



EBOOK

Top 10 Challenges Technical Writers Face and Their Solutions

Navigate Everyday Problems and
Optimize your Content Operations



Fluid Topics

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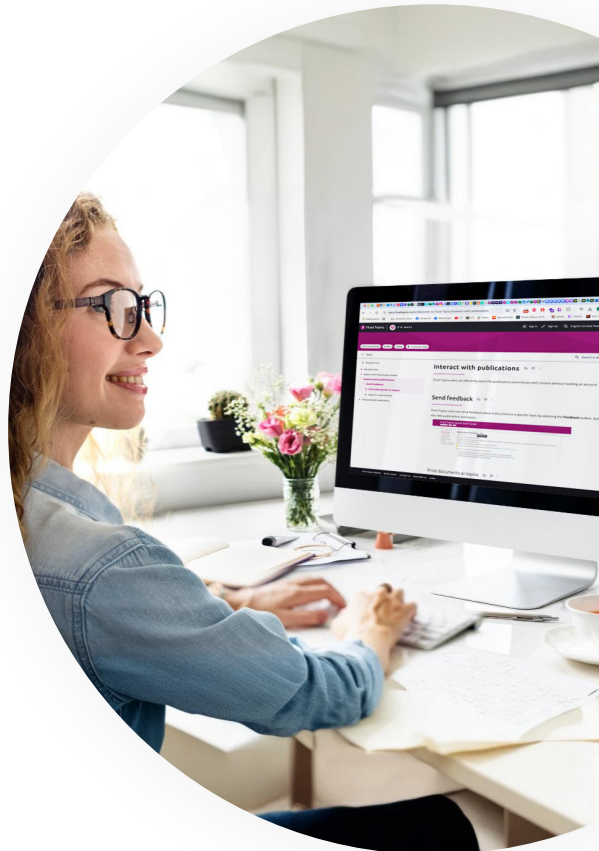
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INTRODUCTION

The work of technical writers, or tech writers, is at the core of the customer lifecycle, product adoption, and other activities that bring immense business value. They are changemakers. **When businesses invest in the needs of their technical writers, the returns are significant.** For example, [FedEX](#) saw a dramatic improvement after their technical writers revamped the company's corporate ground operations manual. This update pushed information findability from 52% to 80%, saving the company \$400,000 a year.

Despite this clear value, there are several barriers standing in the way of high-value content creation and delivery. Developing documentation at scale is a complex, laborious process. Challenges like inefficient processes, gaps in the tool stack, and shifting needs amidst new technologies complicate the work of technical writers.

If you're a technical writer looking for concrete solutions to everyday problems, this eBook is for you. Uncover the 10 core challenges tech writers face, actionable solutions to optimize workflows, and information to build a business case for new investments. You'll discover how to leverage tools and processes to enhance the documentation workflow while improving the user experience and optimizing the company's ROI.



GLOSSARY

- **Content Delivery Platform (CDP):** A CDP is a software solution that centralizes and unifies content from a wide variety of sources and formats. From this central point, the CDP then connects all content to each delivery point, be it a documentation portal, helpdesk tool, knowledge base, website, or AI application like a chatbot. This creates a cohesive content experience for users.
- **Dynamic Content Delivery:** Dynamic content delivery, or publishing, provides personalized, customized, on-the-fly content to users based on each profile, behavior, or situation. Unlike static content, dynamic delivery ensures each person gets the most relevant, up-to-date information in real-time. Content Delivery Platforms like Fluid Topics are designed to collect all enterprise product content and deliver it dynamically to the user touchpoints where it's requested.
- **Generative AI (GenAI):** GenAI refers to a category of artificial intelligence that produces new content including text, images, audio or code, making it a valuable tool across industries. It uses datasets to replicate patterns and create new, similar data in response to prompts. Often, GenAI uses LLMs to understand and/or produce natural language. Examples of GenAI applications include ChatGPT or DALL-E2.

