Devz vs Docz: An Everyday (Rap) Battle

DevConf.CZ 2019

Jiří Herrmann
Alexandra Nikandrova
Štefan Sitáni
Engaging, thought-provoking, and well-researched presentation about the benefits of documentation.

You’re welcome!
Let's rock!
The docs are made by our writerly crew
To give our users a bit of a clue
With our software how to totally rock
Or at least be competent without going amok
We use mark-up lingos like AsciiDoc and DocBook. Render them to HTML to give it a slick look.
We have strategists to research what to write and why. Also SMEs like programmers to check it... like that guy.
Though truth be told at times it can be pretty tough
Cause they’re often not that great at documenting stuff…
Well, now and then you make a grammar error... or three.

Also reading your man pages sometimes kinda hurts
I mean, is it so hard to write stuff in human words?
Okay, look who’s talking, the master of nitpicks,
I’ve been working non-stop on a critical bug fix,
I give you all the info, and you just write
Three sentences about it -- that can’t be right!
And then it’s not over! As a proper troll
You come back and make me review it all!
Easy reading needs damn hard writing. Try it, you should.
The practical ins and outs appreciate I would,
See I can’t just document
Everything you implement,
Just the useful bits I gotta blend.
And useless to the user, the programming stuff is
They want short and sweet answers to “How to fix this?”
Man, how should I know what those guys use or don’t use? Besides, I have code to write, no time for your how-tos! Ain’t that really supposed to be a part of your voodoo? Or do’ya just expect me to do your job for you?
My schedule is tight, deadlines a-looming,
My backlog looks bleak, my manager gloomy,
So sue me!

If I focus on what I’ve been hired to do
Since I’m pretty much the only one who can, too
... unlike you!
Oh wow, nice burn, but before you go,
Could ya check this lil’ doc for me, bro?
It’s just 25 pages or so…
Ugh, can you believe this? I’m plain out of luck
I’m better off talking to my debugging duck
It’s a damn hassle to be with doc reviews stuck
A hassle? Nay, an opportunity!
What the fu..?!
Gentlemen, do mind your language, please!
Arguments like this are best solved in threes
Marketing’n’sales’ the name, money is the game,
The goals we all pursue really are the same
In business to align our approach and aim
For our products to garner name and acclaim
And with prestige comes income - my claim to fame.
So let’s synergise our sources
And engage our pooled resources
To optimize and synchronize
And utilize and productize.
Make it agile, transparent, innovative
Your beast-mode code can only compete if
It’s trending, it’s booming, it’s just all the rage
For all to embrace it in this digital age
And that’s what I do here, and then some
So I’d just like to say: you’re welcome.
You got any of that?
‘Fraid so…
Thank you, money fan, I don’t think I can, 
Express how ecstatic I am ‘bout your “business plan”
But “synergize”? Are you kidding me? 
Buzzwords like that lack credibility
And just talking about how it’s great
Does nothing real communicate
I pen the prose for the pros, you peddle pretty half-lies
   It feels bloody wrong if shit like that flies
     And your stylistics are such a god-awful mess
I’d sometimes like to say: @#!?$#$! Well, you can guess...
Whoa, that was a bit excessive, I sense some bias
It’s not her fault other companies wanna buy us.
Plus sharing is caring, but starving sure sucks,
And we need her to turn fixed bugs into bucks.
Still, when I read sales write-ups, I go like “Daamn! Are these really my features?” ‘Cos I don’t recognize them! There must be a better way to make money. And you said transparent? Now I think that’s funny
‘Cos while for every bug we gather 25 ACKs
You’re selling open source and use Windows and Macs
You don’t like me? Now that’s just mad,
Everything I do should only make you glad.
It is me who puts the Red on the Hat,
Green in your wallet and roof over your head.
I make your bonuses grow nice and fat.
Tell that to our Customer Care buddy – Ted
Oh wait, he’s not here! He’s busy being shouted at!
‘Cos you promised what delivered couldn’t be
And stuff like that nobody likes to see.
So our every well-crafted git commit,
Is rewarded by a user throwing a fit!
Okay, -- you guys asked for it.

I’m excited to give you some certified stats:
I meet with CTOs while you surf YouTube for cats
I have kick-offs every year where Jim cheers me on.

I rock snazzy suits. You look like a prawn.

And hard facts indicate that I should be your hero
As without me your lines are worth exactly... oh, zero!
Hold on!

Now pump the brakes, take a step back, 
Try to think, and keep your ego in check 
Say you sell some cool software, 
but no one knows the ‘how’ and ‘why’...
Or that all your coders get fed up and go: ‘Bye…’
Quiet, you two, please stop this tirade,
We’re not alone, into fools we’ve been made.
Actually, the audience might come to our aid. You two about my value to persuade.
Yes, agreed, they can help us decide
Which one of us has the truth on their side.
So after all this fuss and ado
It looks like it’s now just up to you
To tell how docz, devz, and salez can mend fences
And perhaps even make use of their diff’rences
But before we conclude this diss so blistering
I would just like to say: thank y'all for listening
WAIT...

WHAAAT?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developers</th>
<th>Marketing &amp; Sales</th>
<th>Technical Writers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create the software</td>
<td>Get the software to users</td>
<td>Create instructions for using the software</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>READMEs, man pages, blogs, ...</td>
<td>Promo materials</td>
<td>User guides</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Developer documentation

- man pages, READMEs, upstream wikis, blogs, etc.
- By: developers, QE
- For: developers, QE, experts

- Comprehensive
- In-depth
- Technically demanding
- Feature-focused
Marketing documentation

- Official websites, promo materials, etc.
- By: marketing
- For: sales, potential users/customers

- High-level, light on the specifics
- Sounds good
User documentation

- Guides, manuals, release notes, advisory descriptions, etc.
- By: technical writers, customer support
- For: users

- Minimalistic
- Focused on “user stories”
- Written for easy comprehensibility
If software = potato:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Devs</th>
<th>Marketing &amp; sales</th>
<th>Tech writers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>~ Farmers</td>
<td>~ Grocers</td>
<td>~ Cookbook makers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;All you need to know about harvesting potatoes&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Why potatoes are good for you&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;How to make a potato salad&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
So… who was right?
Q&A time!
Thank you!

Jiří Herrmann
Alexandra Nikandrova
Štefan Sitáni
Sources:

Music:

- beatsbyNeVs - West Coast Beat - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mOrRIOCWb2s
- Chillhop Chill Lofi Hip Hop Instrumental - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M08eoWw6q_I
- HARD Trap Beat Rap Instrumental - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfvNEWvF0SE
- Free Corporate Background Music For Your Presentations - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qfdZASliOBI

Images:

- DeviantArt, Flickr, Wikipedia, OpenClipart (Creative commons)

Inspired by: Epic Rap Battles of History - https://www.youtube.com/user/ERB