Essential Confluence Features for Technical Documentation

This page is part of the guide to developing technical documentation on Confluence. In this section we highlight the built-in Confluence macros that are most useful in technical documentation. For more information about Confluence macros, see Working with Macros.

To add a macro to a Confluence page, use the Macro Browser.

On this page:

- Auto-Generating a Table of Contents for Page Content
- Drawing Attention to Elements of a Page
- Putting Content inside Customisable Panels
- Inserting Anchor Links on Pages
- Structuring Content using Sections and Columns
- Making your Documentation more Engaging by Embedding Videos

Auto-Generating a Table of Contents for Page Content

It is important to make it easy for viewers to jump to the section of a Confluence page that they are most interested in. The Table of Contents macro helps you navigate lengthy pages by summarising the content structure and providing links to headings used on the page. Headings are indented progressively.
2. Each feature in the release is a heading on the page.
3. You can generate a list of hyperlinks to each of the features in the release notes by inserting the Table of Contents macro:

![Image of Table of Contents macro]

4. The image below shows the Table of Contents macro inserted at the top of the 'Release Notes' page. Note that we have excluded the 'Highlights of Confluence 3.4' heading from the table of contents by modifying the macro's parameters.

![Image of Table of Contents with highlights excluded]

5. The image below shows the macro parameters specified in the Macro Browser. Note the 'Minimum Heading Level' and 'Maximum Heading Level' parameters.

![Image of Macro Browser showing parameters]
Drawing Attention to Elements of a Page

Often when creating documentation there are elements of a page that you want to highlight, or draw the viewers attention to. Confluence ships with the following macros that help you focus a viewer's attention to a note, information, tip or warning.

¿Note Macro

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is it?</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Note macro allows you to highlight a note on a Confluence page. It creates a yellow coloured box surrounding your text, as shown to the right.</td>
<td>Draft in progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This document is a draft and is under development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See Note Macro for more examples and instructions.

¿Info Macro

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is it?</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Info macro allows you to highlight helpful information on a Confluence page. It creates a blue coloured box surrounding your text, as shown to the right.</td>
<td>Did you know?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Confluence is the best wiki ever.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See Info Macro for more examples and instructions.

¿Tip Macro

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is it?</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Tip macro allows you to highlight a helpful tip on a Confluence page. It creates a green coloured box surrounding your text, as shown to the right.</td>
<td>Learn more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Check out this blog post: Technical Writing in a Wiki: Technical Communicators Explain How &amp; Why?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See Tip Macro for more examples and instructions.

¿Warning Macro

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is it?</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Warning macro allows you to highlight a warning note on a Confluence page. It creates a red coloured box surrounding your text, as shown to the right.</td>
<td>Draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This page is a draft in progress and visible to Atlassian staff only.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See Warning Macro for more examples and instructions.

Putting Content inside Customisable Panels

The Panel macro allows you to place content inside a customisable coloured panel. This is particularly useful when you want to clearly separate elements on a page.
1. You are documenting a procedure which involves a number of steps.
2. You want to call out the steps of the procedure from the rest of the page by placing it inside a coloured box, or panel.
3. You can create a coloured panel using the Panel macro.
4. The image below shows the parameters set for the panel using the Macro Browser.

**Inserting Anchor Links on Pages**

Anchor links can be especially useful when navigating between sections of a long document or when you want to link to a segment of a page from another page. The Anchor macro allows you to link to specific parts of a page.
1. You are documenting part of a user guide.
2. The page is split into multiple sections.
3. After each section you want to provide a link for viewers to click, taking them back to the top of the page.
4. To achieve this you first must create an anchor at the top of the page using the Anchor macro. You can give the anchor any name you like. In the image below, the anchor at the top of the page has been named 'top'.

   ![Anchor macro example](image)

   This guide is for people who want to author and publish technical documentation on Confluence wiki. You will find it useful if you want to create and publish Confluence content. This page highlights out-of-the-box Confluence macros that you may want to use to create documentation. This page is also a template that you can use to create your own documentation.

   ![Confluence page sections](image)

   The rest of this page gives more details of the macros listed above.

5. Create a link to the anchor, anywhere on the page, using the Link Browser. The image below shows a link to the anchor called 'top', with an alias of 'Return to top of page'.

   ![Link Browser example](image)

   ![Confluence page sections](image)

   See Working with Anchors for more examples and instructions.

Return to top of page

Structuring Content using Sections and Columns

Sometimes it is necessary to structure content into sections and columns.

- You can create any number of sections on a Confluence page using the Section macro.
- Each section can contain any number of columns, created using the Column macro.
- Columns can either have a fixed width, specified in pixels, or a dynamic width, specified as a percentage of the page width.
- Note: A column must be created inside a section

The images below show part of a Confluence page with two sections (red), each with two columns (blue) of different widths.
Making your Documentation more Engaging by Embedding Videos

Pictures can be worth a thousand words. The same can be said for videos. Often, it’s easy to explain a concept or demonstrate a procedure using a video. The **Widget macro** allows you to embed web content, including YouTube, Episodic and Vimeo videos, in a Confluence page.

1. You release a new version of your product.
3. The marketing team creates a video demonstrating the new features of the release and uploads it to YouTube.
4. You can embed the video in your Release Notes using the Widget macro, for playback on your Confluence page.
   a. Select 'Widget' from the 'Insert' menu in the Rich Text Editor toolbar.
   
   ![Widget Macro]

   ![Confluence 3.4 Release Notes]

   b. Insert the URL of your YouTube video into the 'Web Sites Widget URL' field.

   ![Insert 'Widget Connector' Macro]

   c. Click 'Insert' and save your page.
See Widget Macro for information on the supported services and for more usage examples.

Return to top of page

Next Steps

Take a look at Confluence Plugins for Technical Documentation.