Managing Documentation Complexity: SEAPATH's Approach to Wiki Refactoring

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Savoir-faire LINUX®

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years in industrial product engineering in many verticals

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Rte Le réseau de transport d'électricité — SUPPLIER TROPHY 2 EDITION 2022 — Industrial Competitiveness and Excellence

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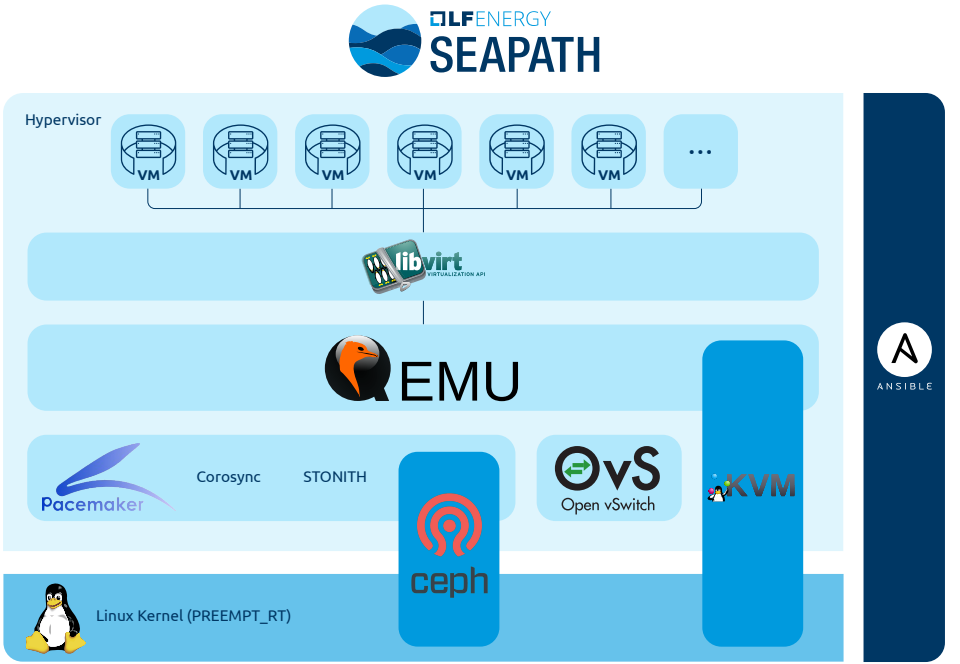
LF Energy SEAPATH's presentation

- Open-source hypervisor for electrical substations
- Brings IT people and OT people together
- Two sides:
  - Infrastructure deployment
  - Infrastructure management
- High entry cost

