

FreeBSD Wiki - Analysis and Discussion

Gaelan Lloyd

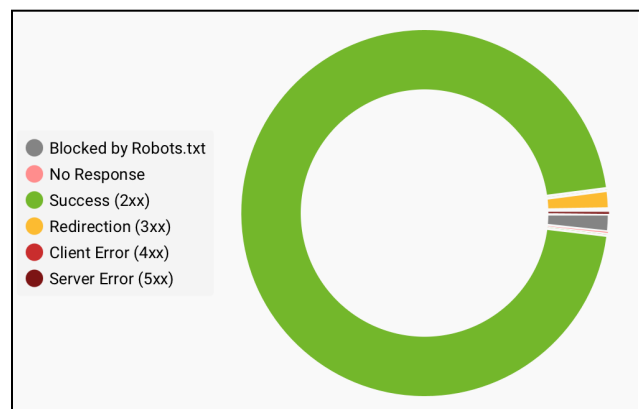
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Overall site structure

I used ScreamingFrog to crawl the wiki (at a gentle pace of 1 page every 10 seconds.) It took about 12 hours to crawl the site.

The site is in fantastic condition from a link-health standpoint. Of 4,100 pages crawled, only eleven 404's were encountered!

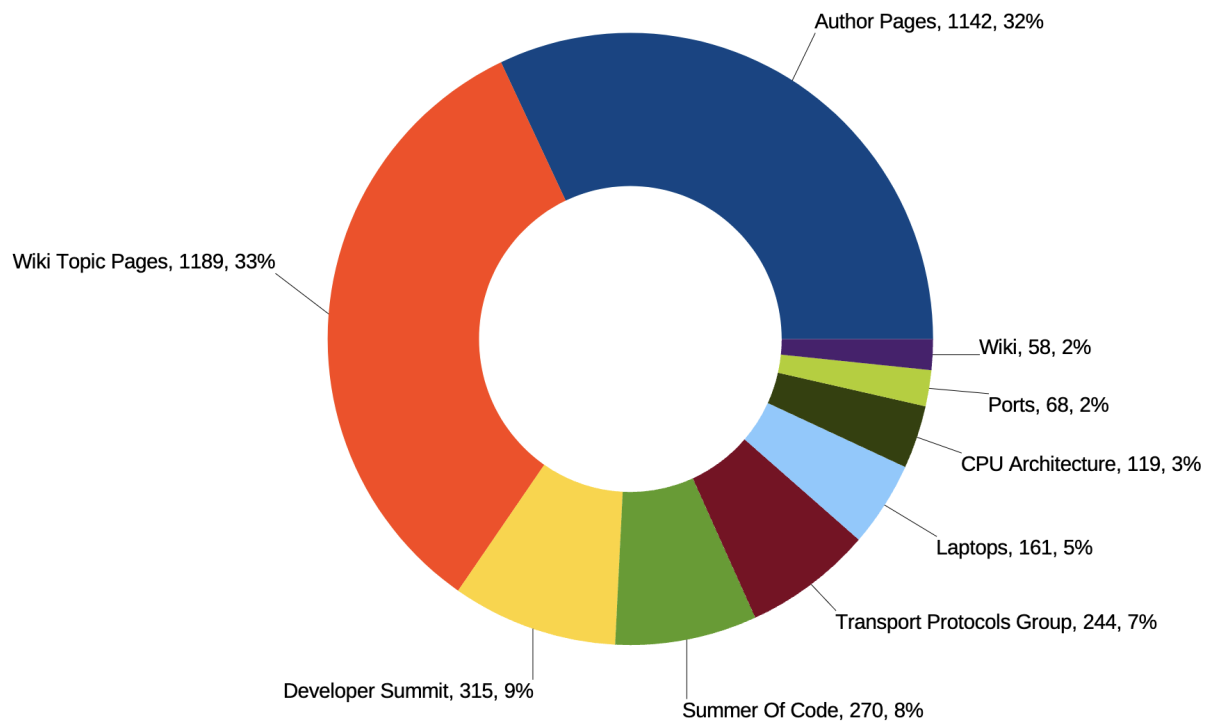
	URLs	% of Total
▼ Response Codes		
▼ Internal & External		
All	4,140	100%
Blocked by Robots.txt	71	1.71%
Blocked Resource ⓘ	0	0%
No Response	6	0.14%
Success (2xx)	3,978	96.09%
Redirection (3xx)	73	1.76%
Redirection (JavaScript) ⓘ	0	0%
Redirection (Meta Refresh)	0	0%
Client Error (4xx)	11	0.27%
Server Error (5xx)	1	0.02%



