

Answers

All about answers, the life blood of Stack Overflow.

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Overview

While questions are important, they offer little benefit until they're answered. Answers are the lifeblood of Stack Overflow, and a well-written answer brings much value to your Stack Overflow for Teams site.

Write a great answer

Here are some guidelines for writing a great answer.

Read the question carefully

Make sure you understand, precisely, what the question is asking. Your answer should address the specifics of the question, or a viable alternative. Any answer that gets the asker going in the right direction is helpful, but also mention any limitations, assumptions, or simplifications in your answer. Brevity is acceptable, but fuller explanations are better. If your answer says "don't do that," make sure you also include "try this instead".

Provide context for links

Links to internal and external resources are encouraged, but add context around links to make apparent their purpose and destination. Always include in your answer the relevant content of a vital link, in case the target site is unreachable or goes permanently offline.

Write to the best of your ability

Every answer won't be perfect, but correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar make an answer easier to read. Well-written answers also tend to get upvoted more frequently. Remember that you can always go back at any time and edit your answer to improve it.

Add a partial answer

If you find an unanswered question that addresses a problem you're also having, consider how you can move toward a solution. Do some research on your own, then contribute what you learned as a partial answer. Even if you can't solve the problem in its entirety, other users will have more to go on. Upvote the question as well, so it gets more attention.

Add to existing answers

If a question has a suitable answer already, you can still contribute your own knowledge by expanding on the answer or adding an alternate solution.

Answer well-asked questions

Not all questions can or should be answered. Don't waste your time on questions that:

- Are unclear or lacking specific details that can uniquely identify the problem.
- Solicit opinions rather than facts.
- Have already been asked and answered before.

If you read a question that has value but needs improvement, consider leaving a comment for the asker suggesting how to improve the question. You can also [edit the question yourself](#) to improve its quality and reduce the chances of it being closed or deleted.

Answer your own question

If you have a helpful question that you know the answer to, you can write and answer your own question. This allows you to document knowledge so it's easy for others to find.

You'll see an **Answer your own question** checkbox at the bottom of the "Ask a question" page. Check this box to submit both a question and its answer. If you choose to not answer your question when you add it, you can come back and answer it at any time.

Accept an answer

When you receive a good answer to your question, you can formally accept the answer as a way to recognize its accuracy and quality. When the original author of a question accepts an answer, Stack Overflow for Teams marks that answer with a colored checkmark.

Accepting an answer is not a definitive statement that the question has been answered perfectly. Accepting an answer only indicates that you received an answer that worked for you. If a better answer comes along later, you can't change your accepted answer. Instead, the community can upvote later answers to recognize their value.

You can also accept your own answer to a question you wrote, but not until 48 hours have passed after writing the answer. This allows other users to post an answer that you may choose to accept instead.

In most cases, accepting an answer results in reputation gains.

- If you accept someone else's answer, you earn +2 reputation and the writer of the accepted answer earns +15 reputation.
- If you accept your own answer, no reputation is awarded.

Deleted answers

Users can delete answers that lack accuracy, substance, or relevance. Such answers may be:

- Inaccurate in content.
- A commentary on the question or other answers.
- Answering (or asking) a different or unrelated question.
- A simple "thanks!" or "me too!" response.

- A duplicate of other answers.
- Little more than a link to an external site.

You can delete an answer you wrote at any time, unless the writer of the question accepted your answer. You can also undelete your own answer after deleting it. Moderators and admins can delete and undelete any answer immediately. Users with enough reputation can also vote to delete answers that have a negative score. If an answer receives three delete votes, Stack Overflow for Teams will delete it. Finally, Stack Overflow for Teams will automatically delete any answer that accumulates enough offensive or spam flags.

A deleted answer becomes invisible to all but the original author, admins, moderators, and privileged users (with high reputation). If deleted by others, the writer of a deleted answer can request undeletion by flagging it for moderator review. Privileged users can also cast undelete votes. Once a deleted answer has three undelete votes, Stack Overflow for Teams will restore (undelete) the answer.

There are many factors that play into the delete/undelete process for questions and answers. To learn more, check out this [Stack Overflow Meta post](#).

NOTE: *If possible, it's better to improve an answer than delete it. To edit an answer, click its **Edit** link.*

Answer questions with the API

You can use the Stack Overflow for Teams API `/questions` endpoint to answer questions on your site. For more information on the API, check out our [API v3 for Teams Basic and Business](#) and [API v3 for Teams Enterprise](#) articles.

Need help? Submit an issue or question through our [support portal](#).