



Webinar On

Docs, Design, and Data: The Solo Architect's Toolkit

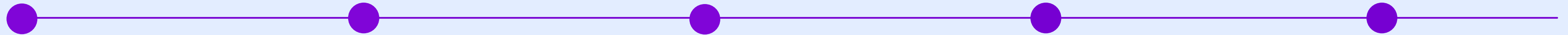


Speaker

Sowjanya Parthasarathy
Technical Writer
Funnel



In this session



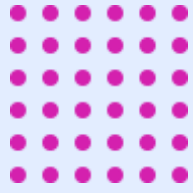
Shift from large enterprise to a scaleup

Challenges as a technical writer

Challenges as a content designer

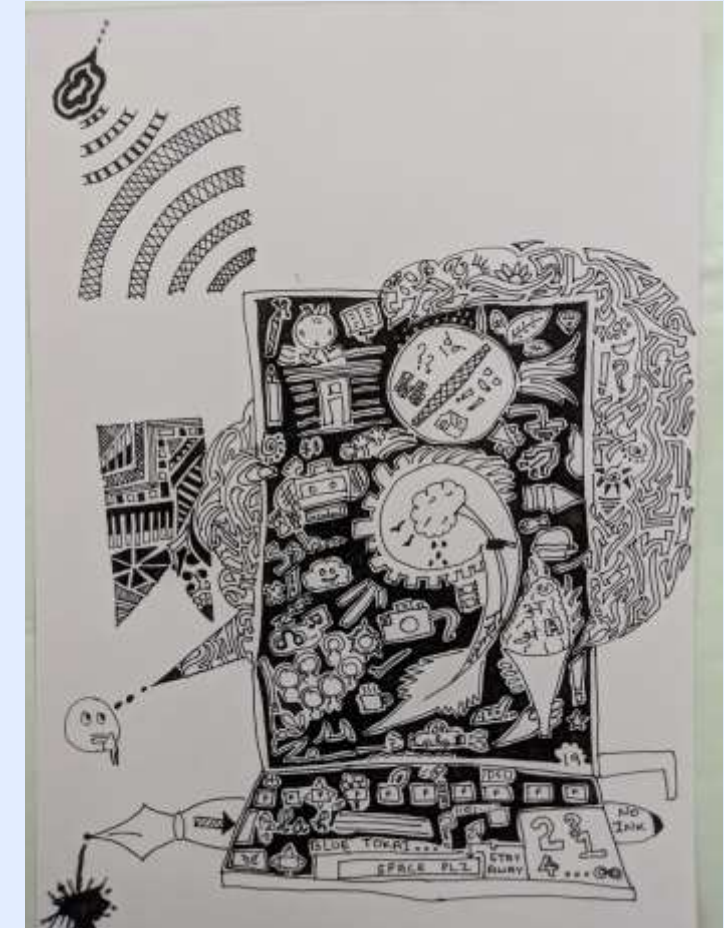
How is your content performing?

Takeaways



Who am I?

Technical writer by title, but i'm there everywhere if it's something to do with user experience and product adoption.



Journey for the last 11 years

Funnel, New Native,
Palo Alto Networks,
Cisco, Pegasystems,
ANSR Source

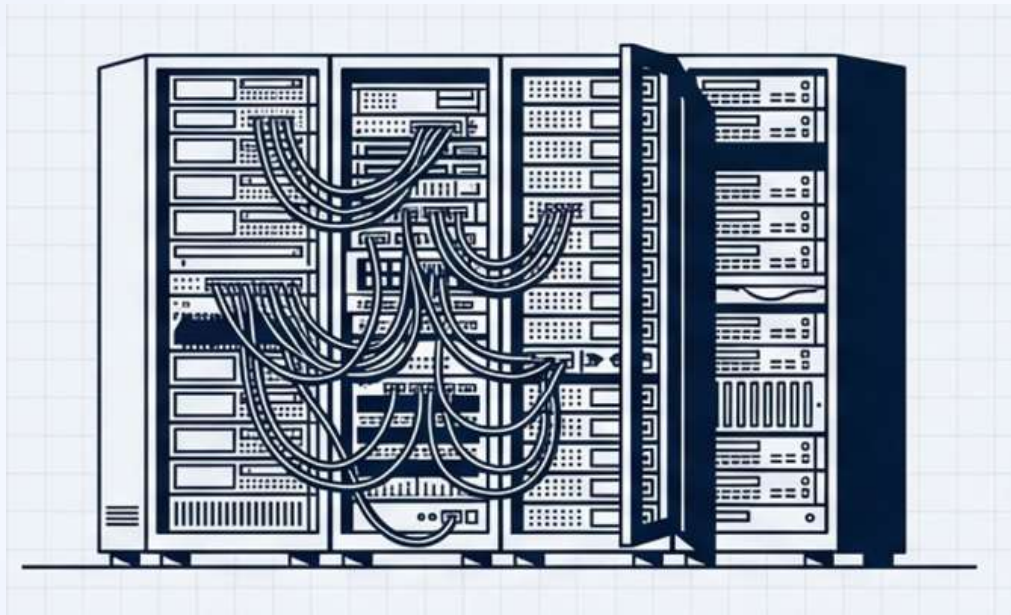
Manage product
documentation and UX
copy

Content governance,
content patterns in
design, and dabbled in
marcom

Obsessed with
collaborations

Love creativity

Foundation

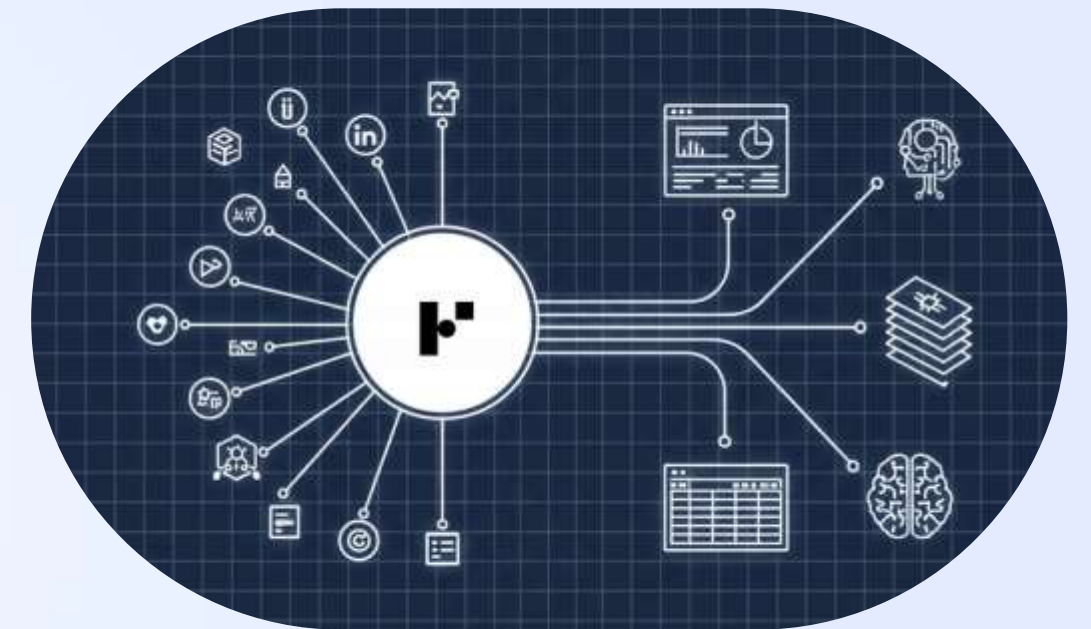


Data center products, cybersecurity, BPM and CRM

```
system_config = { "host": "127.0.0.1", "port": 8080 }
```

