

Documentation in git: Adventures in automation and users as authors

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DESCRIPTION

Creating and maintaining quality user facing documentation in a modern HPC facility is a challenging undertaking; software packages change frequently, different user communities require tailored content, teams with diverse backgrounds have to contribute to a coherent body of knowledge, and no-one wants to maintain a documentation server when there are more interesting research problems to solve! The HPC team at the Monash eResearch Centre are using a git-centric approach to managing technical documentation. I'll talk about how we've escaped the dreaded world of CMS; how our user communities are now able to fork the doc repo and contribute their own content through pull requests that the administrators then review; the fun we've had exploring the use of slack bots and other automation workflows to facilitate easy updates of software listings; content quality checks using pre-commit hooks; and the pièce de résistance, deploying the latest version to production with a single slack command, allowing us to update our production documentation on the fly.