

5 Ways We Improved User Experience and Organic Reach on the New Moz Help Hub

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We're proud to announce that we recently launched our brand-new Help Hub! This is the section of our site where we store all our guides and articles on how to use Moz Pro, Moz Local, and our research tools like Link Explorer.

Our Help Hub contains in-depth guides, quick and easy FAQs, and some amazing videos like this one. The old Help Hub served us very well over the years, but with time it became a bit dusty and increasingly difficult to update, in addition to looking a bit old and shabby. So we set out to rebuild it from scratch, and we're already seeing some exciting changes in the search results – which will impact the way people self-serve when they need help using our tools.

I'm going to take you through 5 ways we improved the accessibility and reach of the Help Hub with our redesign. If you write software guides, work in customer experience, or simply write content that answers questions, then this post is worth a look.

If you're thinking this is just a blatant excuse to inject some Mozzy news into an SEO-style blog post, then you're right! But if you stick with me, I'll make sure it's more fun than switching between the same three apps on your phone with a scrunched-up look of despair etched into your brow. :)

Research and discovery

To understand what features we needed to implement, we decided

to ask our customers how they search for help when they get stuck. The results were fascinating, and they helped us build a new Help Hub that serves both our customers and their behavior.

We discovered that 78% of people surveyed search for an answer first before reaching out:

This is a promising sign, and perhaps no surprise that people working in digital marketing and search are very much in the habit of searching for the answers to their questions. However, we also discovered that a staggering 36% couldn't find a sufficient answer when they searched:

We also researched industry trends and dug into lots of knowledge bases and guides for popular tools like Slack and Squarespace. With this research in our back pockets we felt sure of our goal: to build a Help Hub that reduces the length of the question-search-answer journey and gets answers in front of people with questions.

Let's not hang about – here are 5 ways we improved organic reach with our beautiful new Help Hub.

#1: Removing features that hide content

Tabbed content used to be a super cool way of organizing a long, wordy guide. Tabs digitally folded the content up like an origami swan. The tabs were all on one page and on one URL, and they worked like jump links to teleport users to that bit

of content.

Our old Help Hub design had tabbed content that was hard to find and wasn't being correctly indexed

The problem: searchers couldn't easily find this content. There were two reasons for this: one, no one expected to have to click on tabs for discovery; and two (and most importantly), only the first page of content was being linked to in the SERPs. This decimated our organic reach. It was also tricky to link directly to the tabbed content. When our help team members were chatting with our lovely community, it was nearly impossible to quickly send a link to a specific piece of information in a tabbed guide.

Now, instead of having all that tabbed content stacked away like a Filofax, we've got beautifully styled and designed content that's easy to navigate. We pulled previously hidden content on to unique pages that we could link people to directly. And at the top of the page, we added breadcrumbs so folks can orient themselves within the guide and continue self-serving answers to their heart's content.

Our new design uses breadcrumbs to help folks navigate and keep finding answers

What did we learn?

Don't hide your content. Features that were originally built in an effort to organize your content can become outdated and get between you and your visitors. Make your content accessible to both search engine crawlers and human visitors;

your customer's journey from question to answer will be more straightforward, making navigation between content more natural and less of a chore. Your customers and your help team will thank you.

#2: Proudly promote your FAQs

This follows on from the point above, and you have had a sneak preview in the screenshot above. I don't mind repeating myself because our new FAQs more than warrant their own point, and I'll tell you why. Because, dear reader, people search for their questions. Yup, it's this new trend and gosh darn it the masses love it.

I mentioned in the point above that tabbed content was proving hard to locate and to navigate, and it wasn't showing up in the search results. Now we're displaying common queries where they belong, right at the top of the guides:

FAQ placement, before and after

This change comprises two huge improvements. Firstly, questions our customers are searching, either via our site or in Google, are proudly displayed at the top of our guides, accessible and indexable. Additionally, when our customers search for their queries (as we know they love to do), they now have a good chance of finding the exact answer just a click away.

Address common issues at the top of the page to alleviate frustration

I've run a quick search in Keyword Explorer and I can see we're now in position 4 for this keyword phrase – we weren't anywhere near that before.

SERP analysis from Keyword Explorer

This is what it looks like in the organic results – the answer is there for all to see.

Our FAQ answer showing up in the search results

And when people reach out? Now we can send links with the answers listed right at the top. No more messing about with jump links to tabbed content.

What did we learn?

