Stack Overflow for Teams Documentation

Questions

How to write a great question and manage answers.

Document generated 12/06/2024

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Tags | [**Questions**](#) | [**Answers**](#) |

Applies to: Free, Basic, Business   Enterprise

Overview

Your Stack Overflow for Teams knowledgebase is built on questions, specifically questions that are written well and answered accurately. In this article, we'll explore what it takes to write a question that is clear, focused, and compelling. Such a question is more likely to be answered by your community, bringing a solution to you and value to other users.

NOTE: *We use the generic word "community" in this article, not to be confused with Stack Overflow for Teams'* [Communities](#) *feature.*

Search first

Before you begin writing a question, make sure it hasn't already been answered on your own site or the public Stack Overflow site (www.stackoverflow.com). If your question is new, or differs significantly from other related questions, write and submit your question. If you find related questions and answers online, include links in your question. This will help others understand how your question differs from what's already been posted.

Write a great question

With millions of Stack Overflow questions written and answered, we've observed many best practices for writing an effective question. Follow these guidelines to write a question that gets answers and brings value to your site.

Summarize the problem in the title
Your question's title is the first thing users see, and an interesting title increases the chances they'll read the rest. Here are some hints for writing an interesting title.

- Try to summarize your question in one sentence. What details can you (briefly) include that will help someone identify and solve your problem? Details to consider: error messages, APIs, problematic software libraries, unusual circumstances.

- Check your title for spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors.

- If you're having trouble coming up with a clear, concise title, write it last. Sometimes writing the rest of the question first can make it easier to summarize the problem.

Explain the problem

Before you provide details, start by expanding on the summary you put in the title. Explain how you encountered the problem you're trying to solve, and any difficulties that have prevented you from solving it yourself. The first paragraph in your question is the second thing most readers will see, so make it as engaging and informative as possible.

Be specific

After summarizing your problem in the beginning of your question, begin adding specific details. Without being overly wordy, try to share all the aspects of your issue or problem. If you ask a vague question, you'll get a vague answer.

Watch out for subjective questions

To prevent users from flagging or even removing your question, it's best to avoid asking subjective questions. You should only ask practical, answerable questions based on actual problems that you face. Chatty, open-ended questions diminish the usefulness of our site and push other questions off the front page.

Subjective question types to avoid:

Subjective Question Type	Example
Every answer equally valid.	"What's your favorite _____?"
Answer included in question, more answers solicited.	"I use _____ for _____. What do you use?"
No actual problem to solve.	"I'm curious if other people feel like I do."
Open-ended, hypothetical.	"What if _____ happened?"
Rant in disguise.	"_____ is lame, am I right?"

Not all subjective questions are to be avoided. With care, you can craft a subjective question that is both constructive and valuable to your community. A valid subjective question invites sharing experiences over opinions, and requests that users support their opinions with facts and references. For more information, read guidelines for great subjective questions and real questions have answers.

Include all relevant tags

Tags are important for organizing questions and making them easier to locate. Include as many tags as are relevant to your question. If your question involves technology, include a tag for the relevant language, library, API, etc. As you type in the tags field, Stack Overflow for Teams will suggest tags that match what you've typed. Read the tag descriptions before accepting the suggestions to make sure they're relevant to the question you're asking. Learn more about using tags.

Help others reproduce the problem

If your question pertains to programming, include the problematic sections of the code you've written. Do not copy in your entire program. Include just enough code to allow others to reproduce the problem.

Proofread before posting

Before posting your question, read it through from start to finish. Imagine you're another user reading it for the first time. Does it make sense? Is it clear and concise? Would the question benefit from more information, or less? If your question pertains to programming, follow your own instructions and try to reproduce the problem in a fresh environment. Correct mistakes, condense wordy text, add missing information, and read through it again. Before you post, check one last time to make sure that your title still effectively summarizes the problem.

Meet quality standards

You may encounter this automated message from your site when posting a question: "This post does not meet our quality

standards". Stack Overflow's minimum quality filter checks all new questions for completeness. To make sure your question meets the minimum quality standards, check for the following:

- A clear title.

- A reasonable explanation of what your question is. Add as much detail as you can.

- Evidence of background research that wasn't adequate to solve your problem.

- Correct use of spelling and grammar.

If you have all of these elements and your site still blocks your question, reach out to your site administrator or moderator.

After you've posted your question

Writing a good question is the beginning of the Q&A process, not the end. Here's what to do after you've posted your question.

Respond to feedback
After you post, other users may comment on your question with suggestions for how to improve it. If you missed an important piece of information, be ready to respond by editing your question to include it. If someone posts an answer, read it to see if it adequately answers your question. If you need more information, use a comment to provide feedback to the answer writer.

As the author, you will also receive notifications for all new activity (such as comments or answers) on your question. These notifications will appear on your For You page, but you can also receive notifications via email. Learn more about communication settings.

Accept an answer
One of the most important parts of asking a question is to accept a suitable answer. Not only does this give the writer of the answer a reputation boost, but it also gives a clear indication that your question was answered (and your problem solved). Stack Overflow for Teams will pin the accepted answer to the top of the answers list and mark it with a green check.

Stack Overflow for Teams will also mark questions with an accepted answer in question lists. This gives users a quick way to identify answered—and unanswered—questions.

Help your question get answered
Not all questions are answered right away. If your question hasn't received an answer after considerable time, you may need to put additional effort into the question. Read over your question again and, if possible, edit it to improve its clarity and brevity. Add to your question to provide status and progress updates if you've made progress toward solving your problem. This "refresh" will bump your question higher on your site's home page and may garner more interest.

If you still feel your question isn't getting a good answer, you can help by offering a bounty on any question more than two days old.

Additional resources

Learning to ask a good question is a worthy pursuit, and not one you'll master overnight. Here are some additional resources you may find useful:

- Writing the perfect programming question

- How do I ask and answer homework questions?

- [How to debug small programs](#)

- [Meta discussions on asking questions](#)

- [How to ask questions the smart way](#) (long post, but valuable advice)

Add questions with the API

You can use the Stack Overflow for Teams API `/questions` endpoint to add 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](#).