I categorized the crawled pages into the following high-level groups based on my observations:

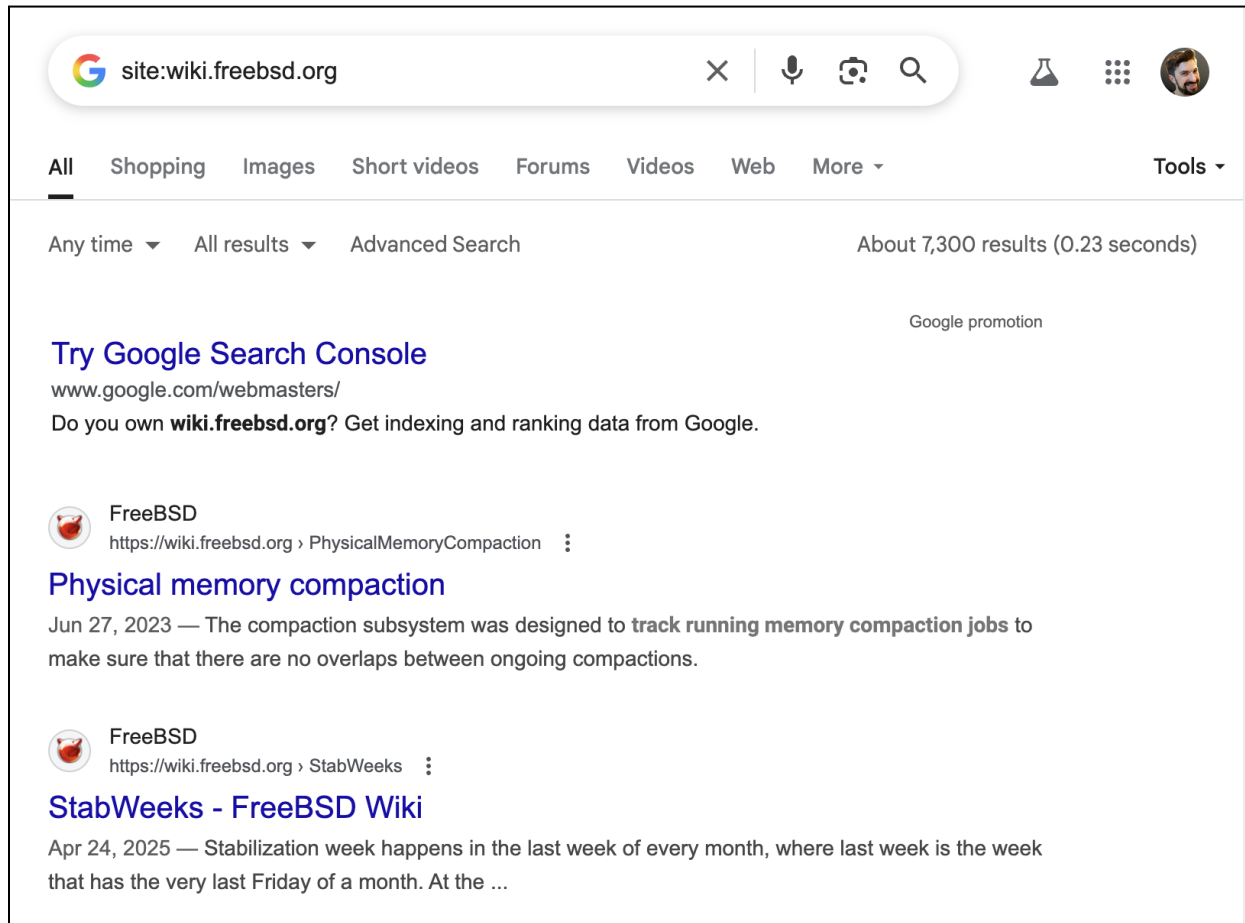
- Author Pages
- Wiki Topic Pages
- Developer Summit
- Summer Of Code
- Transport Protocols Group
- Laptops
- CPU Architecture
- Ports
- Wiki

Using those groups, here's what the site's content breakdown looks like:



Google search indexing results

Google's search index reports about 7,300 indexed pages for wiki.freebsd.org.



