

Issue #13



Helping devtools win over technical audiences

MARKUP MINDSET

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TMM #13– Top of Funnel Noise and How Neos Guides Developers to First Success



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Hey there, welcome to a new issue of The Markup Mindset.

Here's what we are covering today:

- 1. Insight of the Week**– How inflated top-of-funnel traffic is distorting marketing signals for devtools.
- 2. Teardown**– A closer look at Neos' documentation and where teams can surface first success earlier.
- 3. Practical Play for Teams**– A simple experiment that increased setup completion for a client.
- 4. Signal of the Week**– A shift in how developers evaluate tools based on reliability and failure clarity.

Lets get started

1. Insight of the week

Bot traffic is distorting the top of the funnel in devtools.

Over the last year, something subtle but important has shifted in how traffic behaves in developer products. When we looked at analytics across documentation sites, SDK landing pages, and GitHub-linked onboarding paths, we found that a large portion of traffic was not coming from humans at all.

A growing share of requests now come from:

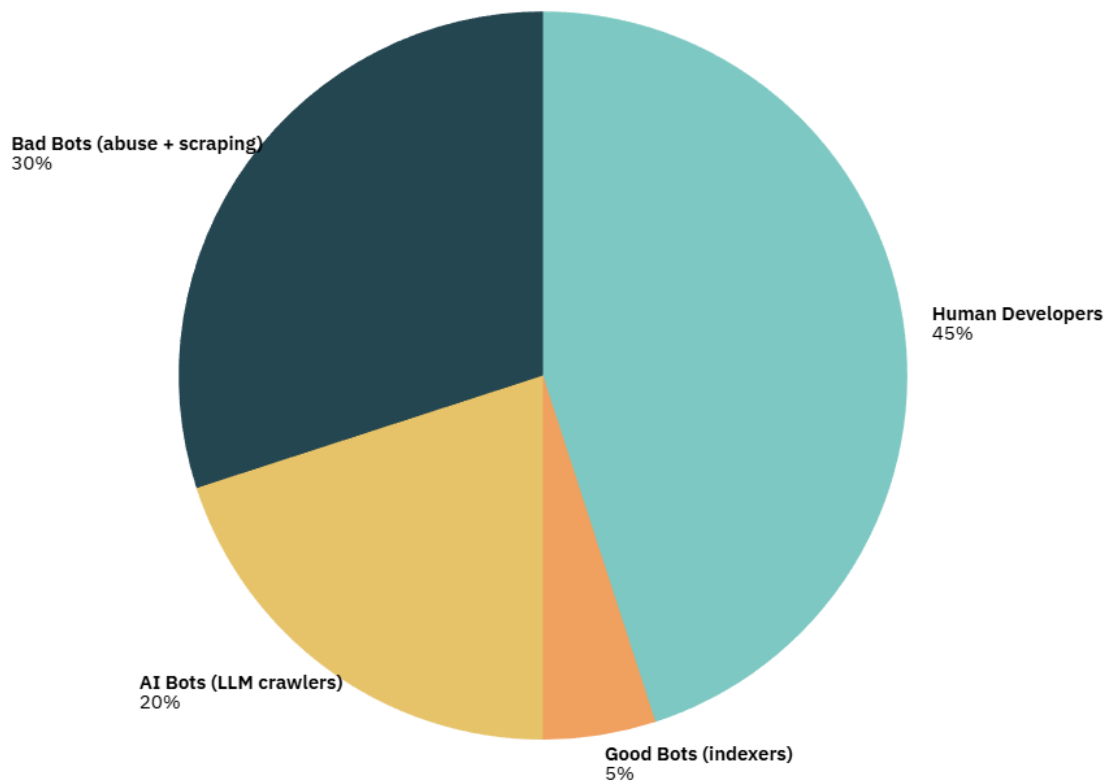
- AI crawlers (GPTBot, ClaudeBot, PerplexityBot, CCBot)
- Automated code scanners
- Dependency indexers
- Scrapers and credential scripts

And when we layer that against public traffic telemetry from Cloudflare, Fastly, and recent devtool company talks (PostHog and Supabase in particular), the pattern becomes clear:

Only about 40 percent of traffic to devtool websites is human.

The rest is split between:

- Good bots (search + docs indexers)
- AI bots (LLM docs ingestion)
- Bad bots (abuse, scraping, credential testing)



So what does this mean?

It means:

- **Traffic is no longer a signal of interest.**
- You cannot measure demand by how many people hit your docs or website.
- Top-of-funnel impressions have lost meaning because too much of the funnel is non-human.