[See Full Glossary](#)

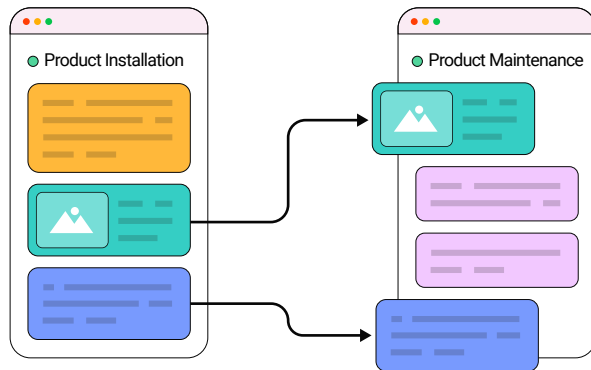
1. HIGH VOLUME OF CONTENT TO CREATE

CHALLENGE

The constant flood of requests for new content and updates can be overwhelming. Technical writers have a never-ending backlog of work that requires extensive planning and attention to detail to ensure consistently accurate and clear deliverables. With frequent product changes and the need to tailor documentation for various user personas and languages, companies need a lot of content in a short period of time. On top of that, tech writers must manage content across multiple platforms, products, and projects simultaneously, all while facing tighter deadlines and increased pressure.

SOLUTIONS

- **Implement a Component Content Management System (CCMS):** Using a CCMS allows teams to adopt a modular writing practice. Modular or structured content breaks documentation down into smaller, reusable components that you can repurpose for different documents or projects. According to [Scriptorium Publishing's](#) Sarah O'Keefe, companies can expect to reuse about 20% of content. She reported that this number reaches up to 80% for content-heavy industries with product overlap, like the semiconductor sector. Content reuse reduces the content production volume and increases production velocity.
- **Look for Automation Opportunities:** The growing use of AI tools and optimized content operations help eliminate workflow inefficiencies in daily tasks. Simple improvements such as automated content tagging, machine translation, and AI writing optimization suggestions, allow writers to focus on high-value tasks like producing documentation.



of content decision-makers feel like maintaining the speed of publishing new and updated content is a real challenge.

(Source: [Adobe/Forrester](#))

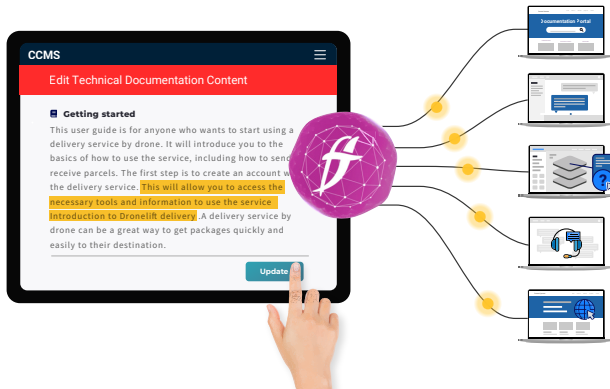
2. KEEPING UP WITH FAST RELEASE CYCLES

CHALLENGE

Release cycles, particularly in software companies, are becoming increasingly short, rolling out updates almost continuously. Not only does this add to the volume problem, but last-minute changes to the product throw off the workflow, creating unnecessary emergencies. Technical documentation teams are responsible for preparing all the documentation for new releases. However, right before launching, the development team may announce some new features that weren't listed in the original scope. In this case, the documentation team must quickly revise their documentation to publish these changes as close to the update as possible.

SOLUTIONS

- **Update Communication Workflows:** If the documentation teams don't find out about product changes until the last minute, it may be time to rethink your operational workflows. Make sure you have clear, open communication with developers, engineers, and product teams, attending joint meetings if needed.
- **Reassess Documentation Calendar:** Some last-minute changes are inevitable, but other times teams can alleviate stress by reworking their deadlines and prioritizing content earlier. Try to leave some buffer time to reduce the stress of unforeseen changes.
- **Adopt Continuous Content Delivery:** Writers must be able to edit documentation as often as needed. By adopting continuous content delivery, they can publish updated content at the rhythm and speed they want, across all channels.



HOW HEXAGON SAVED TWO WEEKS IN THE DOC DELIVERY PROCESS

Discover how Fluid Topics helped Hexagon achieve new delivery targets and keep up with an accelerated release pace by switching to continuous content delivery.



Learn how



“We’ve saved up to two weeks in the documentation delivery process for large products, which helped us reach our goal of four-week release cycles. We couldn’t have kept up with the pace without Fluid Topics.”