SYSTEM FAILURE
IF MISSING

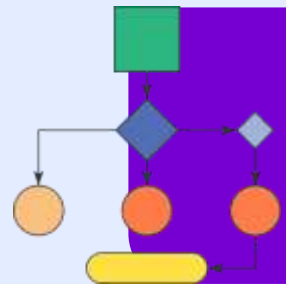
Misplaced comma equals a system failure



At Funnel, from Dec 2024

The two worlds

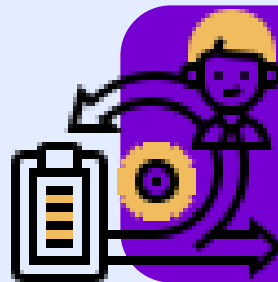
A cog in the past



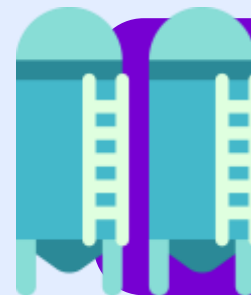
Defined processes



Dedicated tools



More teams



Strict silos

An architect in the present

Rapid iteration



Generalist tools



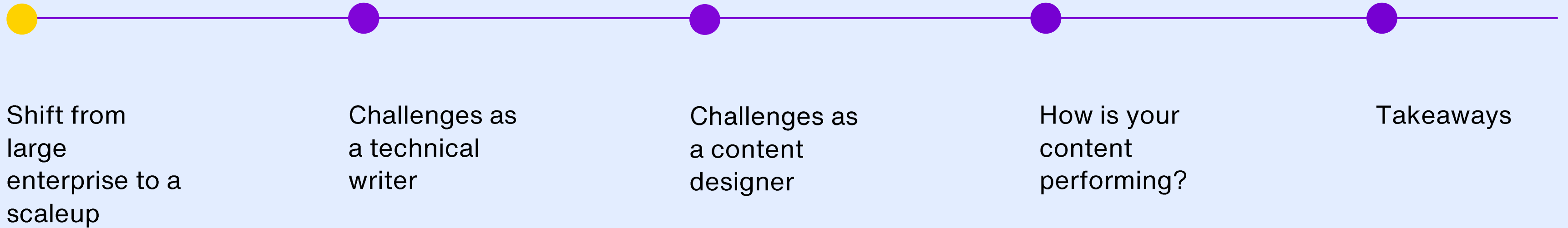
No QA for docs



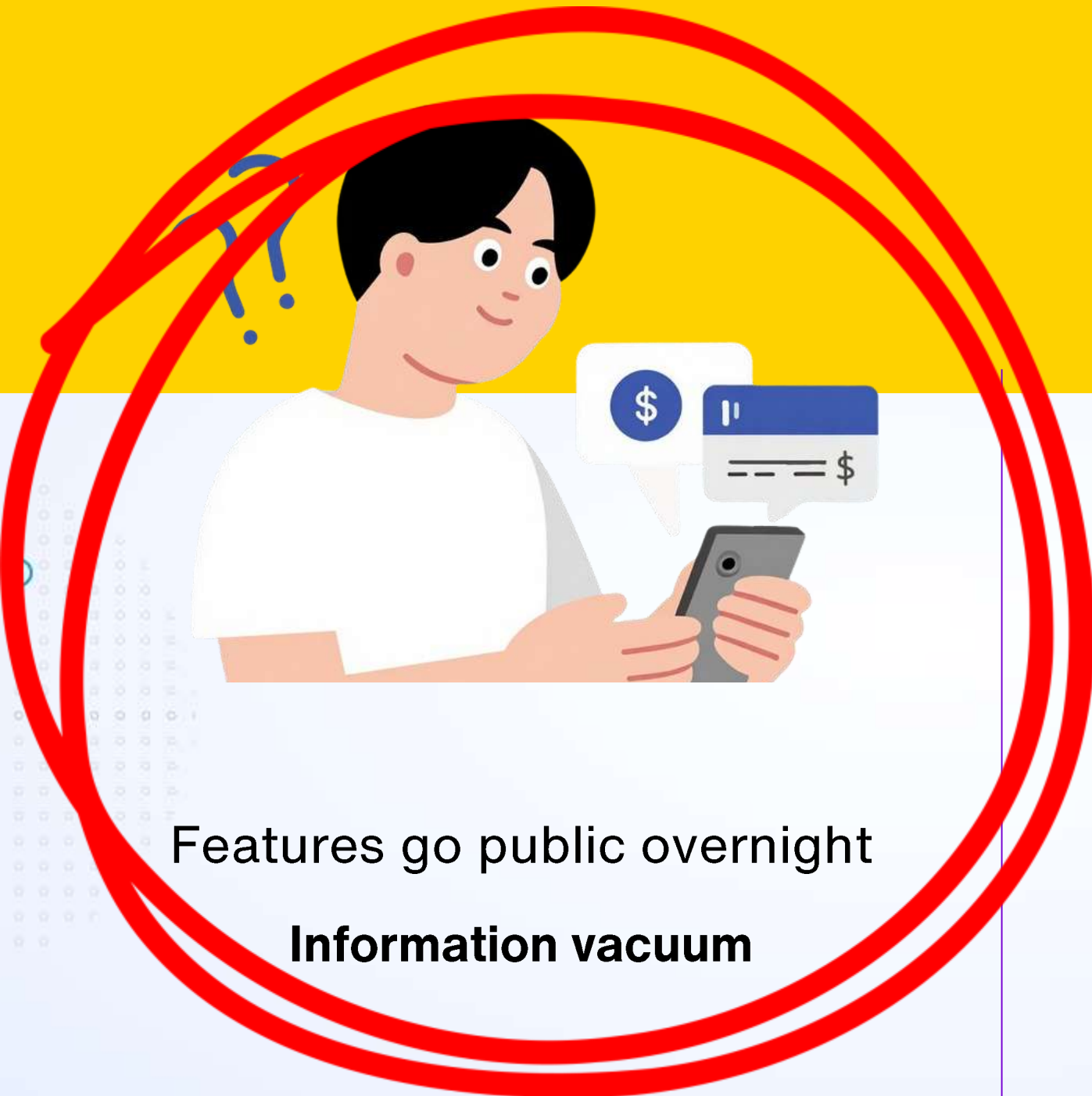
Crowdsourced knowledge



In this session



Oh no!



Using a non-docs tool
Tooling trap



Docs rot immediately
Stale reality

The archaeological dig



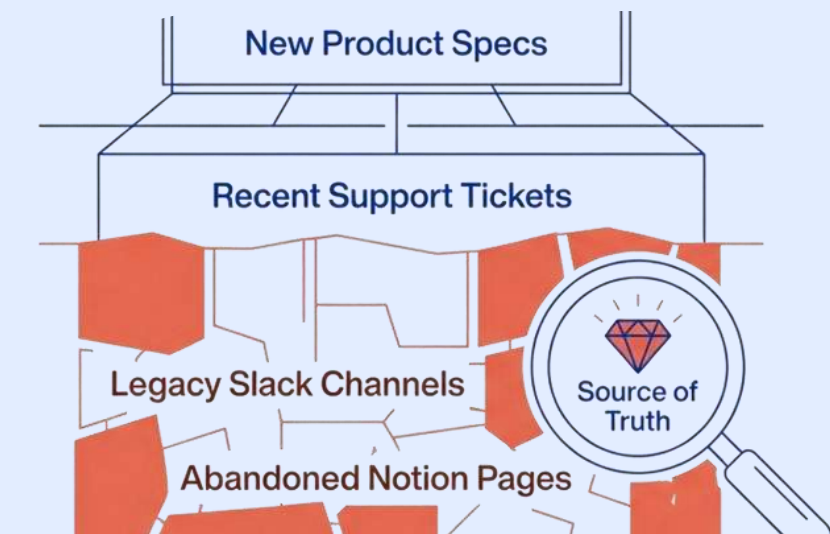
1. Make your mark

- Understand domain
- Know your teams
- Learn how business works



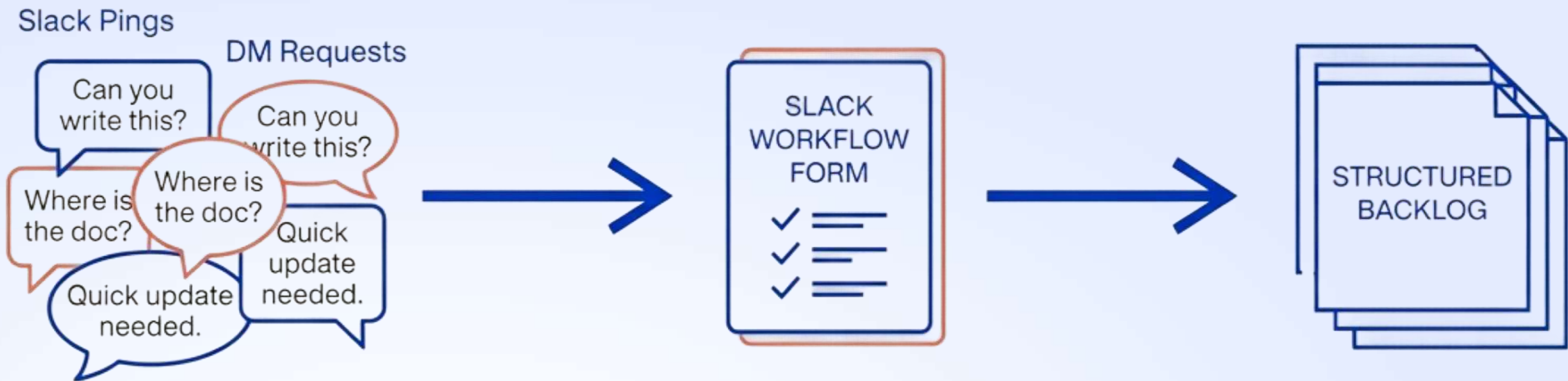
1. Identify noise and signal

- Identify your stakeholders
- Learn how they work
- Find your communication modes



1. Don't forget those legacy sources!

- Version history of your product
- Decisions made in the past
- Hidden gems



Results

- Understood the work culture better
- Found a docs channel and took ownership
- Turned chaos to structured data

Oh no!



