



Writing an Article for the *FreeBSD Journal*

BY ROLLER ANGEL

I'm sure you've learned many cool things about FreeBSD along the way, just as I have. And some of those things you probably wish you'd known earlier than you did, just as I did. Think about the thousands of users out there, on all kinds of levels, and the many paths there are to learning more about FreeBSD—including reading. There are manuals and guides and books. There are also articles as we have here in the *FreeBSD Journal*. Someone has to write these articles, and I'm here to tell you that writing is an interesting, fun way to learn more about FreeBSD too. I've learned more than I ever would have imagined when I started out on this writing path.

But who writes about FreeBSD? You may be thinking someone who has been in the field for decades or someone of a certain experiential level. The truth, however, is that it could be you. Did you ever learn something—a new process or way of approaching a problem, an avenue you hadn't considered, something that simplified how to get from Step A to Step B—from talking to a friend or coworker? What was it about that friend's vision or explanation or understanding that made your understanding clearer or deeper? What was it about yours that helped your friend?

While writing a FreeBSD-themed article may seem like a challenge at first, it is really just like having a discussion with a colleague about a topic that interests both of you, or talking with friends about how you implemented something on your computer. Of course, to write an article for a broader readership, you'll likely need to do a little research and maybe refine your writing skills to get your point across in a way that your reader will learn something new or understand how someone else uses software they also use. You'll want to think about who will read your article, why they're reading it, what they bring to the process, and what you want them to learn from your experience, perspective, and/or explanation.

Think about something you've done recently that someone in the FreeBSD community would be interested in hearing about or could learn from. Sharing your personal experience and expertise in that way will probably be more valuable to others than you might think. Your topic might be something you just discovered and wish someone had told you about years ago, or, on the other hand, it could be a summary of many years of experience doing something you do well. Chances are, if you've ever struggled with something in the FreeBSD arena, someone else has too,

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or they will in the future; either way, they will benefit from hearing your side of the story. Your article might be the one that moves them forward, opens a door, gets them back on track. It might be through learning a new skill or a different way of thinking about something. I can't tell you the number of times I've received feedback on an article I wrote that helped me too.

Whenever I write an article, I am careful to detail—in words—the very same steps of the processes that I use to get my FreeBSD machine to do what I want it to do. At the outset, I write in pieces and often with the help of virtual sticky notes or a basic document with a few spaces between ideas. As I continue to develop it, I add to my initial thoughts and fill in the spaces and notes with bits of information I want to convey and/or the commands I use. Before long, I've built up a respectable amount of text and examples that I then link together into a story. This is just an example of how I work; other writers may work differently. But all of us compose and edit as best we can before we send it off to the *FreeBSD Journal* to review. The *Journal* staff does a great job of making the article read even better, and you are asked to review the edited version and design, to update your content or make corrections, before publication.

What and how you write is in your hands, the final content and design subject to your approval, but, whether you're new to writing about FreeBSD or someone who's been at it for a while, there are always other hands that can help you along the way. Consider giving it a try!

ROLLER ANGEL spends most of his time helping people learn how to accomplish their goals using technology. He is an avid BSD user and Pythonista who enjoys learning all the amazing ways he can solve issues with BSD and Python. He is a firm believer that people can learn anything they wish to set their minds to. He contributes to open source projects in his spare time and uses BSD and Python to learn more about the computer, to assist with his many side projects, and to automate and manage various aspects of his life.



The FreeBSD Project is looking for

- Programmers • Testers
- Researchers • Tech writers
- Anyone who wants to get involved

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Checking out our website

freebsd.org/projects/newbies.html

Downloading the Software

freebsd.org/where.html

We're a welcoming community looking for people like you to help continue developing this robust operating system. Join us!

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Help Create the Future. Join the FreeBSD Project!

FreeBSD is internationally recognized as an innovative leader in providing a high-performance, secure, and stable operating system.

Not only is FreeBSD easy to install, but it runs a huge number of applications, offers powerful solutions, and cutting edge features. The best part? It's FREE of charge and comes with full source code.

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