easily browseable for finding content.

Some biting feedback we had was "It feels like a giant whiteboard with notes all over it" which is basically coming from frustration with producing work that must be consumed by a much larger community and not understanding how best to present things. If their consumers (generally very frenzied field consultants and other product teams) get frustrated or overwhelmed by data, they won't use the system to get their information - they'll send email to someone for the answer.

So, we are looking at developing our own widgets for the Overview tab where users can list explicit links to content. This has appeased some people but they are still looking for more.

Some requests have been: a tighter drill-in on content (like an advanced search on tag groups and tags so they can get to very specific information), a way to show content from a specific timeframe/release, a way to promote content or, for example, show that right now a particular document is "speculative" and not yet "what we are going to do". Text in the page or tags could somewhat be used for the last item but there is some desire to have this data piece be more prominent than other metadata.

Anyway, that's a long list of a lot of stuff... 😊 If others have had the same issue or if you have some guidance or suggestions on space & content best practices or ways to help with this problem, they would be greatly appreciated!!

Thanks.

Tags: [best_practices](#), [community_management](#), [feature_request](#)



[Dawn Foster](#) 126 posts since

Jun 14, 2007 1. **Re: Guiding users to content - any help or best practices?** Apr 14, 2008 3:41 PM

We've been doing this mostly with widgets (html widget with links to key content). One example is on the [plugin page](#) People can get pretty creative with the existing widgets, especially in Clearspace 2.0 where we have a few more widgets available. In most cases, we've been able to use the existing widgets to do what you described without having to develop any new widgets.

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May 26, 2007 2. **Re: Guiding users to content - any help or best practices?** Apr 23, 2008 1:01 PM

We've gone ahead and created something we're calling a "Signpost" widget. HTML editing, with no revision tracking, is not really an option for many of our project leaders (the people who edit space overview tabs in our world). Our Pubs people would love the power of HTML editing for every document they write (;>) but other users cringe at that and want WYSIWYG for everything.

Anyway, our Signpost widget allows users to have any number of groupings of links with a custom name per link and custom title on each instance of the widget. It's editable like any other widget. So far our users really like it - and they're sending us many more requests to expand the functionality.

We weren't able to accomplish this as a plugin or we'd share it. We're on 1.10.5 - not sure at this time when we'll be able to upgrade to 2.x. Maybe in the future we could share this.