Features go public overnight

Information vacuum



Using a non-docs tool

Tooling trap



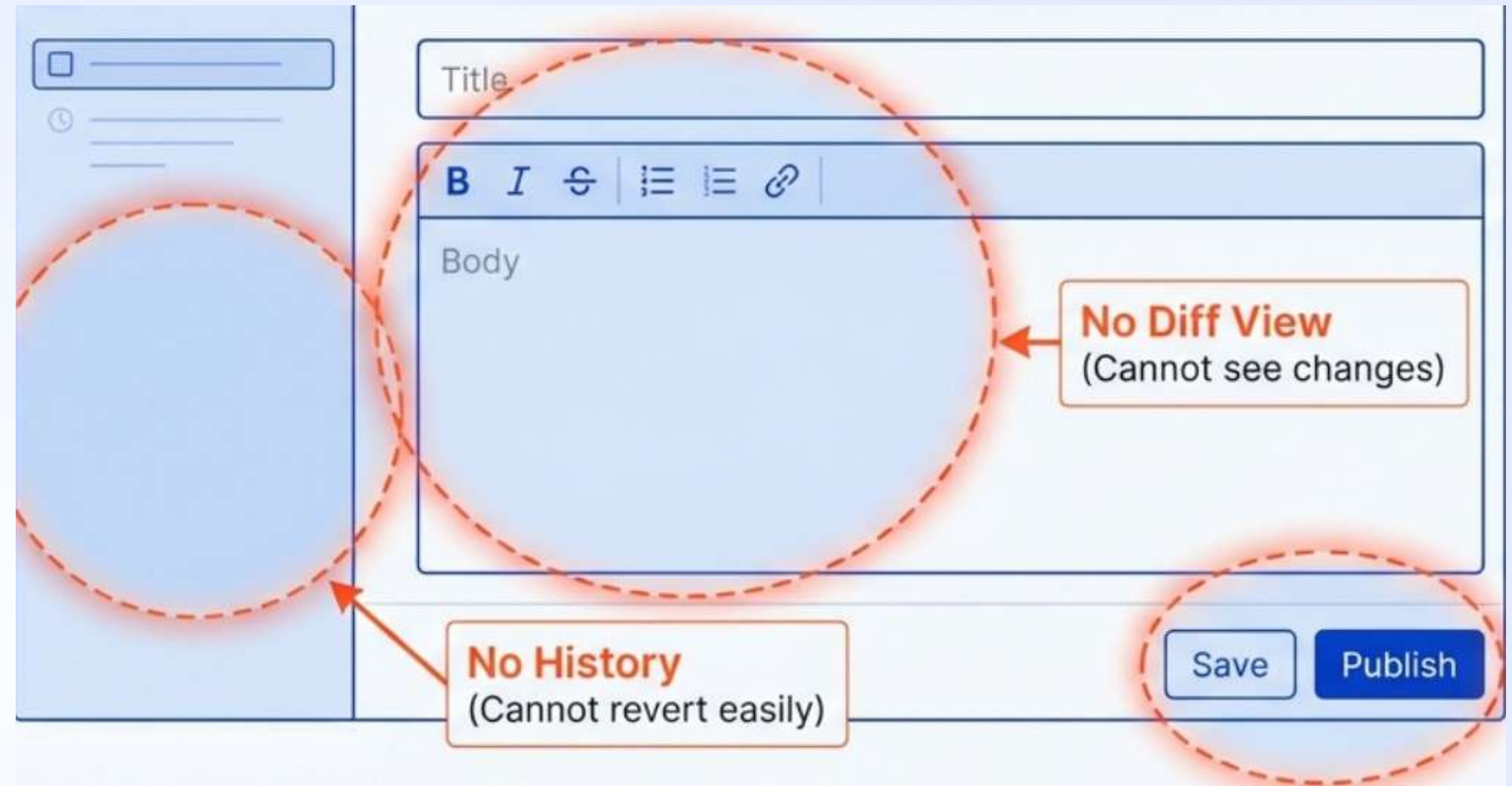
Docs rot immediately

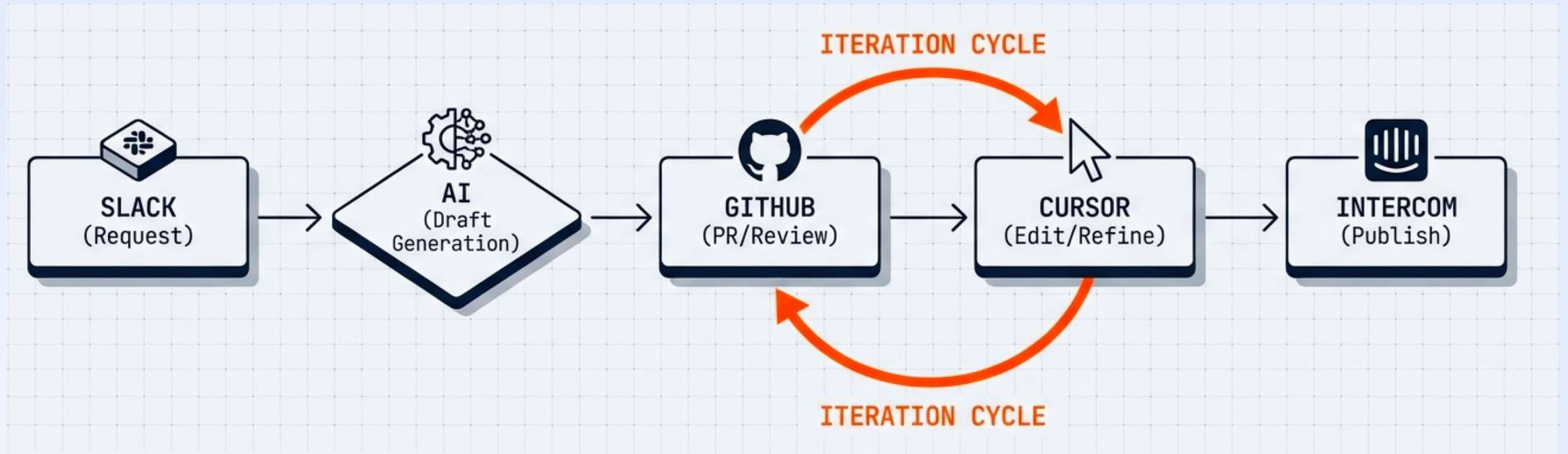
Stale reality

Review black hole

Problem with non-doc tools:

- Reviews took longer
- No diffs and proper version control
- Formatting





Solution: Hybrid docs-as-code workflow

Set up docs-as-code: Efficiency, collaboration and tools

Oh no!



