

## Company News

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# Improving the Experience of Our Support Website


 January 21, 2014 · Posted by [Leon](#) in [UX](#) · [5 Comments](#)



We are always committed to improving our support website experience. Read [this blog post](#) for the most recent changes to the Documentation site.


At Balsamiq we've always prided ourselves on our customer service. We have real live humans who stand by the phone and love hearing it ring. And we're blazing fast with email support by providing coverage from our U.S. team during our working hours and passing it off to our European team during theirs.

### Contact Us for Help

 [In Our Forum](#)

 [By Email](#)

 +1 (415) 367-3531  [Twitter](#)

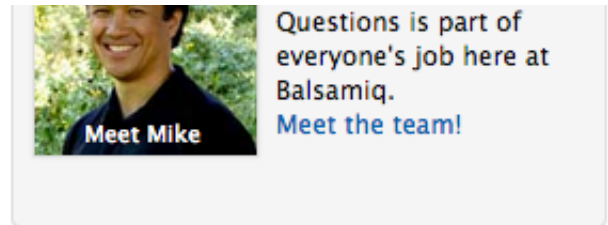
 [Record a Screenshot](#)  [Server Status](#)



**We're real people!**  
Answering your

We also rely heavily on our web support channel, i.e., our support website ([support.balsamiq.com](https://support.balsamiq.com)).

This site serves as our repository for product documentation and FAQs, helping people learn the product and get help if they run into trouble. Our support site is very important not only for customers wanting to get answers, but for our support staff, who can direct people to specific articles that can answer their questions.



In 2013, we identified several touch points in our customer journey that we wanted to improve. Support was a primary focus, being an aspect of the company's service that customers can repeatedly return to. A little back story describing the evolution of our support site may help understand what we hoped to improve.

When Balsamiq started, our documentation was modestly maintained on our servers (a single page per product) and we responded to support primarily using Gmail and [GetSatisfaction](#). As the company and customer count grew, we grew our support team. In 2012 we started using [Desk.com](#) to manage our support system, from email management to publishing our documentation.

We shipped a very basic site with a searchable set of articles using Desk's base templates. While we continued to write support articles and improve how we responded using the email management capabilities of Desk, the support site was largely unchanged. The questions and feedback we got over that first year helped us become aware of its limitations, and we started to describe the problems internally.

The predominant issue had to do with difficulty locating content. From

our perspective we also identified problems connecting related content, keeping media up to date, and knowing if users were getting the answers they were looking for.

This was a re-alignment and not a redesign. We set out to improve the site, focusing on aligning the organization of content and the layout of entry pages to address the findability problems, and gardening the current content to reflect user needs.

## **A new look + better organization**

Here's a list of the most noticeable changes to our support site, although there were many other, smaller changes we made to both our processes and our site.

### **Updates to our support home page**

We wrote up requirements and started wireframing a rough idea that we could use to discuss the problem and explore solutions. We iterated over it a few times until we had a basic understanding and agreement on the direction we wanted to take, and immediately started front end development. We like to make refinements in further iterations in code.

This screenshot shows our initial wireframe for the support home page.

## HEADER

### Search

Keywords: [Lost key](#), [Need an invoice](#), [Installation](#), [Export](#), [Import](#), [Symbols](#), [Icons](#), [Error](#)

### FAQs

#### Licensing and Sales

Get help with: [Retrieving License Key](#), [Getting an invoice](#), and [more...](#)

#### Installation

Get help with: [Installation Errors](#), [Updating software](#), and [more...](#)

### Contact

[In Our Forums](#)[By Email](#)

Phone: +1 (415) 367.3531  
Skype: balsamiq



#### We're Real People

Meet Joe. Answering your questions is part of everyone's job here. [Meet the whole team!](#)

### Getting Started



#### Basics

- [Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet](#)
- [Consectetur adipiscing elit](#)
- [Phasellus semper dictum sem](#)
- [Dictum scelerisque](#)

#### Advanced tutorials

- [Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet](#)
- [Consectetur adipiscing elit](#)
- [Phasellus semper dictum sem](#)
- [Dictum scelerisque](#)
- [Class aptent taciti](#)

### Documentation



Mockups  
for Desktop



myBalsamiq

[More product FAQs...](#)



