How do I structure my IT documentation?

Dr. Richard Heigl
Are there best practices?
Yes.
1. Define your Use Case

- Software Documentation
- Online help, FAQ and how-to’s
- IT process management (e.g. IT emergency manual)
- Customer and installation documentation
- IT project documentation (e.g. introduction of new services)
- Cataloging or inventory
Start with one!
My example

- Online documentation of a complex enterprise software: cargo support
- Some typical requirements
  - Documentation of the various modules with multiple versions
  - Release notes
  - Optionally multilingual expandable
  - Space for internal information
  - Information should be easy to find
  - ... many others ...
2. Determine key points of your documentation

- **Document types**: software descriptions, minutes, checklists, planning documents
- **Topic groups**: teams, departments, projects
- **Access** permissions
- Pay special attention to **versions and releases** of software

- **Assistance systems**: workflows, approvals, reading confirmation

- **Supported languages**

Read more in the BlueSpice Blog:
- [Structuring heterogeneous-content](#)
- [Categories, document types and namespaces](#)
Create a distribution and structuring plan!
But keep it simple.
3. Distribute and structure content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification system</th>
<th>Recommended for...</th>
<th>In our example...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Namespaces</td>
<td><strong>Document types</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Topic / product cluster</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Assistant systems and access restriction</strong> needed: workflows, approvals and other functions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Software modules, Release notes, Space for internal knowledge base</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subwikis</td>
<td>Secure workspace for <strong>teams</strong> (e.g. HR) or documentation in other languages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not needed in the first step, optional for internal wiki or English edition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Categories</td>
<td><strong>Topics for teams and projects</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Topic / product cluster</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Clustering of topics for teams and working groups Search support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Semantic</td>
<td>Detailed <strong>metadata</strong> and in-depth information</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In our case not needed in the first step</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
3. Distribute and structure content

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Navigation system</th>
<th>Recommended for...</th>
<th>In our example...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Subpages          | Nested information on a single topic  
Easy support of multilingualism  
Creation of simple alphabetical navigation | Releases: Detailed descriptions of new features |
| Book              | Training materials and manuals  
Documentation  
Creation of a simple editorially maintained navigation | Used to display an article hierarchy (one "book" per module)  
Books can be exported |
| Left navigation   | Link to functions (main page, latest changes, books), document types (guidelines, minutes, how-tos, manuals), topics | Quicklinks to modules, Release documentation, Internal pages |
| Mega menu         | Links to topics | Not used |
Set a few design rules.
4. Ensure basic orientation and support for the search

- Browsing along user journeys
  - e.g. Mainpage → Module portal (with entry points for manuals, functions and technology, “Recent changes”, highlighted topic) → Function description

- Search optimization
  - Provide overview articles (e.g. Container) and disambiguation pages
  - Work with redirects
4. Ensure basic orientation and support for the search

- **Title**
  - As simple and meaningful a title as possible
  - Avoidance of special characters
  - If the name is the same, the title should be extended by the respective topic in brackets

- Avoiding subpages
5. Working out with templates for portals and pages

- Portals
  - Internal Helpdesk
  - Software development
  - Team page
  - ...
- Search in topics
- Page templates
Thank you for your attention!
Contact us!

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