Features go public overnight
Information vacuum

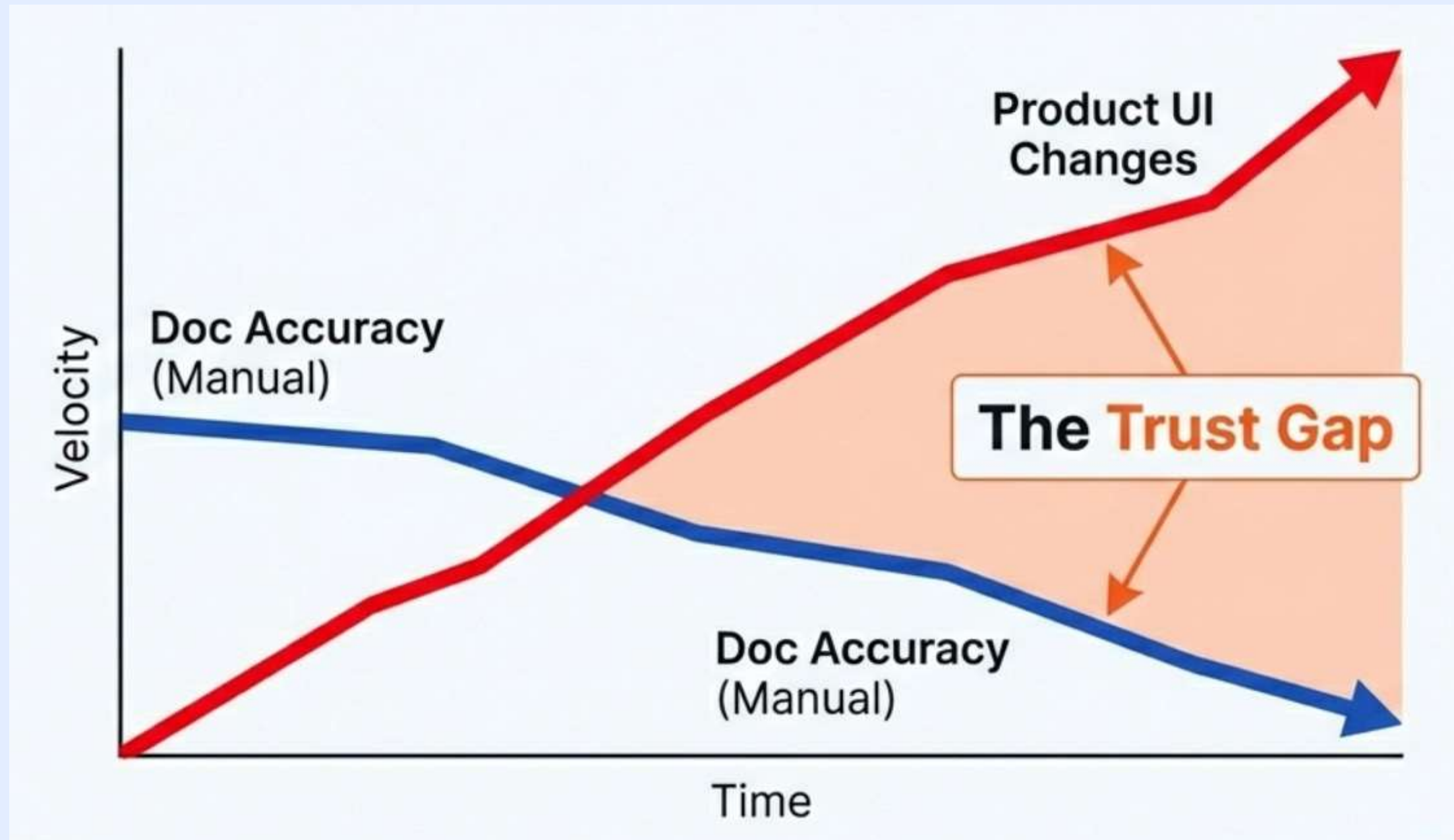


Using a non-docs tool
Tooling trap

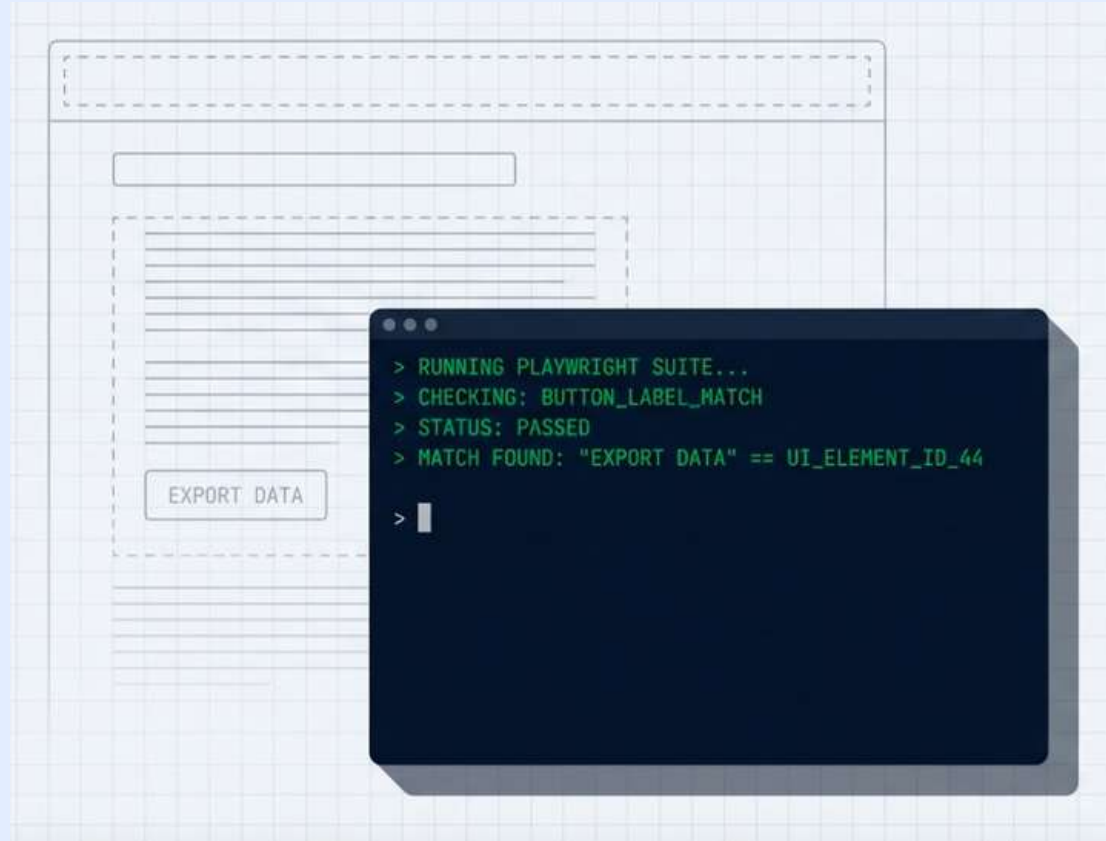


Docs rot immediately
Stale reality

Stale docs nightmare



Product UI changes faster in agile environments

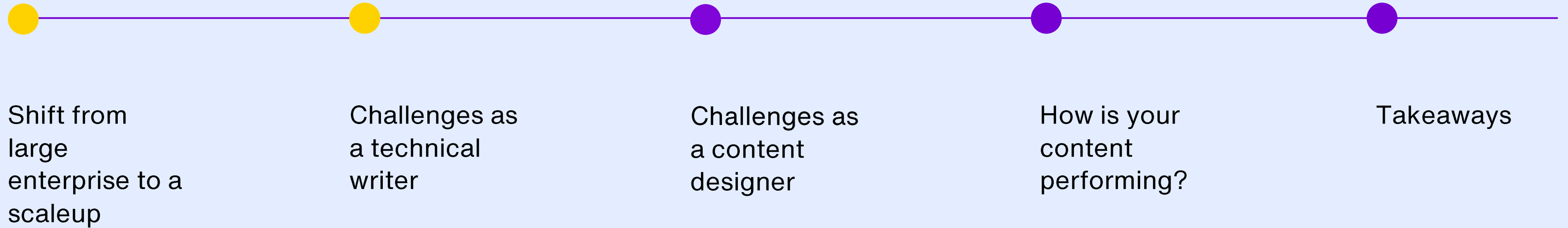


Solution: Self-healing documentation

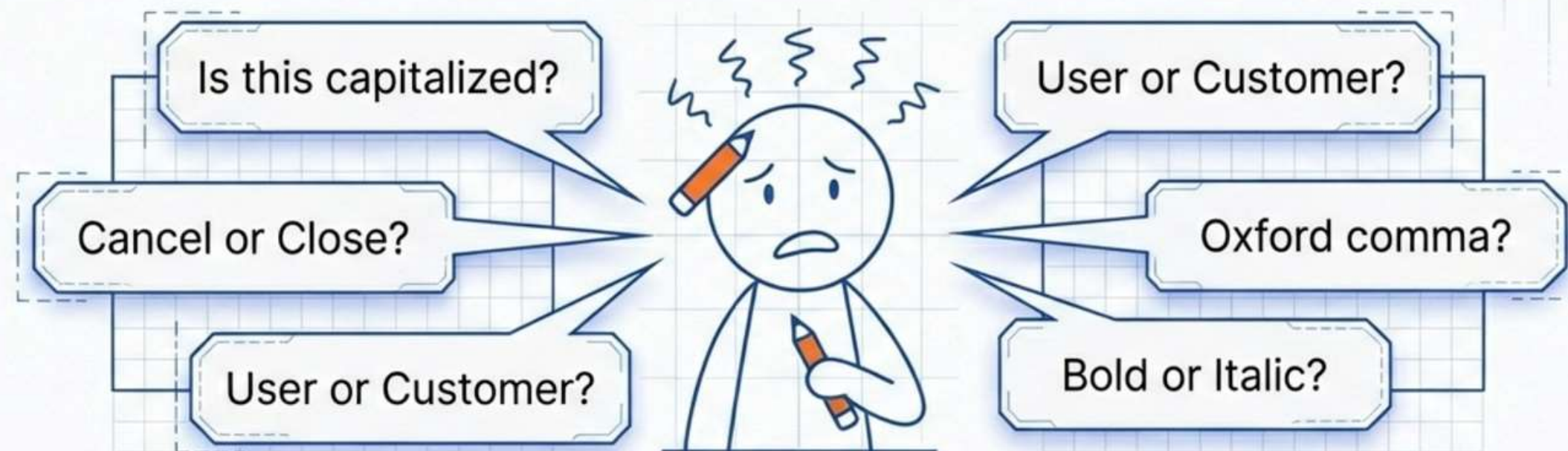
- Simulate user actions to test docs
- Alert me when the test fails

```
> run playwright test --doc-verify  
  
Testing Article: "Connecting Data Sources"...  
  
[FAIL] Element 'button[name="Add Source"]' not found.  
  
Expected: 'Connect Source'  
  
Alert sent to #docs-ops channel.
```

In this session



The UX bottleneck



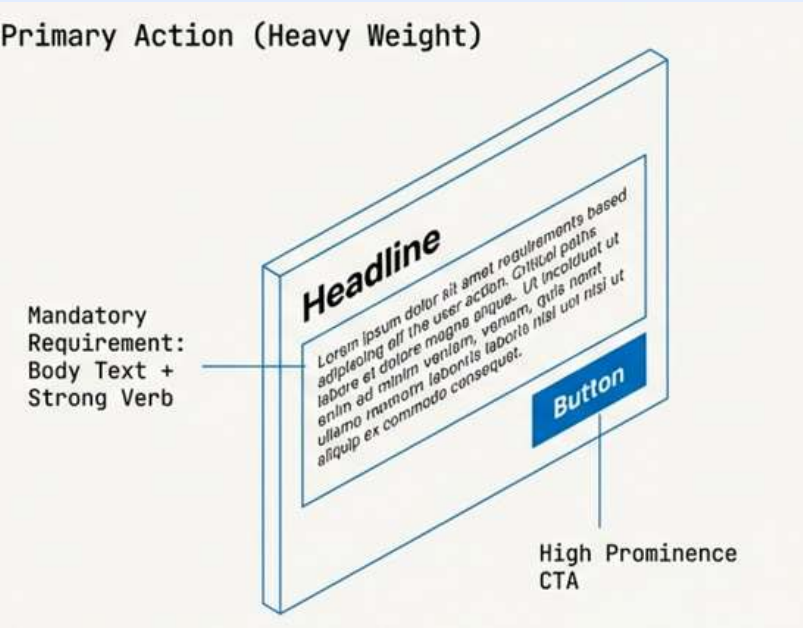
Micro-decisions kill velocity

How are we communicating with our users?