Plugin



Plugin



Plugin



Plugin

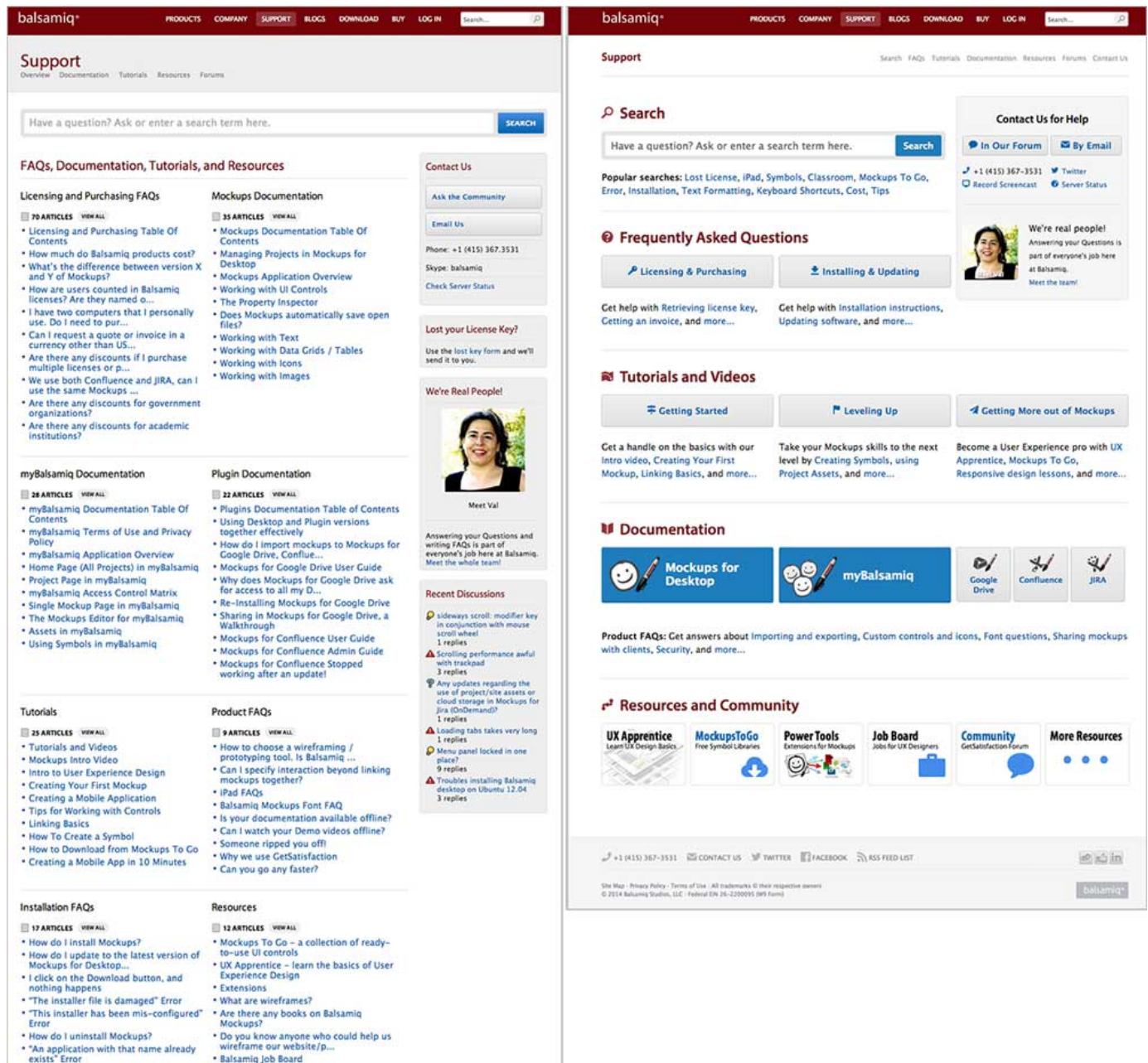


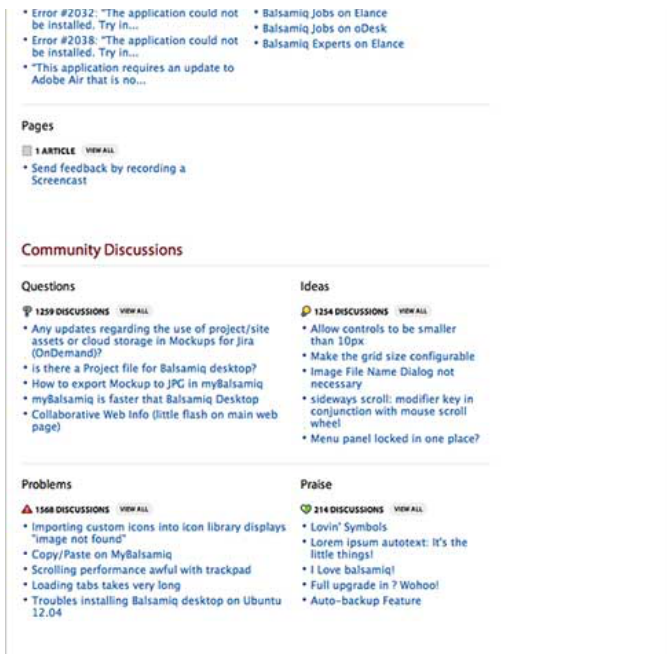
Plugin

Rather than just showing the first 10 articles in each category we wanted to encourage visitors to either search for what they are looking for or choose a category to drill down into for a more approachable index page for that category. This cut down greatly the amount of text on the page and provided better entry points to a