Lonnye Yancey-Smith
Executive Manager of the Asset Lifecycle
Intelligence Division



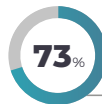
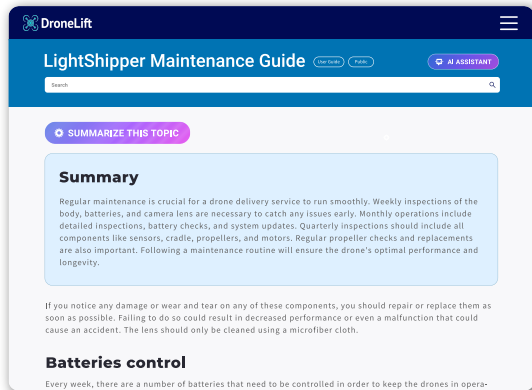
3. NAVIGATING THE RISE OF AI IN DOCUMENTATION

CHALLENGE

Generative AI applications are infiltrating every facet of work including technical writing, but this isn't a bad thing! While AI won't replace tech writers, it is redefining content management requirements. Technical writers must find the balance between leveraging AI for efficiency and maintaining the level of accuracy and details that their users expect.

SOLUTIONS

- **Embrace AI as a Tool, Not a Replacement:** AI won't replace technical writers. On the contrary, writers should harness new AI tools to fast-track content production, translate text quickly and at lower costs, and check content for consistent style and tone. These solutions enhance productivity so writers can focus on more complex and creative tasks.
- **Invest in Training:** Team training is essential to staying competitive and evolving alongside technology. Fluid Topics' Head of Product Knowledge, Rémi Bove, recommends *"[investing] in training programs that enable technical writers to grasp fundamental AI concepts. Fostering a collaborative and innovative culture is equally important."*
- **Maintain Human Oversight and Editorial Control:** AI tools can check simple grammar issues but still face challenges like hallucinations and a lack of detail when trying to replicate nuanced, context-specific documentation. Keep technical writers in the loop by retaining content creation within the scope of humans. Additionally, for any new AI tools, establish processes that ensure human oversight and validation of all GenAI outputs.



of executives believe Generative AI will increase workforce productivity.

(Source: KPMG)

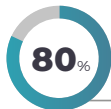
4. ADDRESSING DIVERSE PRODUCT USERS

CHALLENGE

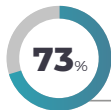
Documentation needs the flexibility to serve different audiences - customers, internal teams, partners - each with unique needs, backgrounds, and experiences. Some may expect advanced, technical explanations while others will look for simple, step-by-step guides. Yet, offering personalized content for language localization and role-specific information greatly increases the complexity of documentation development and the time to publication.

SOLUTIONS

- **Engage with Users:** Get feedback to understand how your content brings value to different user groups and whether you could further tailor it to their needs. Are there areas of documentation that need clarification or an accompanying visual? Creating a direct line of communication from users to writers is the best way to ensure documentation will serve all users.
- **Invest in a Content Delivery Platform:** CDPs help companies implement dynamic content delivery which allows teams to create personalized content experiences at scale. CDPs leverage user information (e.g. profile, preferences, behavior) at the point of delivery to retrieve relevant content for each user.



of customers say the experience a company provides is just as important as its products or services.



of customers expect better personalization as technology evolves.

(Source: [Salesforce](#))



Breaking Free From One-Size Fits All Documentation

A Webinar by Fabrice Lacroix and Val Swisher

Watch the Webinar

5. COLLECTING INFORMATION FROM SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS

CHALLENGE

Collecting specialized information is one of the main tasks of technical writers. To accomplish this, they meet regularly with subject matter experts (SMEs) who have the technical and functional field knowledge needed to craft accurate, detailed documentation. SMEs may be experts in a product component, specific process, regulations, or other complex topics. However, looping SMEs into the documentation workflow is complicated. They have their own objectives and may not have the time needed to sit down for an informational interview, making it difficult for writers to gather this essential knowledge.

SOLUTIONS

- **Turn SMEs into Collaborators:** SMEs are highly knowledgeable about their specialties and can draft a page or two of content about their expertise quickly and on their own time. Asynchronous work can be a valuable alternative to live meetings. Collaborative tools provide the flexibility that technical writers need to get valuable insights on time so they can turn that information into ready-to-use documentation.
- **Access the Right Tools:** Streamline communication and avoid content bottlenecks when passing documents back and forth with documentation tools. From project management tools to CCMs and Content Delivery Platforms, make sure your team is equipped to share drafts, collaborate in real time, and dynamically deliver content updates across endpoints.