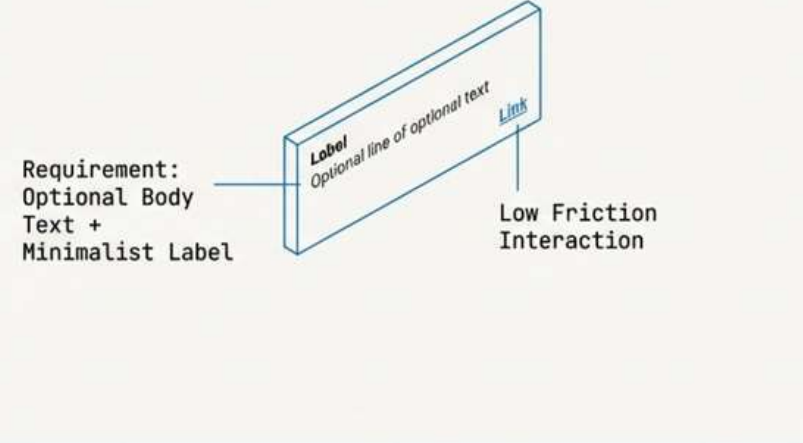
What is the goal?



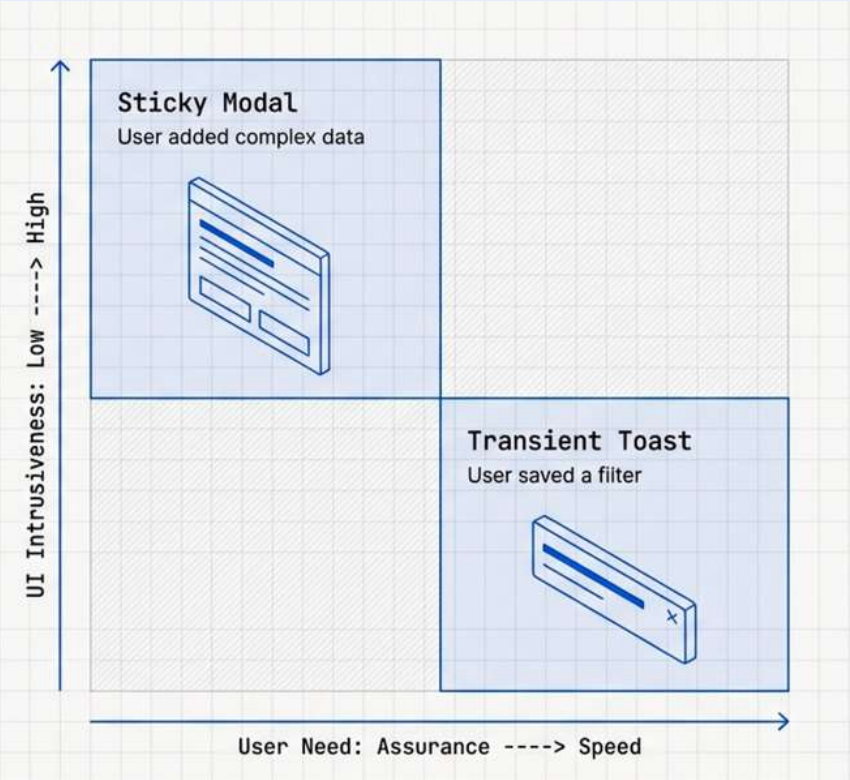
Standardizing success patterns



Secondary Action (Light Weight)

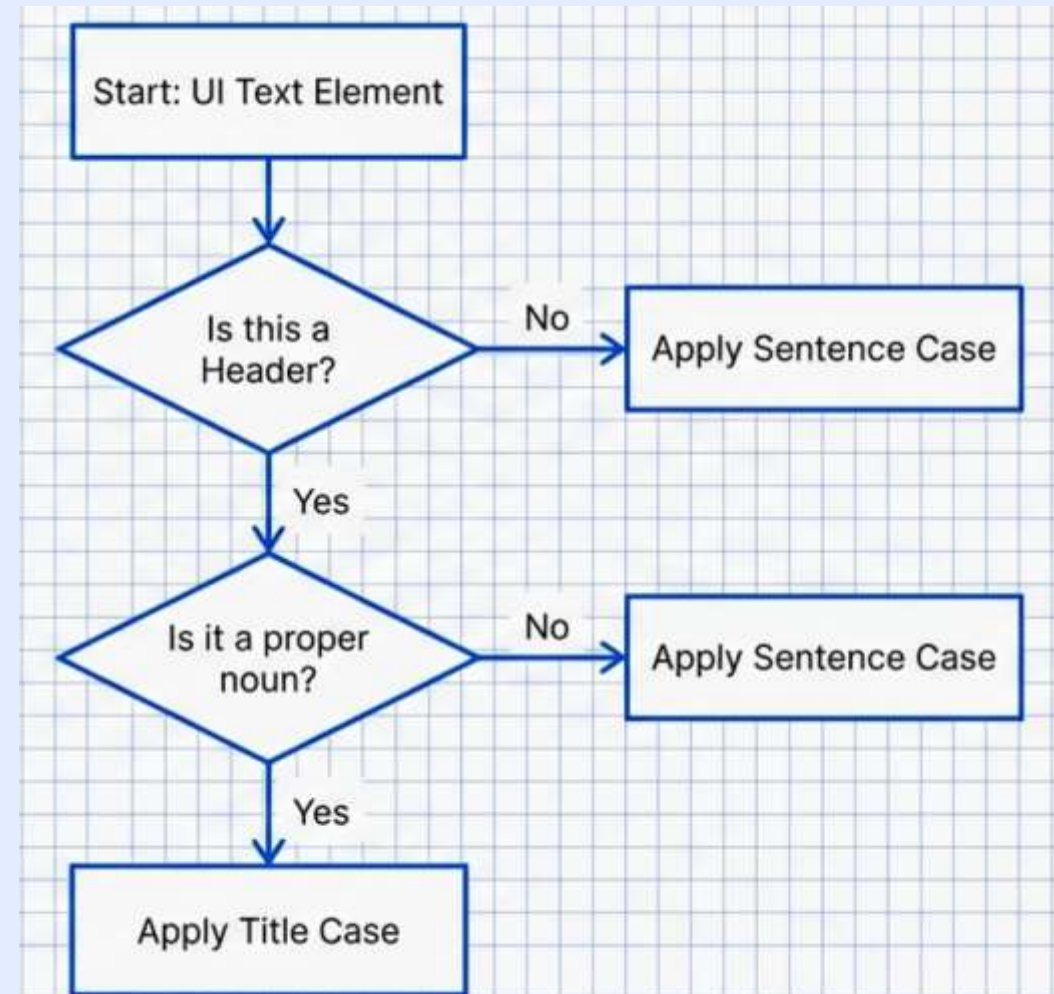


How can we help users?