refined search. Also, by looking through our logs, we could pick out some of the most popular search terms and place them next to the search box, helping people who didn't necessarily know how to describe what they were looking for. Finally, increased use of icons and images would differentiate the categories and other link targets better.

Here you can see a comparison of the original support site's main page with the redesigned version.





Better, no?


## Better sidebar navigation

Our sidebar (the grey navigation bar to the right on our individual articles) now links to headings within the page so that you can get an overview of the article you're reading without having to scroll all the way through to see if it contains the content you're looking for. We've also tried to save some time and effort by providing links to some related articles below that in case the page you're on doesn't answer your question or you want more information.

This screenshot shows some of the navigation changes to our sub-pages, as well as updates to our tutorials (discussed below).







## Tutorials and Videos

[Home](#) > [Tutorials](#) > [Tutorials and Videos](#)

Below is a list of guides and video tutorials to help you learn and grow with our products. We hope to add new ones frequently, so check back periodically. Tutorials containing videos are marked with a , and all our videos are consolidated into a playlist in the [Videos](#) section below.

### # Getting Started

Get a handle on the basics.

1. [Watch the Mockups Intro video](#) 
2. [Creating Your First Mockup](#)
3. [Linking Basics](#) 
4. [Creating a Mobile Application](#) 
5. [Tips for Working with Controls](#) 
6. [Data Table Formatting](#) 
7. [Creating a Mobile App in 10 Minutes](#) 

#### More resources:

- [Complete Mockups Documentation](#)
- [Complete myBalsamiq Documentation](#)

In-page navigation

Tutorials organized by level

Related Articles widget

More video tutorials

#### On This Page

[Getting Started](#)

[Leveling Up](#)

[Getting More out of Mockups](#)

[Video Playlist](#)

#### Related Articles

[Intro to Symbols](#)

[Does Balsamiq offer product training and demonstrations?](#)

[How to Use Show / Hide Markup for Layering](#)

[Can I watch your Demo videos offline?](#)

[Tips for Working with Controls](#)

## More focus on tutorials

We got feedback last year saying that many of our articles were too wordy and too focused on describing features rather than on how to actually do stuff with our products. So, we made a concerted effort to step things up in the tutorials department. Here are some of the changes we've made.

## A new index page for tutorials

We started by creating a new [home page for our tutorials](#). It's grouped into categories for beginners, intermediate users, and people who want to do more with our products once they've learned how to use



them.

We also got feedback from people who said that they just wanted to see the videos, so we've labeled the tutorials that contain videos as well as [consolidating all of them into one playlist](#) that's viewable at the bottom of the new index page.

## **"How-to" guides**

We also experimented with some different kinds of tutorials. Some people said that many of our articles were too general or that they didn't have many pictures or enough guidance. So, we took some of our most frequently asked "how do I...?" questions and created a few detailed, step-by-step guides showing these processes each step of the way. Our guides on [how to create a symbol](#) and [how to download from Mockups To Go](#), for example.

## **More "Tips and tricks" videos**

We describe Balsamiq Mockups as "Excruciatingly simple. Filled with hidden powers." The goal of the videos we've added recently has been to reveal some of those hidden powers by showing how you can do things with Mockups that you may not have thought were possible and/or easily accomplished. We relied on our own Mockups experience as well as examples from our customers to create a few short videos, such as ["How to Use Show / Hide Markup for Layering"](#) and ["How to Create Multiple Header Rows in a Data Grid"](#) that might make you say, "I didn't know you could do that with Balsamiq Mockups!" We hope to create more in the coming year.

Here's an example of one of them:



# Looking ahead / our hopes for 2014

Here's a quick list of some things we'd like to add in the next year:

1. Better, clearer docs, more tailored to specific needs
2. Better metrics for tracking the usefulness of our articles
3. A more structured course for learning Mockups
4. Tagging or labeling for better cross-referencing of articles
5. Applying the editorial style guide that we finally got around to creating to all of our old articles

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*How are we doing? What would you like to see more or less of? Have any tips for us? If so, leave a comment below or email us at [support@balsamiq.com](mailto:support@balsamiq.com). We're eager to get better!*

— Leon and Mike



**Leon** for the Balsamiq Team

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