

# Documentation

FORM Developers Workshop 2026, Nikhef

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# Introduction

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A good Reference Manual and Tutorial is important for new **FORM** users, but also “old **FORM** users”

- I refer to the Reference Manual on a weekly basis

The current website, on **github.io**,

- [<https://form-dev.github.io/form-docs/master/manual/>]
  - continuously updated, tracks the **master** branch
- [<https://form-dev.github.io/form-docs/stable/manual/>]
  - stable, for v5.0.0

The old Nikhef-hosted web site is out of date:

- [<https://www.nikhef.nl/form/maindir/documentation/reference/html/manual.html>]
  - **needs updating, or should forward to the `github.io` page**

**The Tutorial (“FORM for Pedestrians”) is not available on `github.io`**

- [<https://www.nikhef.nl/form/maindir/documentation/tutorial/online/online.html>]

# Content update

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Ana and I attended a “docathon” event,

- added simple examples to most of the Statements section
- also added each example to the test suite
- simple examples demonstrating functionality is more beginner-friendly
- **continuing these updates would be a useful activity for the “hands-on” sessions!**

# Formatting update experiment

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The current Reference Manual and Tutorial are written in `latex`

- `html` page generated automatically (`latex2html`)
- looks dated – not very appealing to beginners who are accustomed to the “modern internet”

**It is relatively straightforward to generate something a little nicer**, for e.g.:

- convert pre-processed (`regex`) `latex` to `restructured text` (`pandoc`)
- generate web pages with `sphinx`
- **not yet ready: things are missed in the conversion**
  - would be easier if the `latex` source was cleaned up
- **it would be nice to syntax-highlight FORM code – easy with `Pygments`**

[See example]

Another possible option: `latex` + `bookml`?

# Decisions

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Should we update the formatting of the Reference Manual?

Should we keep the `latex` source, or just use restructured text?

- if `latex`, clean it up/reformat things for easier conversion
  - use `description` env rather than manual `\lefttabitem`, `\tabitem`, etc
  - use as little custom commands and layout as possible
  - **this could be a good activity for a hands-on session!**

Closer integration of Reference Manual and Tutorial?

- host both on the same page, cross-link relevant parts between them