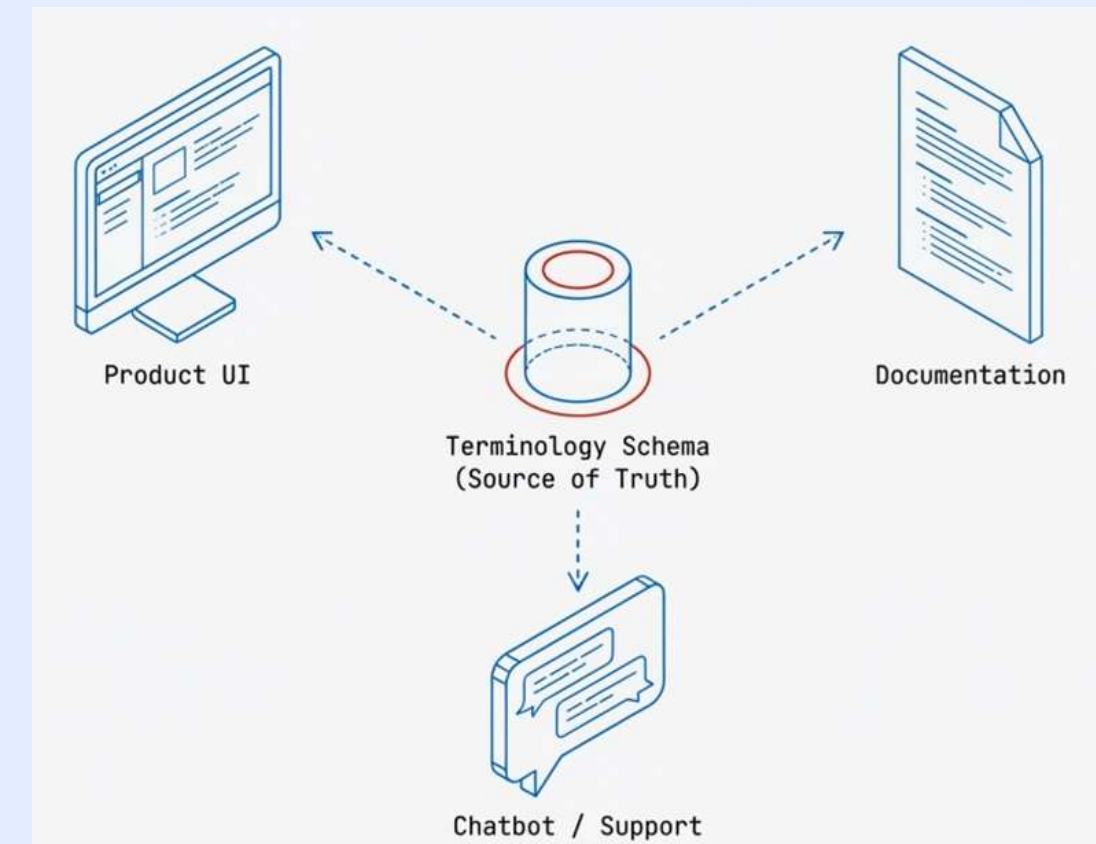


Operationalizing the design system

How to enable your designers?



Multi-dimensional glossary



Entry ID: Filter
Definition: A mechanism to narrow down a dataset based on criteria.
Grammatical Rules: Verb: To filter. Noun: A filter. Plural: Filters.
Design Note: Max char count: 20. Must be accompanied by a clear icon.
Forbidden Terms: DO NOT USE: 'Sieve', 'Refine', 'Sort' (unless sorting).
Usage Constraints: Allowed in: List Views, Dashboards. Not allowed in: Settings.

Result: Verified linguistic identity

Technical / Authoritative ← Tone Governance → Conversational / Approachable



Admin Panel

No Emojis

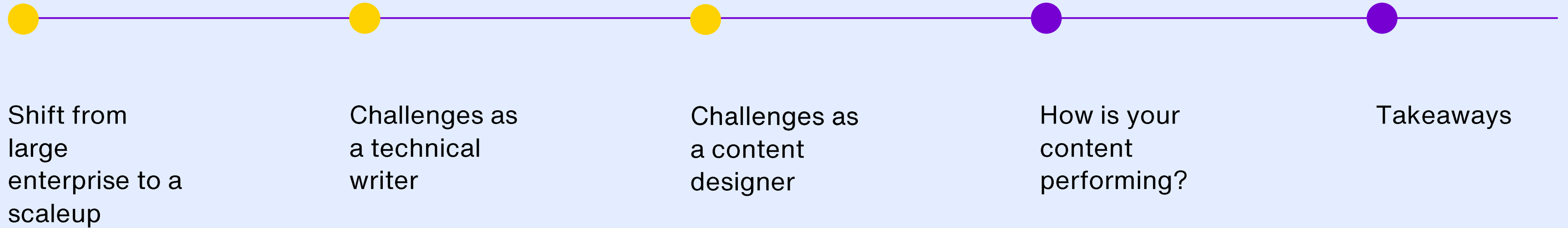
Emojis Allowed

Critical Interfaces & Error States

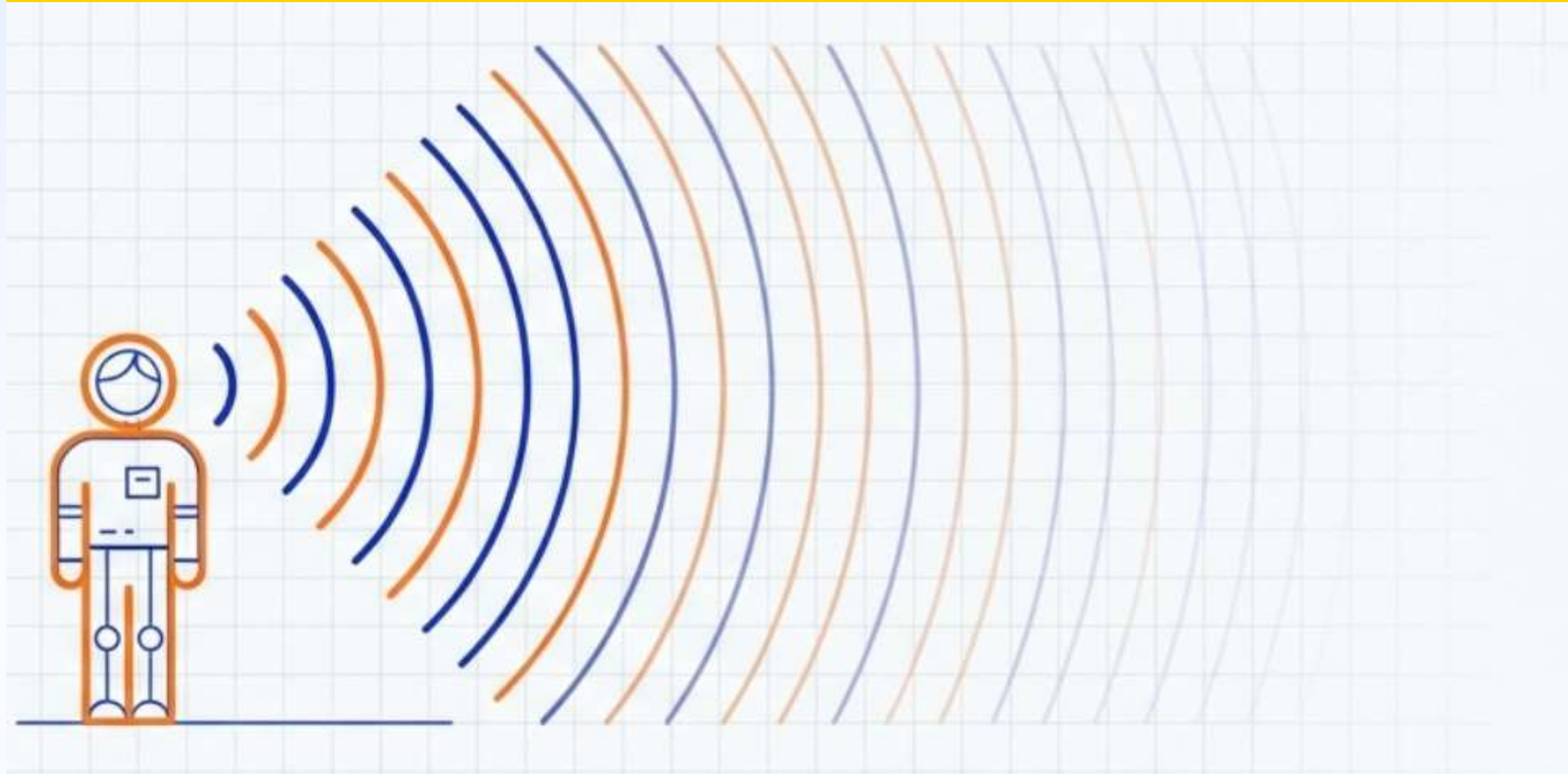


Onboarding & Empty States

In this session



Where's the feedback?