IMPROVING THE CONTENT CREATION PROCESS WITH ACROLINX & FLUID TOPICS

Learn how these tools streamline content creation and delivery to meet user quality and consistency expectations.

acrolinx



Fluid Topics

Discover their joint solution

6. WORKING WITH OUTDATED DOCUMENTATION TOOLS

CHALLENGE

Outdated tools reduce productivity whether due to a lack of modern features that slow down production or the unsupported file formats that make publishing a challenge. In fact, [Fortune 500 companies](#) lose about \$12 billion each year due to inefficiencies in documentation operations and management. Without the necessary resources available, operations will face increasing delays, hampering the quality of the user content experience. From a lack of version control to no collaboration capabilities and static content delivery, the limitations of outdated documentation tools have extensive consequences.

SOLUTIONS

- **Revamp Content Operations Processes:** If you can't get new tools, you at least need to make sure that you are working as efficiently as possible with the ones you have available. Review existing processes to eliminate inefficiencies, improve communication, and clarify responsibilities where possible.
- **Choose Best-of-breed Tools for Each Workflow:** When investing in new tools, choose top-of-the-line solutions for each part of your documentation pipeline, including content authoring, content optimization, developer documentation, and content delivery. Be sure to select tools that are interoperable for seamless operations.



is the average amount of time tech writers spend creating documents.



of these documents become lost without the right systems and strategies in place to manage this content.

(Source: [The CM Consultant](#))

17 Most-Popular Software Documentation Tools

Update your tech stack with these solutions to improve productivity, optimize documentation release cycles, and enhance user adoption.

[See the tools](#)

“Fluid Topics enhanced our operations by unifying our content and centralizing our publishing, allowing us to instantly communicate about 1 million products across 60 websites and 25 portals. The time saved and the improved user experience? That’s true value.”

Nelson Abbey

Principal Information Developer,
Johnson Controls International



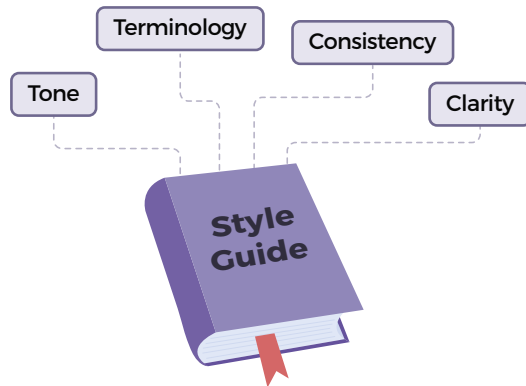
7. MAINTAINING DOCUMENTATION CONSISTENCY

CHALLENGE

Many teams contribute to documentation including product knowledge, engineering, IT, development, R&D, and more. However, producing and editing content across so many teams creates inconsistent deliverables. Users are frustrated when they encounter different writing styles, shifting tone, or terminology discrepancies in documentation.

SOLUTIONS

- **Define Style Guidelines:** Establish a style guide that serves as a reference for users across teams when writing documentation. This guide should lay out the rules for formatting, tone, vocabulary, and more to create a coherent user experience with the company. Consistent writing improves uniformity and streamlines the editing process.
- **Perform Documentation Audits:** Regularly analyze the consistency of all content within your documentation corpus to ensure it adheres to your company's standards for quality, consistency, and tone. Technical writers can automate these checks by leveraging AI content quality tools like Oxygen Positron AI Assistant, Acrolinx, and Congree UCC.



30%

of content experts say their content is not designed or optimized for mobile devices.

(Source: [Data Conversion Laboratory](#))

76%

of field service technicians use mobile devices on the job.