This is why so many teams say:

- "Our website traffic is growing, but signups are flat."
- "Docs views are high, but activation is low."
- "Our ads send clicks, but nobody continues."

The useful metric now is *ACTIVATION*.

How many users complete a working example, run a command, or make their first API call. If this number is steady or improving, you are growing. If it is flat, no amount of new traffic will change the outcome.



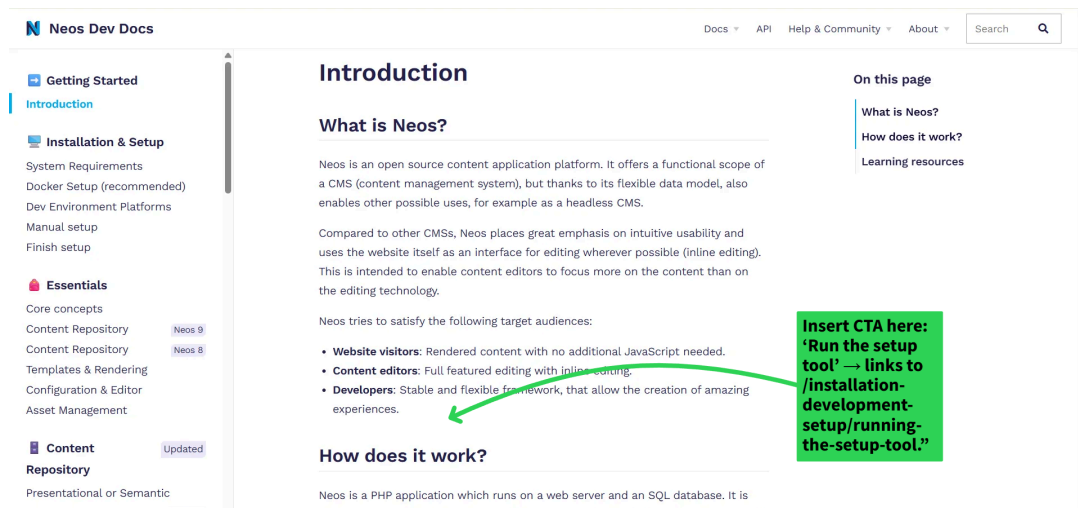
2. Teardown: Neos Documentation

Link: <https://docs.neos.io/guide/getting-started/introduction>

Neos has a clear and reliable documentation structure. It is written for developers who are setting up or extending Neos with PHP or Docker, and it assumes technical confidence. Once a user enters the installation flow, the steps are straightforward and predictable.

The first success in this journey is simple. A developer needs to run Neos locally and open the setup tool in a browser to complete configuration. This happens on the page called “Running the Setup Tool”, and it is the moment when the CMS becomes usable. It is the point where a developer confirms that everything works.

→ The place where the experience slows is before this point. The intro page explains what Neos *is*, but the user is usually there to install it and not read a product summary.

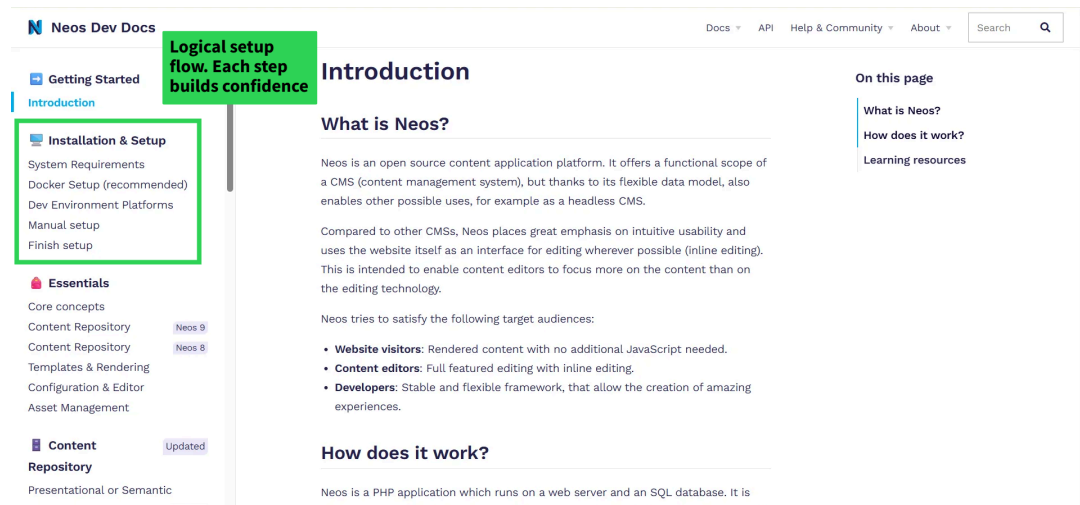


If you do not show the first step to action on that page (like I have done above), they have to guess:

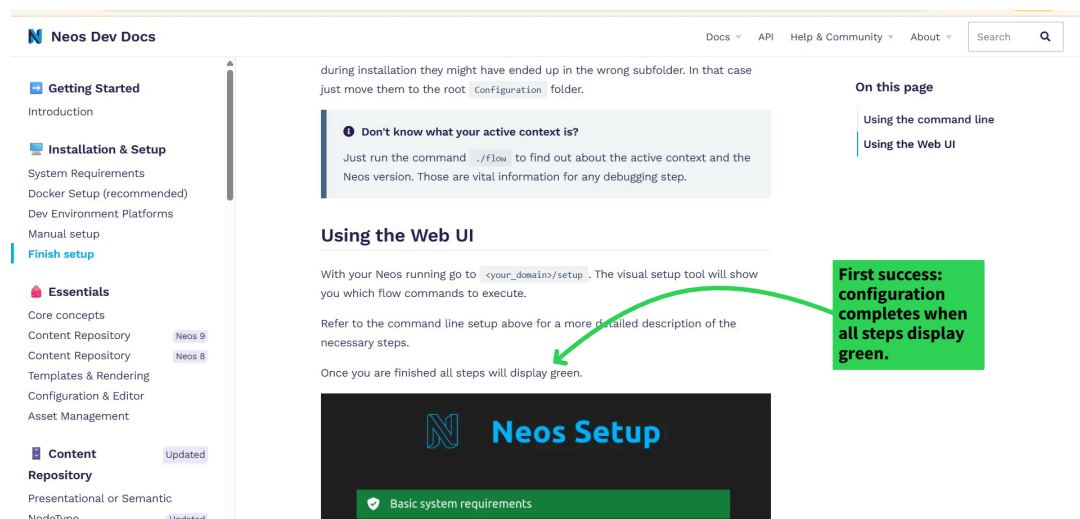
- Do I go to Installation and Setup?
- Do I go to Docker?
- Do I go to the Development Environment?
- Do I scroll?
- Do I sidebar hop?

This creates uncertainty, which is the enemy of onboarding.

-> Once the user enters the installation sequence, the documentation becomes smooth. The sidebar path (see image below) moves through System Requirements, Docker Setup, Development Environment, Manual Setup, Running the Setup Tool, Finish Setup. It reflects how developers naturally think through installation, which builds confidence



-> The page that contains the actual first success is Running the Setup Tool (see image below). This is where the user opens the setup tool in a browser, completes configuration, and arrives at a working Neos instance.



-> A simple troubleshooting block at the top of the Getting Started page or the setup guide can prevent early drop-off. Most early setup failures fall into only a few categories: environment mismatches, missing extensions, or configuration errors.

3. Practical Play for Teams

One of our clients added a small thumbs up or down block at the end of every setup step in their docs. The prompt said, **“Was this step clear?”** with an optional comment field.

Within two weeks, they collected more than 400 responses. Most downvotes pointed to one setup step involving environment variables. The team updated the copy and added a sample .env file. Setup completion improved by 24 percent.

The change worked because feedback arrived in context, right where friction happened, not through a survey later.

Try this:

Add a one-click feedback element after critical steps in your docs. It will show you exactly where developers stop and why.

4. Signal of the Week

Developers are choosing tools by how quickly they can run a working example.

GitHub’s Octoverse data shows a 40%+ increase in the use of starter and template repositories year over year, and StackOverflow’s 2025 survey reports that most developers evaluate a tool by running an example and not by reading setup instructions. The example repo has become the real entry point. If your docs do not lead with a runnable example in the first two minutes, you are slowing activation.

That’s all for this week’s issue.

We will now drop The Markup Mindset on the **second Thursday** of every month. It gives us enough room to research, test ideas, and bring you something worth reading every time.

Before you go, we just published our guide on [search ads for developer marketers](#). Check it out.

More from us:

1. [6 developer marketing metrics you need to track \(funnel-wise\)](#)

2. [3 developer marketing strategies that works \(+ tips to implement them\)](#)

3. [How to migrate API documentation](#)

Best,

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