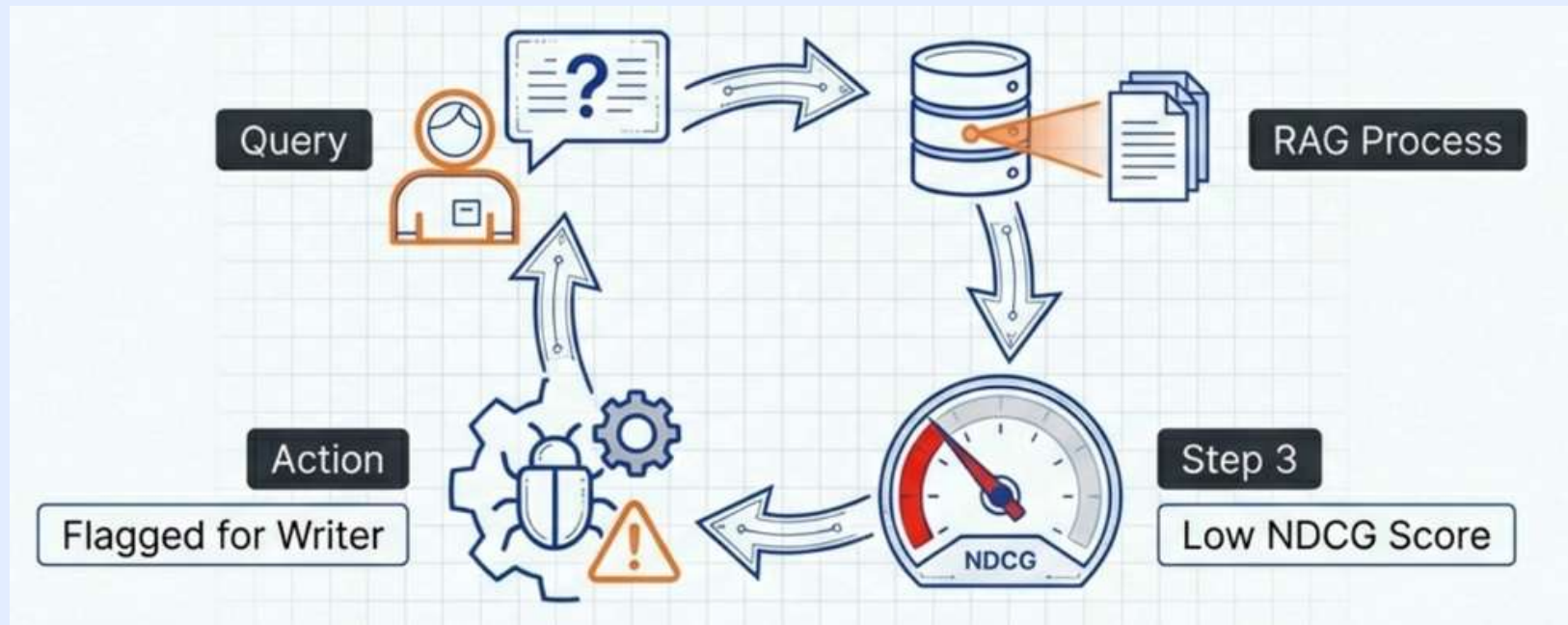


- Traditional metrics fail to measure accuracy
- Limitations in exporting metrics

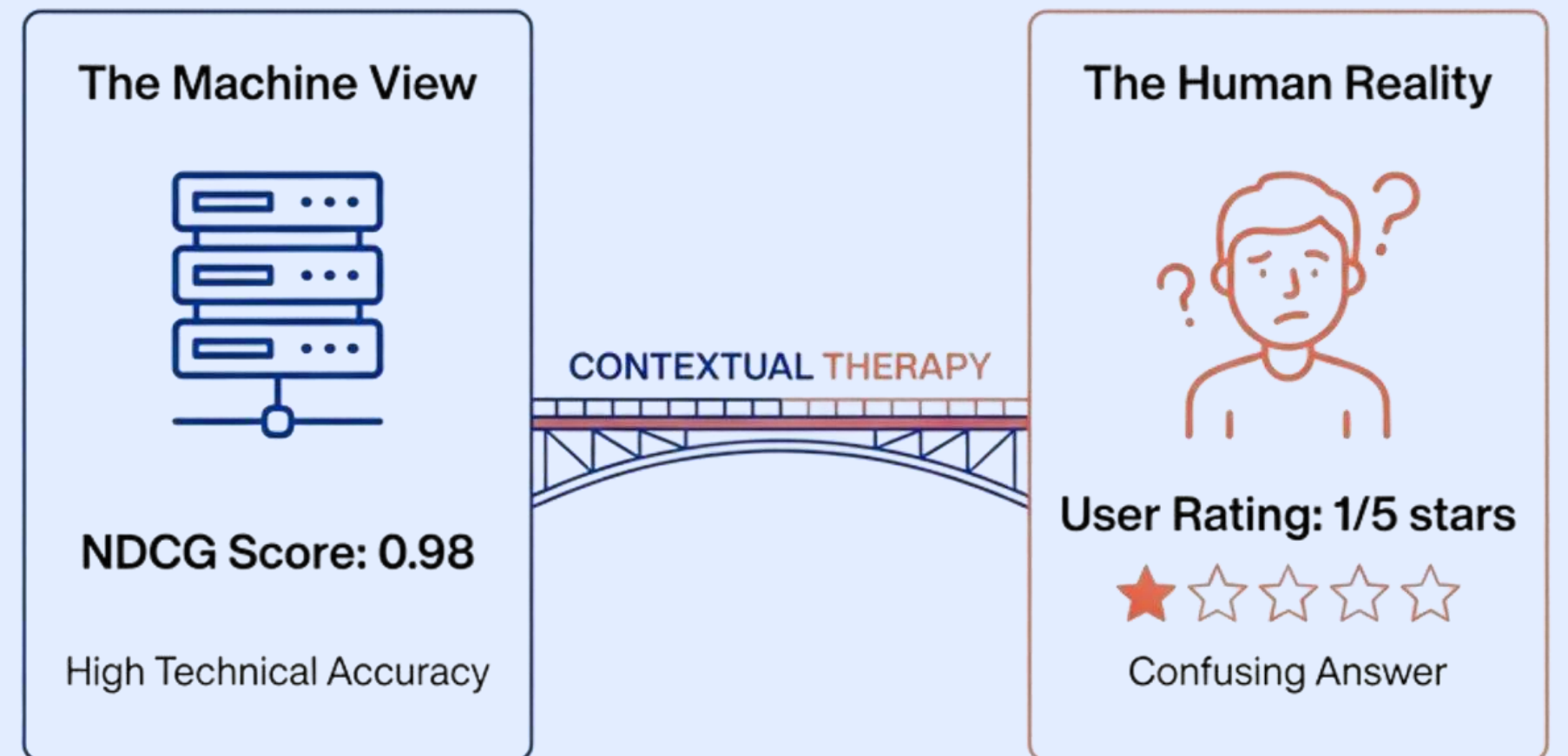
Data and AI

Using hallucinations to identify doc gaps

Note: Sometimes Math isn't always the truth

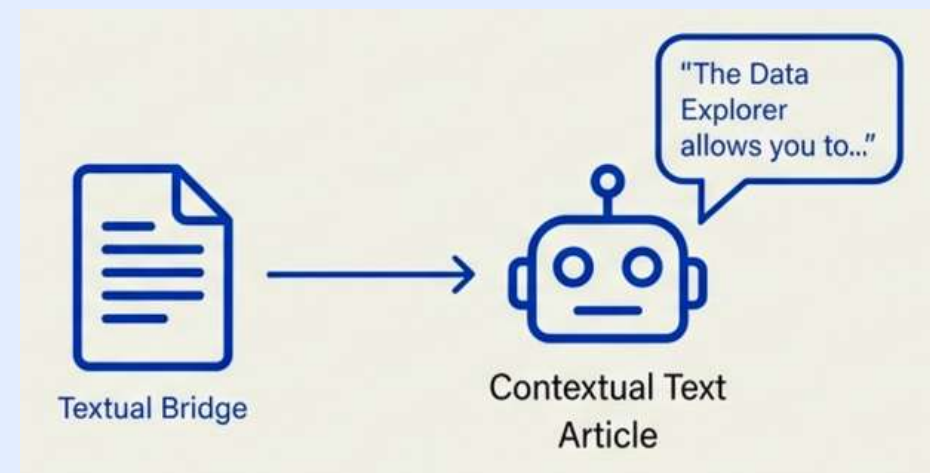
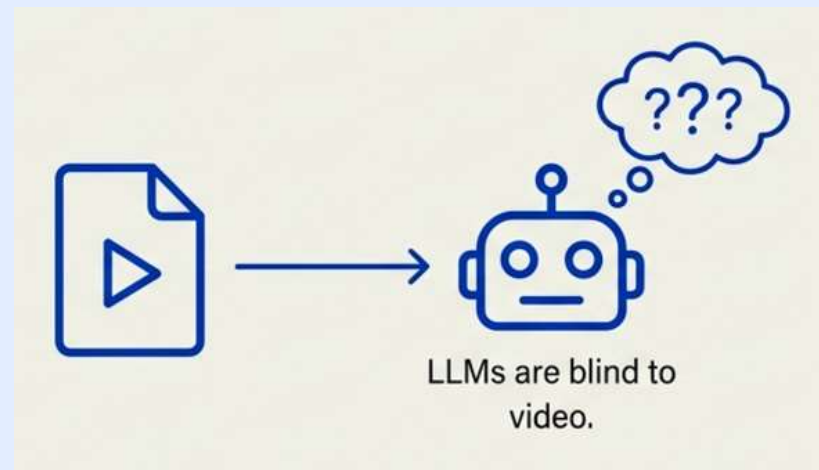