(Source: [SightCall](#))

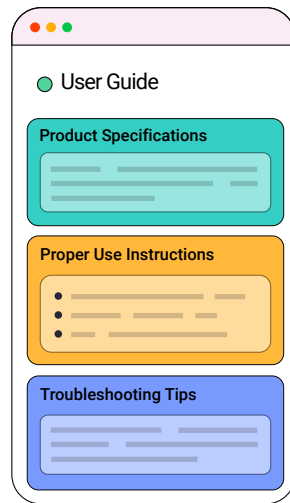
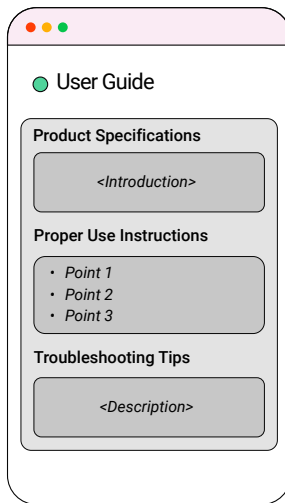
8. IMPROVING DISORGANIZED CONTENT STRUCTURES

CHALLENGE

Content structures that lack clear planning result in fragmented, illogical documentation. Users struggle to find what they need when information is not properly organized, leading to confusion and frustration. Disorderly content structures may also result in duplicated content, ambiguous hierarchies, and overlapping topics. All of these issues undermine the usability and reliability of documentation.

SOLUTIONS

- **Outline Content:** Sketch an overview of your content to guide your writing process so the final production is logical and clear. Consider when to use elements like headings, subheadings, bullet points, or numbers to improve content readability and findability.
- **Write Structured Content:** Authoring tools like CCMSs use structured content, allowing tech writers to organize their documentation into precise topics. These tools make it easy to drag, drop, and rearrange content topics as needed to ensure a logical flow of information.



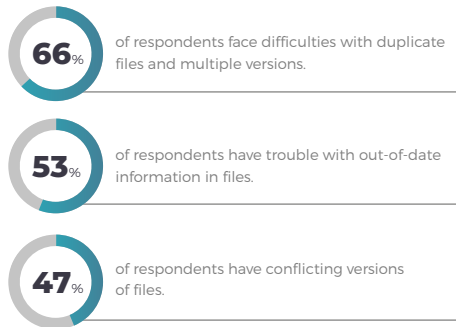
9. CLARIFYING COMPLEX CONTENT OPERATIONS

CHALLENGE

Content operations determine how actions, tools, and teams work together throughout the content lifecycle, from strategy execution to creation, delivery, and optimization. These operations need to be clearly defined, or else teams may face confusion, bottlenecks, and wasted resources. While optimized content operations help teams improve content quality, enhance efficiency, and speed up delivery, disjointed efforts produce the opposite effects.

SOLUTIONS

- **Align Your Content Strategy:** A content strategy must be clear and aligned to larger business goals to succeed. Documentation teams must measure the impact of their content efforts on other business units and then align goals and resources. A unified content strategy will optimize the company's ROI and improve the user experience.
- **Embrace Cross-Functional Collaboration:** Creating clear workflows between teams is key for smooth communication and collaboration. Streamlining processes helps content advance through each lifecycle phase. Also prioritize transparency in communications to support positive cross-team collaboration.



(Source: [Shelf](#))

BONUS TIP

Centralize All Your Content: Bring all content together into a centralized, easily accessible hub by leveraging a robust Content Delivery Platform (such as Fluid Topics). This creates a single source of truth for your content, making it far easier to manage, update, and deliver across multiple channels. Without this unified foundation, distributing consistent, up-to-date content to every endpoint becomes inefficient and error prone. Centralization is key to scaling your content operations.

10. KEEPING CONTENT RELEVANT AND FRESH

CHALLENGE

All content needs updating sooner or later. Needs evolve, bugs are fixed, and new product versions launch, all of which require content updates. If documentation contains errors, is missing information, or doesn't provide the latest, most relevant knowledge for fixing an issue, users may start to distrust the company. At best they will feel frustrated with their product experience and at worst they may experience product downtime.

SOLUTIONS

- **Meet Regularly with Product Teams:** Regularly review content during consistent and transparent meetings with product and development teams. This will ensure documentation teams are up to date on the latest or planned product changes. Regular communication makes standardized content updates quick and easy to implement.
- **Track Documentation Metrics:** Producing large quantities of documentation isn't useful if you don't know how well it's serving your audience. Measure dedicated documentation metrics to gain direct user insights and make data-driven decisions around update priorities.

Most Searched Terms

Searched	Term	Metadata
720	API	Region (region_cleaned): World Drone type: HeavyShipper
543	Replace	Version (version_cleaned): V2 Drone type: LightShipper
422	Assist	Region: World Drone type: HeavyShipper
378	Video	Region (region_cleaned): US Drone type: HeavyShipper
267	How	Drone type: LightShipper

● **Topic Feedback** ★★★★★ 13min ago

"This piece of content is very helpful, but could use more diagrams for installation steps."

