

Wechaty @ Season of Docs Case Study

Create easy to learn tutorials for beginner users of Wechaty

Organization or Project: [Wechaty](#)

Wechaty is a Conversational RPA SDK for Chatbot Makers that creates a bot in a few lines of code that can be run on platforms such as [Whatsapp](#), [Wechat](#), [Gitter](#), and [Lark](#) among others.

Problem Statement

We were losing new users and potential contributors as the documentation wasn't beginner-friendly, new users always struggled with setting up with their development environment, could not get started with the simplest example source code, and found it hard to know what they can do with our API. Also, a lot of common and general questions were being asked in the community, which we feel get reduced if there is proper documentation for the same.

Proposal Abstract

This project primarily aims to improve the Structure and documentation of the Tutorials section, allow new users to learn by doing, they should get all the minimum necessary explanations to get started our sub-projects include improving the documentation for How-to-Guides, references section, introduction & explanations, redesigning of the landing page, adding documentation for the gRPC-Gateway, and OpenAPI.

Project Description

Budget

We received a fairly competitive pool of 16 proposals for our primary Google Season of Docs project. As we were quite active during the hiring phase, we interacted with many prospective technical writers, which resulted in several tech writers making many contributions, also we were sent many draft proposals, we actively reviewed draft proposals and gave our suggestions to them, and in the end, we had multiple excellent proposals for our the main project, and rejecting anyone of them would have been so harsh for them. As we had lots of documentation

work, we introduced many sub-projects for interested tech writers who have worked hard, and have shown great determination and effort in their proposals for working with Wechaty.

We finally hired 2 tech writers for working on the main project, and 9 other tech writers to work on 5 small sub-projects. These 5 sub-projects are mentioned in the Wechaty budget, to manage all this we have hired two volunteers from outside Wechaty who will be managing all this work. We are receiving \$9.5k funding from Google for our projects, and the remaining amount is being paid from the Wechaty community. The actual budget of this project is \$5k (main project) + \$5k (for 5 sub-projects) + \$1.5k (for volunteers) + 1.3\$k (performance stipend for tech writers and volunteers) + \$500 (swags for the Wechaty members participating in GSoD), that sums of up to \$13.3k, Wechaty community has planned to fund additional \$3.8k from the community fund which we get via donations.

Participants

All hired tech writers and volunteers directly contracted us via mail, and Github. We were sent many draft proposals and we promptly reviewed them to make them better. A deadline of 30th April was set for submitting their final proposals. A discussion cum [selection meeting](#) was held for the participants who had submitted their proposal before the deadline. Participants who had submitted proposals voted for other participants on the basis of their proposals and discussion, as Souvik and Shwetal received the most votes (all the participants had equal weightage in the voting) they were selected. For the sub-projects and volunteering selections were made the similar way, i.e via voting on Google forms, and on the basis of the discussion which occurred in the meeting. Nobody dropped out.

[Souvik Biswas](#) and [Shwetal Soni](#) for [Create easy to learn tutorials for beginner users of Wechaty](#) ([team proposal](#))

[Vasvi Sood](#) and [Abhishek Jaiswal](#) for [Improve the How-to guides section](#) ([team proposal](#))

[Shraddha Vasant Prasad](#) and [Soumi Bardhan](#) for [Improve the References section](#) ([team proposal](#))

[Mukosa Joseph Mawa](#) and Chris Estepa for [Improve the Explanations \(and Introduction\) sections](#) ([team proposal](#))

Their role was to document the explanation and introduction section of the documentation so that we can quickly engage the new users, help them understand what Wechaty is, and let them know what they are looking for, and will be getting from Wechaty.

[Sajen Sarvajith k](#) and Arnab Saha for [Reconstruct Wechaty homepage\(landing page\) with value proposition](#) ([team proposal](#))

[Rajiv Ranjan Singh](#) for Improve the gRPC and OpenAPI ecosystem ([proposal](#))

[Rohitesh Kumar Jain](#) and [Simin Liao \(廖思閔\)](#) for [Volunteering](#) ([team proposal](#))

Timeline

There are six teams in total excluding volunteers. Since each team varied in project length and schedule, you could find the respective timeline in this [file](#).

Results

We, 13 technical writers, had successfully created more than 130 pieces of new content, one demonstration video, one advertising video, and a brand-new landing page for Wechaty. All of our works are available on the [Wechaty documentation website](#).

Works for each team can be listed in their respective final projects:

1. [Landing page](#)
2. [Tutorials](#)
3. [How-to guides](#)
4. [Reference](#)
5. [Introduction and explanation](#)
6. [Improve gRPC and OpenAPI](#)
7. [Document quality](#)

Metrics

We measured the project in the following two metrics:

1. The number of the new documents created for Wechaty
2. The number of documents or software improvements for Wechaty

Originally we planned to measure whether the new users increase with the completion of the documentation, but then we realized that our documents aren't marketing materials, and our existing users are complaining that we didn't provide comprehensive documentation. For this reason, we focus on creating documents that cover all aspects and measure the number of new documents. After four months of working, our team has created over 130 new documents with over 150 PRs, and also built a comprehensive structure.

We consider our work very successful because it meets all of our needs right now, and is very friendly for future maintenance. The categories are set unambiguously and are easy to follow. We believe this documentation benefits our users and contributors a lot.

Analysis

We are very grateful for the whole project participants, including Google committees, all technical writers for our project, and the Wechaty committees. We are happy to announce that this project has successfully finished with significant success. Wechaty is open-source software that highly relies on voluntary contributors to maintain, so before Google Season of Docs, the documents are created based on users' requests. Since they were created one by one upon request, the previous documents were more like articles without a systematic structure.

The hardest part of this project is to identify the topics that should be involved and coordinate with other teams. The Wechaty documentation project is a very huge project that involves creating the whole structure from scratch with 13 technical writers from diverse backgrounds. We had several discussions about the topics to cover all aspects of the software and to avoid overlaps at the same time.

To manage a large number of tech writers and their documents, we have hired two people as coordinators. Rohitesh is responsible for the project management and Simin is in charge of documentation quality.

Summary

This is the first time we managed such a large team of technical writers from different backgrounds. We divided our project into seven sectors, including four teams of different types of documents, one team for landing page, one team for gRPC improvement, and one team for project and document management. Applicants submitted their applications to one of seven teams based on their interests and expertise. With a team of 13 people, we are very happy to announce that we have completed it! Based on our experience, we would advise the future projects to:

1. Demonstrate your software to the tech writers. They are not as familiar as you are and they sometimes misunderstand the function and document incorrectly.
2. Keep your proposal clear. Explain your project in examples and show what you would like to improve.
3. Keep the PR small. It is easier to review and edit when we only change small things each time.

Since we have finished the structure of our documentation this time, If we are to join Google Season of Docs again, we will focus on adding more content. Wechaty provides a lot of functions and is constantly updated, so updating the documentation is necessary as well.

Appendix

Structure reference: [The Documentation System](#)

Documentation style: [Google developer documentation style guide](#)

Vocabulary for technical English: [Apple Style Guide](#)

Meeting minutes: [Wechaty Community Meeting Notes](#)

Wechaty's GSoD proposal: <https://wechaty.js.org/docs/gsod/2021/>

Reconstruction of Wechaty landing page project:

<https://wechaty.js.org/2021/05/01/landing-page-value-proposition/>