Normalized discounted cumulative gain



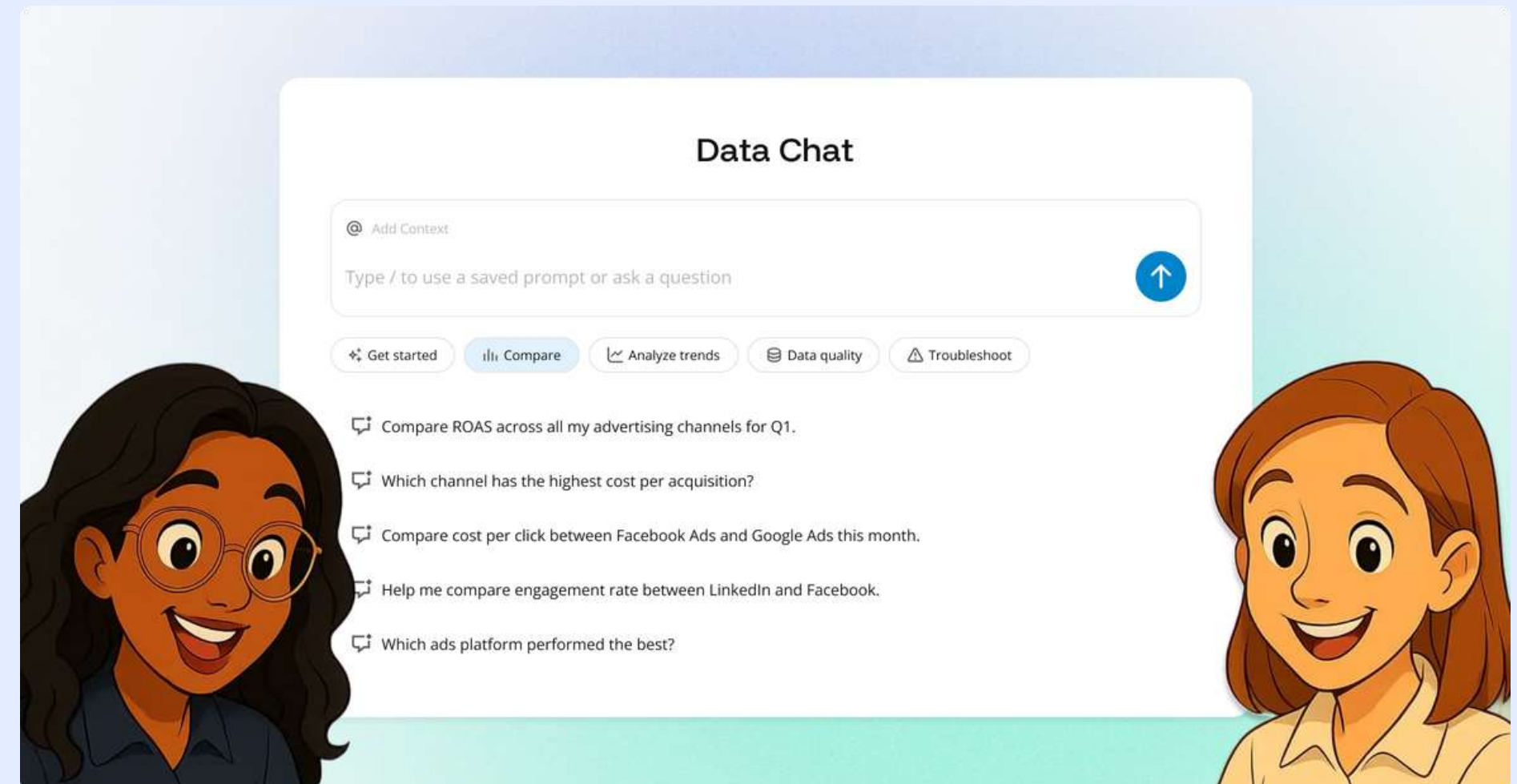
How are docs doing inside the product?

Writing for AI



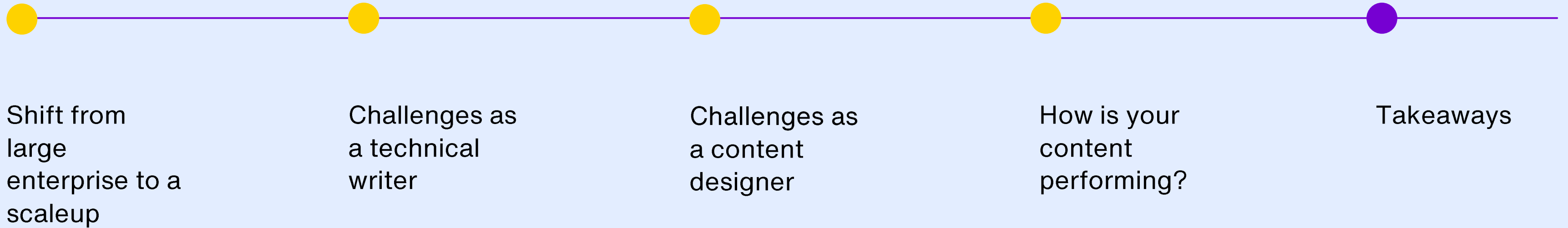
Thinking like a technical writer

Writing for humans



Thinking like a content designer

In this session



Cheatsheet

1. Set up pipelines before you write

2. Create a logic kit to offload micro-decisions

3. Automate audits

4. Unlearn the process

5. Get closer to code

6. Embrace *good enough* from agility

Be audacious!



Don't be afraid to be visible

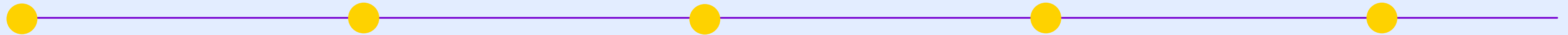
Don't be limited by tools



Don't be protective about your deliverables



In this session



Shift from large enterprise to a scaleup

Challenges as a technical writer

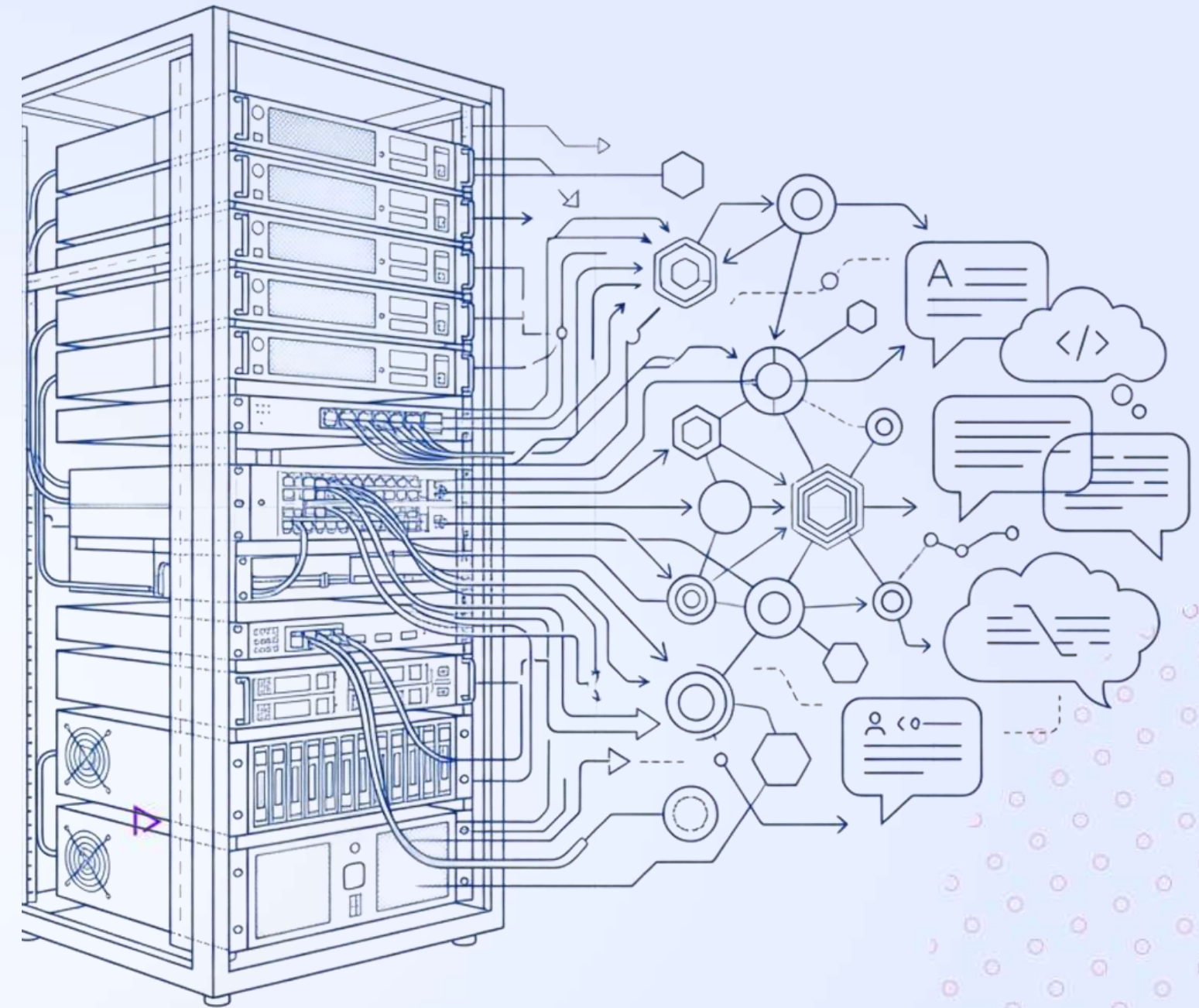
Challenges as a content designer

How is your content performing?

Takeaways

Questions?

What's on your mind? How would you do these differently?





Sowjanya Parthasarathy



Thank you!



<https://www.linkedin.com/in/sowjenyaparthasarathy/>