CASE STUDY: MEET ALICE THE TECH WRITER

With these 10 challenges highlighted, you may feel a tad overwhelmed. After all, where do you start when trying to tackle these diverse problems all at once? First step, meet Alice. Alice is just like you, a hard-working technical writer who knows how to produce great documentation, but who encounters many of these common challenges. Before you jump into implementing every solution, go step by step through Alice's day and discover how simply adding modern, flexible tools into her workflow changes the trajectory of her entire day.

Tackling challenges doesn't have to be daunting. Upgrade your technical writing workflow for low-stress collaboration.

WITHOUT A CDP

- ✗ **Disconnected communication between teams**
- ✗ **Inconsistent and inefficient processes**
- ✗ **Missing content updates**
- ✗ **High stress with lower quality results**

WITH A CDP

- ✓ **Dynamic content delivery**
- ✓ **Better document findability**
- ✓ **Data-driven content updates**
- ✓ **Seamless cross-team communication**

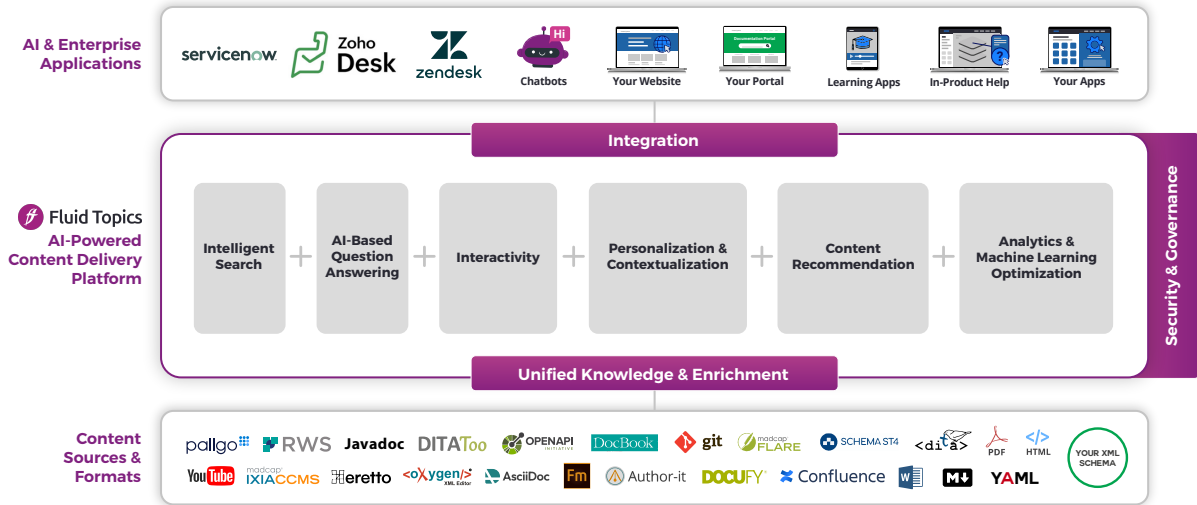
The terrible tale of Alice the tech writer

Follow Alice's journey live ▶



HOW CAN FLUID TOPICS SUPPORT YOUR TECH WRITERS?

As a tech writer, overcoming challenges to optimize your documentation processes, outputs, and user experience has never been easier with a Content Delivery Platform. Fluid Topics' AI-powered CDP mitigates common documentation challenges by centralizing all your product and technical content from various sources and formats to provide a unified view of your organization's knowledge. Provide personalized user experiences, remove the stress of fast release cycles, and write with the tools you want without sacrificing the ease of content delivery. Moreover, Fluid Topics enables you to quickly and securely deploy ready-to-use AI assistants powered by your company's content.



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About Fluid Topics

Fluid Topics' AI-powered Content Delivery Platform is a software solution that collects and unifies all types of documentation, no matter the initial source and format. It then feeds the relevant content to any digital channel, device, and application, including Fluid Topics' native customizable customer portal, in context with the users' needs and environment.

Access our on-demand demo library for self-guided videos

See Fluid Topics in Action



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