Suggested next steps

Understand what the public is using the site for.

Google Search Console

If this hasn't been done already, adding the site to Google Search Console would show search data from Google search queries, which would help us understand the following about the site's audience:

- What search terms are driving visitors to the site.
- Impressions and Click data for pages on the site.
- Geographical traffic sources, as well as device data (desktop vs tablet vs mobile).

Sitewide analytics

I don't believe there's any site analytics script running on the site. Perhaps the site analytics are coming from a locally-hosted server log analysis program, like AWStats or GoAccess?

I'm not a huge fan of Google Analytics, but it is a free and widely available analytics tool that could be used to gather data. I see the FreeBSD Foundation is using Plausible Analytics, and other tools like Matomo exist that could be useful here.

Survey

We could put a survey in place to find out what the public thinks of the site and what they're using it for.

Data gathering timeline

If the analytics above aren't already being gathered and we have to start gathering from scratch, I'd suggest that we let data be collected for about 90 days before making any decisions on site content. General trends should start being apparent after 30 days, but a longer period would give us better view into site activity.

Understand what site authors are using the site for.

From the content category breakdown above, there are almost as many author pages (1,142 or 32%) as there are regular wiki topic pages (1,189 or 33%).

When we emailed four years ago, you mentioned "(originally) wiki.FreeBSD.org was a developers-only wiki. In the last few years we have also welcomed non-developers. But it somewhat remains developer-centric."

There are a few options here on how we could gather information on how authors are using the site, and what they'd like to see out of it.

Site author usage survey

A survey could be sent out to all site editors to find out more about how they're using the site and what they think. A survey link could also be added to the site banner for logged-in users.

Site author usage stats

I'm sure in the wiki there's a way we could see authors by engagement frequency, as well as pages that are most-often edited and ones that haven't been touched in years.

Knowing this information would be helpful to further categorize the site into sections that are receiving attention, versus ones that could potentially be phased out.

My thoughts

I'm new to the project and have only made very modest contributions to the FreeBSD Handbook. I think I've made a few edits to the wiki, too.

Wiki

The wiki tends to cannibalize search results that should probably go to the Handbook. As a newbie, it's sometimes confusing to know whether I should look at the wiki or the Handbook.

The wiki is more friendly to edit, allowing newbies a chance to start contributing sooner.

However, there's a lot of old, outdated information in the wiki. Sometimes this isn't immediately apparent until you notice the "Last edited date" at the bottom of the page and realize the article you just read is several years old.

It seems like the Wiki is a great place for bleeding-edge documentation or notes on experimental projects. Possibly a place to build documentation, get it stabilized, then move it over into the Handbook? If this is the case, having a more official acknowledgement of this structure would be a big help.

Wiki content that's solid enough to be in the Handbook should probably be moved over there.

Handbook

The Handbook is the authoritative source of information.

Editing it is arduous and intimidating. (This barrier to entry could be by design, to help ensure quality).

I've found sections of the Handbook to be vague or lacking. Sometimes there are large knowledge gaps, which I've found out later are covered in other sections of the Handbook. But without cross-links to supporting information, some sections seem like a dead end. (This is particularly a problem when Google sends you to a certain page in the Handbook, and you start reading up on a topic, and there are large knowledge gaps present because the Handbook assumes you've read everything up until that point.)

Some parts of the Handbook can feel long. I feel that splitting the Handbook up into smaller sections could improve usability and encourage contribution.

MoinMoin

I read in the report that MoinMoin is struggling to release an updated version in a timely fashion, and that is a cause of concern. I'm sure migration of the site would be a hefty endeavor, so by understanding more about site analytics, author usage, etc., decisions could be made about keeping vs culling site content, which could help any migration process.

Random thoughts to consider:

Low priority

- Move author pages from / to live under /authors or /home to better organize the site structure if we decide to keep this content. We'd need to put redirects in place to not break any existing links.

Mark