In addition to making your content easily accessible, you should address common issues head-on. It can sometimes feel uncomfortable to highlight issues right at the top of the page, but you'll be alleviating frustration for people encountering errors and reduce the workload for your help team.

You can always create specific troubleshooting pages to store questions and answers to common issues.

#3: Improve article quality and relevance to build trust

This involves using basic on-page optimization techniques when writing or updating your articles. This is bread and butter for seasoned SEOs, although often overlooked by creators of online guides and technical writers.

It's no secret that we love to inject a bit of Mozzy fun into what we do, and the Help Hub is no exception. It's a challenge that we relish: to explain the software in clear language that is, hopefully, a treat to explore. However, it turns out we'd become too preoccupied with fun, and our basic on-page optimization sadly lagged behind.

Mirroring customers' language

Before we started work on our beautiful new Help Hub, we analyzed our most frequently asked questions and commonly searched topics on our site. Next, we audited the corresponding pages on the Help Hub. It was immediately clear that we could do a better job of integrating the language our customers were using to write in to us. By using relevant language in our Help Hub content, we'd be helping searchers find the right guides and videos before they needed to reach out.

Using the MozBar guide as an example, we tried a few different things to improve the CTR over a period of 12 months. We added more content, we updated the meta tags, we added jump links. Around 8 weeks after the guide was made more relevant and specific to searchers' troubleshooting queries, we saw a massive uptick in traffic for that MozBar page, with pageviews increasing from around ~2.5k per month to ~10k between February 2018 and July 2018. Traffic from organic searches doubled.

Updates to the Help Hub content and the increased traffic over time from Google Analytics

It's worth noting that traffic to troubleshooting pages can spike if there are outages or bugs, so you'll want to track this over an 8–12 month period to get the full picture.

What we're seeing in the chart above is a steady and consistent increase in traffic for a few months. In fact, we started performing too well, ranking for more difficult, higher-volume keywords. This wasn't exactly what we wanted to achieve, as the content wasn't relevant to people searching for help for any old plugin. As a result, we're seeing a drop in August. There's a sweet spot for traffic to troubleshooting guides. You want to help people searching for answers *without* ranking for more generic terms that aren't relevant, which leads us to searcher intent.

Focused on searcher intent

If you had a chance to listen to Dr. Pete's MozCon talk, you'll know that while it may be tempting to try to rank well for head vanity keywords, it's most helpful to rank for keywords where your content matches the needs and intent of the searcher.

While it may be nice to think our guide can rank for "SEO toolbar for chrome" (which we did for a while), we already have a nice landing page for MozBar that was optimized for that search.

When I saw a big jump in our organic traffic, I entered the MozBar URL into Keyword Explorer to hunt down our ranking keywords. I then added these keywords in my Moz Pro campaign to see how we performed over time.

You can see that after our big jump in organic traffic, our MozBar troubleshooting guide dropped 45 places right out of the top 5 pages for this keyword. This is likely because it wasn't getting very good engagement, as people either didn't click or swiftly returned to search. We're happy to concede to the more relevant MozBar landing page.

The troubleshooting guide dropped in the results for this general SEO toolbar query, and rightly so

It's more useful for our customers and our help team for this page to rank for something like "why wont moz chrome plugin work." Though this keyword has slightly fewer searches, there we are in the top spot consistently week after week, ready to help.

We want to retain this position for queries that match the nature of the guide

10x content

Anyone who works in customer experience will know that supporting a free tool is a challenge, and I must say our help team does an outstanding job. But we weren't being kind to ourselves. We found that we were repeating the same responses, day in and day out.

This is where 10x content comes into play. We asked ourselves a very important question: why are we replying individually to one hundred people when we can create content that helps thousands of people?

We tracked common queries and created a video troubleshooting guide. This gave people the hand-holding they required without having to supply it one-to-one, on demand.

The videos for our SEO tools that offer some form of free access attract high views and engagement as folks who are new to them level up.

Monthly video views for tools that offer some free access

To put this into context, if you add up the views every month for these top 4 videos, they outperform all the other 35 videos on our Help hub put together:

Video views for tools with some free access vs all the other 35 videos on the Help Hub

What did we learn?

By mirroring your customers' language and focusing on searcher intent, you can get your content in front of people searching for answers before they need to reach out. If your team is answering the same queries daily, figure out where your content is lacking and think about what you can do in the way of a video or images to assist searchers when they get stuck.

