

New Widget 2.0 setting: Disable learned bias

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If you're using Widget 2.0, we released a small but mighty feature this week you may want to consider using.

It's tucked into Settings > Widget in the Suggested Content section: "Exclude articles that have a zero starting weight":

Suggested Content

Suggest content based off of the page path

○ Use the page query strings to suggest content

○ Disable automatic page suggestions

Using the manual updateRecommended(page) function will continue to work.

Exclude articles that have a zero starting weight

Starting weight can be added by editing the article and including page paths in the associated screens list.

New option to Exclude articles that have a zero starting weight

Here's what this setting does:

By default, Widget 2.0 is set up to be a learning widget. Whenever someone opens your widget and then views an article or category, the widget tracks what articles/categories they viewed from that page path. It saves this information as a "learned bias". Over time, once the learned bias gets high enough, it will include that article or category in its recommended list even if you've never added it yourself.

For people with sprawling websites or applications trying to get the widget up and running, this learning process can be useful.

But if you want total control of what's recommended, it's not helpful. And if you're using the option to "Display article when there is only one recommended", additional learned bias recommendations can totally change the end-user interaction you're expecting to happen there.

Leaving this box unchecked keeps the existing behavior, where widget learns and will recommend based on what it's learned.

Checking this box basically tells the widget: "Please don't recommend anything that only has learned bias. I only want to recommend things that I've explicitly told you to recommend."

This doesn't stop learned bias from being tracked--after all, it's still the only way to order multiple recommended

articles at a given page path--but it does reduce how much the widget uses learned bias.

We've already started using this feature here in the Support knowledge base. Now that we have total control, we're now heavily using the "Display article when there is only one recommended" feature. Hopefully this helps get you to the content you need faster whenever you click that **Help** link in the upper right of KnowledgeOwl.

As part of this change, we also made some major updates to our widget documentation, including a revamped Widget configuration & installation section.

Please give this new feature a try and let us know what you think!