Strong, resilient documentation needed

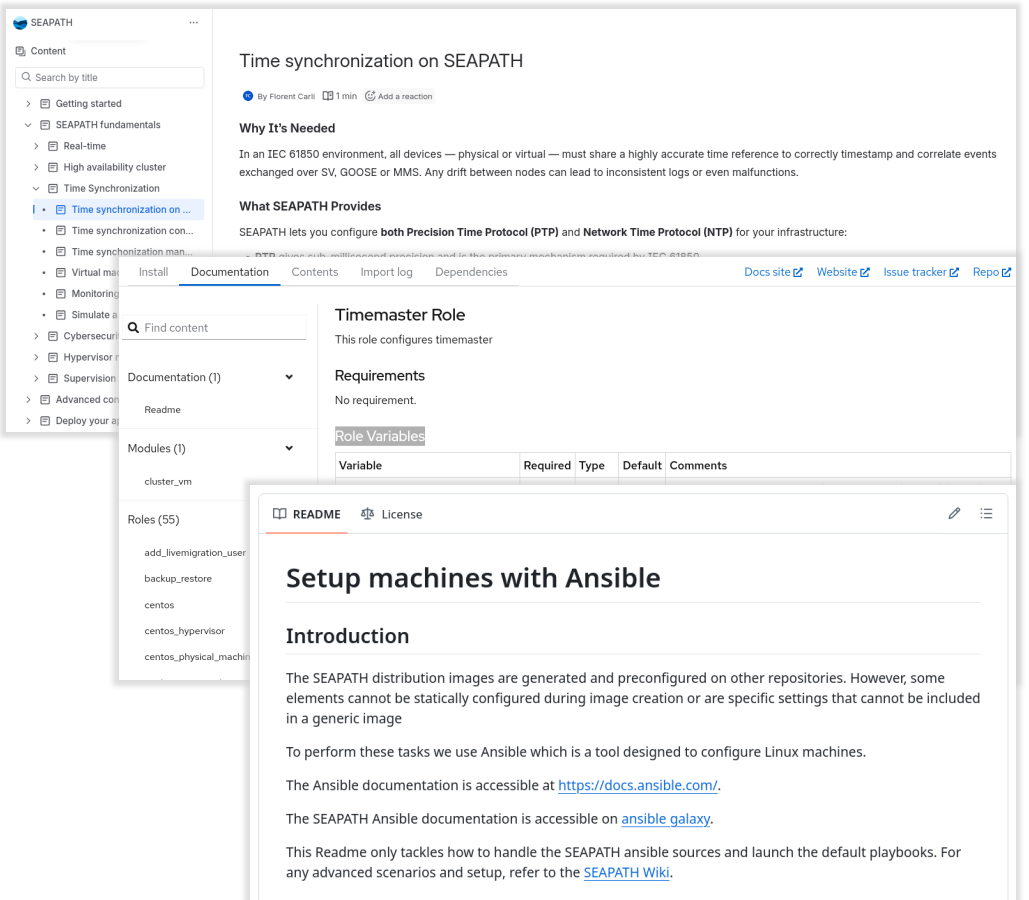


Multiple documentation platform

GitHub hosts the code and contains one README per repository

Ansible Galaxy provides documentation as code for each role

Confluence wiki was provided from the start by LF Energy and explains the general context



Multiple documentation platform

- Balancing the documentation by taking advantage of all three
  - GitHub READMEs explain how to handle the sources
  - Ansible Galaxy describes each variable thoroughly
  - The wiki explains the concepts and links to the others

/!\ One entry point must be clearly identified: the wiki

Structuring the wiki

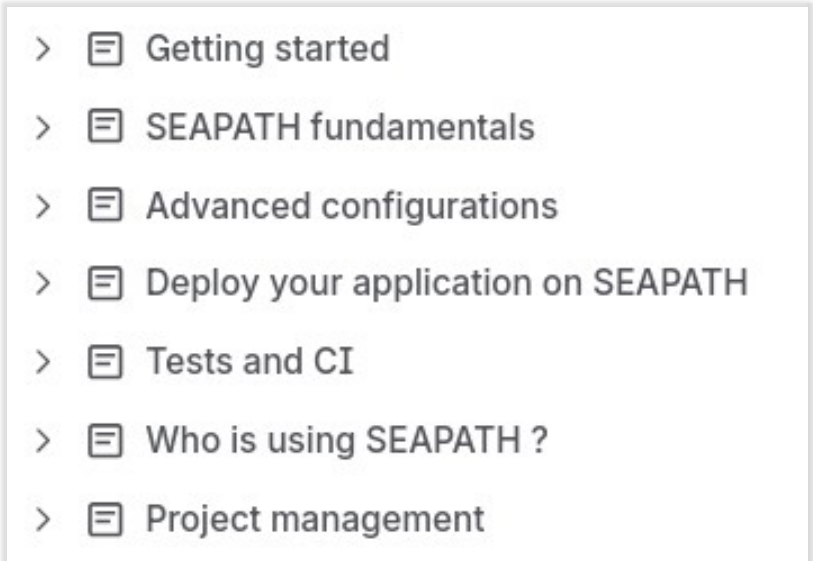
Two possible approaches to organize information

- By usage (installation → configuration → management)
- By topics (network, high availability, time synchronization ...)

- Installation
  - Network
  - High availability
  - Time Synchronization
- Configuration
  - Network
  - High availability
  - Time Synchronization
- Management
  - ...

- Network
  - Installation
  - Configuration
  - Management
- High availability
  - Installation
  - Configuration
  - Management
- Time synchronization
  - ...

Structuring the wiki



- Keeping a small number of parts (only seven)
- Easily identifying the starting point
- Organizing the parts from more general to more specialized

Pages naming convention

Wiki serves two purposes: documentation and demonstration

Better to be understandable than perfectly correct

"SEAPATH fundamentals" instead of "Core Features"

- Real-time
- High availability cluster
- Time Synchronization
- Cybersecurity
- Hypervisor network
- Supervision

"Deploy your application on SEAPATH" instead of "Workload Deployment"

- Deploying virtual machines
- Deploying containers

"Advanced configurations" instead of "Extended features"

- Ansible usage
- Update a physical machine
- Advanced SEAPATH image installation

Pages naming convention

- Keeping the same structure for all the topics
- Dividing the topics among the different actors
- Each feature is built on the same structure :
  - General explanation
  - Configuration (with Ansible)
  - Management once deployed
  - Additional pages

- High availability cluster
  - High availability cluster on SEAPATH
  - Cluster configuration
  - Cluster management
  - Create an extended bridge over the cluster
  - Cluster maintenance
- Hypervisor network
  - Hypervisor Network on SEAPATH
  - Network configuration and deployment
  - Network management
  - Use Open vSwitch bridges on SEAPATH
  - Use SR-IOV NIC on SEAPATH
  - Real-time
    - Real-time on SEAPATH
    - Real-time configuration
    - Real-time management
    - Hardware configuration for real-time

About the wiki tool

Confluence

Good parts

- Easy edits (also for non-developers)
- Pretty rendering
- Multi-person editing

Bad parts

- Not wiki as code
  - Often misaligned
- Not related to versions

Thank you for your attention

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https://lfenergy.org/projects/seapath/

https://github.com/seapath

https://wiki.lfenergy.org/display/SEAP/SEAPATH

https://lfenergy.slack.com #seapath