

Product Brief: Cloud Platform Documentation Content Improvements and Automated Solutions

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Glossary

- **TOC** (Table of Contents) - Refers to the Cloud Platform Docs left navigation pane.
- **Mini-TOC** - Refers to the TOC that appears on individual pages. It is automatically generated based on section headings.
- **Infinitive phrase** - In this scenario, it refers to procedures using the infinitive verb “To” followed by an action. (ie. “**To deploy your first service**”)

Background and summary

When technologists rely on Cloud Platform documentation for guidance and encounter challenges locating relevant information or discover that content is incomplete, inaccurate, or outdated, it leads to frustration, confusion, errors, and wasted time. Clear, accurate, and well organized documentation increases user satisfaction, reduces support overhead, and fosters trust within the organization.

This product brief describes the MVP-level requirements necessary for teams to begin making improvements to the content in the Cloud Platform Docs. The objective is to introduce solutions that:

- Clearly identify ownership of all content.
- Implement and enforce style standards to ensure that end users always have a consistent experience when viewing documentation.
- Implement and enforce structure standards to ensure that end users can find the information they need in the shortest amount of time.
- Ensure content accuracy and maintain it over the long term.
- Establish mechanisms to prevent content from becoming outdated.

By implementing these solutions first, we can more efficiently manage the documentation review cycle to quickly identify and correct inaccurate content, which is a primary concern identified by end users. Adopting an iterative approach will allow us to address the biggest pain points first, while delivering additional enhancements incrementally.

Personas

- Document Contributor - Anyone that writes, reviews, or updates Cloud Platform documentation. Most often, these are members of PlatEng.
- Document Reader - ABC Technologists or anyone else that builds on or interacts with the Cloud Platform and utilizes Cloud Platform documentation.

User pain points and business risks

- Out of date or inaccurate documentation provides end users with solutions that fail to meet expectations or effectively solve issues.
- Sparse or missing content results in wasted time when users search for information that does not exist.
- When the search engine does not return expected results, users often resort to scanning the Table of Contents (navigation panel) instead. Poorly organized or improperly titled pages can lead to frustration and ultimately discourage users from utilizing the documentation.

Non-Goals

- Metric solutions to track usage and effectiveness of documentation over time (to be addressed in separately)
- Video/tutorial content additions
- User research to identify specific content improvements (to be addressed separately)
- Updates to documentation outside of the Cloud Platform Docs site (to be addressed separately)

User Research

DX Survey

The DX survey currently shows a CSAT rate of 57%, with respondents expressing dissatisfaction with the current state of documentation. The primary pain points cited by respondents are: outdated and sparse content, documents not accessible from a central location, content being hard to find and not well-organized.

Slack channel

There is a significant number of Slack messages from users seeking help with finding documentation, as their own attempts to locate topics were unsuccessful. (Anecdotal evidence from a DX survey respondent: “Fast Slack support isn’t fast enough since user does a lot of self-research before he reaches out - “wasted a bunch of time” because of bugs and not enough documentation before reached out in Slack.”)

Platform Engineering OKR Alignment

This initiative aligns with O2: Improve the Cloud Platform user experience.

Project Success Metric(s)

- DX Survey - Documentation CSAT score shows incremental increases

Supplementary metric(s)

- Reduction in Jira tickets or support tickets logged against documentation.
- Evidence showing documentation has aided in resolving X number of support requests.
- Documentation is adopted by more users and more frequently accessed.
- Fewer comments in Slack channels requesting the location of documentation.

User stories

User story	Priority	Notes
As a Document Owner, I want CI checks to fail if a document does not specify a CODEOWNER.	MUST	
As a Document Owner, I want a clearly defined sign-off process that enables me to indicate that a specific document was reviewed, approved, and does not require further review for a designated period of time.	MUST	
As a Document Owner, I want tickets added to my team's backlog whenever a document requires review because the last sign-off is 6 months old, ensuring content remains up-to-date.	MUST	
As a Document Owner, I want the ability to track all open tickets for pages that have not been sign-off on in more than 6 months.	MUST	
As a Document Owner, I want tickets to be added to my team's backlog when a Document Reader logs a bug against a page I own.	MUST	
As a Document Owner, I want style rules enforced during CI.	MUST	

As a Document Owner, I want style rules verified during local pre-commit.	SHOULD	
As a Document Reader, I want all documentation pages and sections to have useful and intuitive titles so I can easily scan content.	MUST	
As a Document Reader, I want the left navigation to be no more than three levels deep so I can quickly scan and locate content.	MUST	
As a Document Reader, I want pages to be organized with consistent visual cues to help me navigate content more easily, using only h1 (title), h2 (section header), and h3 (sub-section).	MUST	
As a Document Reader, I want procedures to consistently appear in bold and use infinitive phrasing so I can quickly scan pages to find instructional content.	MUST	
As a Document Reader, if a page has procedures, I want them displayed in the mini-TOC.	SHOULD	
As a Document Reader, I want the ability to log a bug in a document directly from the page I am currently viewing.	MUST	

Future/Not covered by this program

- The tools will help with ownership and notifications, but once notifications are sent, there is no timeline for backlog items to be managed. First round of reviews and correcting inaccurate information is still a key factor to ensure reader satisfaction.
- Metrics - Need additional initiative for implementing metrics to measure the success of the documentation and identify areas of improvement. Measuring usability and usage of documentation is going to be critical to long-term success.
- Usability study - Necessary for identifying candidates for videos.