Most SEO work doesn't have an immediate impact, so track when you've made changes and monitor your traffic to draw correlations between visitors arriving on your guides and the changes you've made. Try testing updates on a portion of pages and tracking results. Then rolling out updates to the rest of your pages.

More traffic isn't always a good thing, it could indicate an outage or issue with your tool. Analyzing traffic data is the start of the journey to understanding the needs of people who use your tools.

#4: Winning SERP features by reformatting article structure

While we ramped up our relevance, we also reviewed our guide structure ready for migration to the new Help Hub CMS. We took paragraphs of content and turned them into clearly labelled step-by-step guides.

Who is this helping? I'm looking at you, 36% of people who couldn't find what they were looking for! We're coming at you from two angles here: people who never found the page they were searching for, and people who did, but couldn't digest the content.

Here is an example from our guide on adding keywords to Moz Pro. We started with blocks of paragraphed content interspersed with images. After reformatting, we have a video right at the top and then a numbered list which outlines the steps.

Before: text and images. After: clearly numbered step-by-step guides.

When researching the results for this blog post, I searched for a few common questions to see how we were looking in the search results. And what did I find? Just a lovely rich snippet with our newly formatted steps! Magic!

Our new rich snippet with the first 4 steps and a screenshot of our video

We've got all the things we want in a rich snippet: the first 4 steps with the "more items" link (hello, CTR!), a link to the article, and a screenshot of the video. On one hand, the image of the video looks kind of strange, but it also clearly labels it as a Moz guide, which could prove to be rather tempting for people clicking through from the results. We'll watch how this performs over time to figure out if we can improve on it in future.

Let's go briefly back in time and see what the original results were for this query, pre-reformatting. Not quite so helpful, now, is it?

Search results before we reformatted the guide

What did we learn?

By clearly arranging your guide's content into steps or bullet points, you're improving the readability for human visitors and for search engines, who may just take it and use it in a rich snippet. The easier it is for people to comprehend and follow the steps of a process, the more likely they are to succeed – and that must feel significantly better than wading through a wall of text.

#5: Helping people at the end of

the guide

At some point, someone will be disappointed by the guide they ended up on. Maybe it doesn't answer their question to their satisfaction. Maybe they ended up in the wrong place.

That's why we have two new features at the end of our guides: Related Articles and Feedback buttons.

The end of the guides, before and after

Related Articles

Related Articles help people to continue to self-serve, honing in on more specific guides. I'm not saying that you're going to buckle down and binge-read ALL the Moz help guides – I know it's not exactly Netflix. But you never know – once you hit a guide on Keyword Lists, you may think to yourself, "Gosh, I also want to know how to port my lists over to my Campaign. Oh, and while I'm here, I'm going to check on my Campaign Settings. And ohh, a guide about setting up Campaigns for subdomains? Don't mind if I do!" Guide lovers around the world, rejoice!

Feedback buttons

I know that feedback buttons are by no means a new concept in the world of guides. It seems like everywhere you turn there's a button, a toggle, or a link to let some mysterious entity somewhere know how you felt about this, that, and the other.

Does anyone ever actually use this data? I wondered. The trick is to gather enough information that you can analyze trends and respond to feedback, but not so much that wading through it is a major time-wasting chore.

When designing this feature, our aim was to gather actionable feedback from the folks we're looking to help. Our awesome design, UX, and engineering teams built us something pretty special that we know will help us keep improving efficiently, without any extra noise.

Our new feedback buttons gather the data we need from the people we want to hear from

To leave feedback on our guides, you have to be logged in to your Moz account, so we are sure we're helping people who engage with our tools, simple but effective. Clicking "Yes, *thank you!*" ends the journey there, job done, no need for more information for us to sift through. Clicking "*No, not really*" opens up a feedback box to let us know how we can improve.

People are already happily sending through suggestions, which we can turn into content and FAQs in a very short space of time:

Comments from visitors on how we can improve our guides

If you find yourself on a guide that helps (or not so much), then please do let us know!

The end of an article isn't the end of the line for us – we want to keep moving forward and building on our content and features.

What did we learn?

We discovered that we're still learning! Feedback can be tough

to stomach and laborious to analyze, so spend some time figuring out who you want to hear from and how you can process that information.

If you have any other ideas about what you'd like to see on the Help Hub, whether it's a topic, an FAQ, or snazzy feature to help you find the answers to your questions, please do let us know in the comments below.

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