

Designing with Free tools in an Open Community: experiences from the Fedora Design Team

Nicu Buculei & Martin Sourada: Fedora Design contributors
Libre Graphics Meeting, Brussels 2010

Who we are?



fedora Design Team
LEADERS DESIGN TEAM

- Founded in April 2006 (Fedora Core 6 release cycle)
- Started as Art Team, rebranded as Design Team in 2009
- Team leader: Máirín Duffy, our rock star
- We strongly believe in Fedora's 4 Foundations: Freedom, Friends, Features, First
- Established since Fedora 8



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Lesson Learned: You **can** do it in the community

- Fedora 7, Flying High: “voodoo”
- The large community: “we like the result but not the process”
- An important step into opening Fedora



What we do



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- Distro artwork (wallpapers, splashes)
- Website graphics, from layout design to banners
- Marketing and release materials: CD / DVD art, posters, One Page Release Notes, T-shirts, etc.
- Design service: icons, logos, hackergotchi, etc.
- Usability and interface design
- Side projects: Echo theme, comics, photography and more
- Spin: Fedora Design Suite
- Have fun, do cool stuff, be friends

What we use



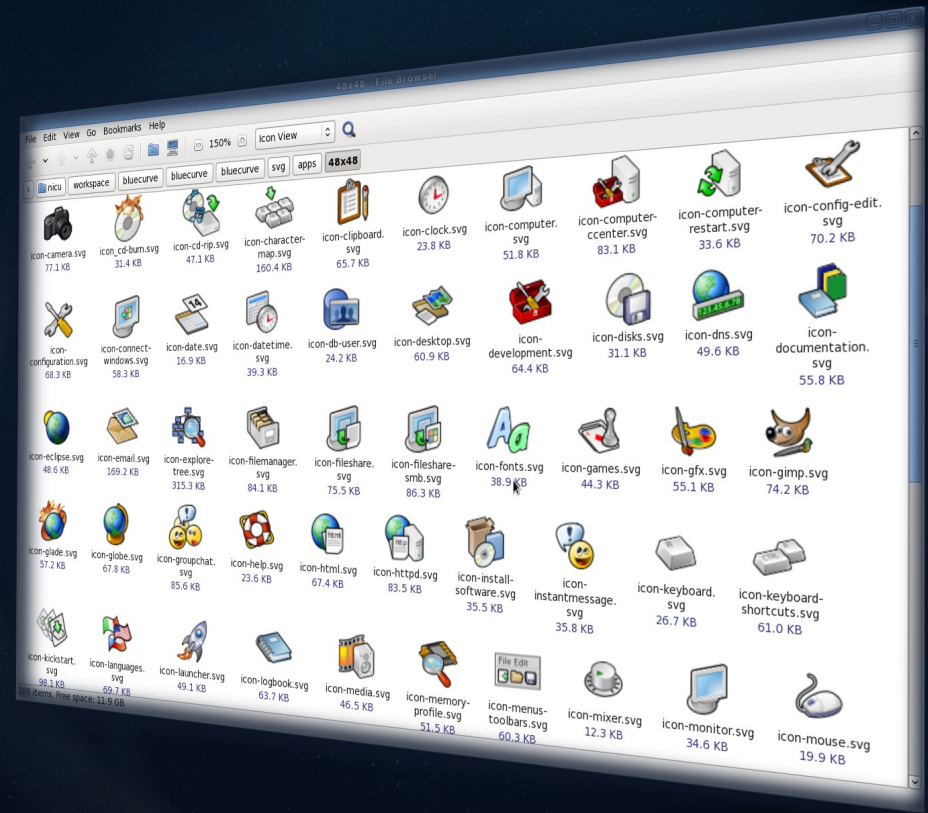
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- Inkscape: we **love** it
- GIMP: everyone's proficient
- Scribus: for printing
- Blender: limited in-house experience, trying to grow
- Little tools: Agave, ImageMagick etc.
- Looking forward to: MyPaint, Alchemy
- We don't **require** the use of Free tools, but encourage it
- But we **do require** free formats and source files
- Proud to showcase the Free Linux Desktop as a viable tool



Lesson Learned: Source files and free license is not enough

- Bluecurve: Linux icon theme made with vector graphics
- Free license (GPL), source available, bad file format
- One-man project, no specifications, no knowledge
- Replaced and abandoned. Echo?



Collaboration tools



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- Mailing list – the main communication channel
- Wiki – document and exchange
- IRC – not convenient when the team is spread around the world, trying to use it better
- Ticketing system (trac)
- Shared storage (ssh) - fedorapeople.org
- Blogs and aggregation
- Face to face meetings

Dreams




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Mockup 2: Project Details Screen

PROJECT [List My Projects](#) [List All Projects](#)

Fedora 13 Wallpaper



Fedora 13's default wallpaper should somehow reflect the release codename for Fedora 13: Goddard. Goddard was a rocket scientist. We need a nice visual concept that represents this theme and can serve as a nice default backdrop for Fedora.

SPECIFICATIONS
The final design will need to be available in the following sizes:

1. **Standard Size:** 2048x1536 pixels
2. **Widescreen Size:** 1920x1200 pixels
3. **4:3 Ratio Size:** 1280x1024 pixels

NEXT DEADLINE
Beta wallpaper due in **21 days** (30 Mar 2010).

DESIGNERS

- AI Spaceman
- George the Dog
- Sunflower Mary

COLLABORATORS


- Penny Penguin
- Pink Penelope

LAST UPDATED 4 HOURS AGO

PROJECT MANAGER Penny Penguin

TOP-RATED PROPOSAL
[Rocket Trails](#)

TIMELINE



DEC 2009 JAN 2010 FEB MAR APR 2010 MAY JUN

PROPOSALS

By Popularity By Alphabetical Order By Most Recently Updated [+ Create a proposal](#)

#1 Rocket Trails

10 Like this 2 Dislike this Last updated 4 hours ago

LEAD DESIGNER [George the Dog](#)

[View this proposal](#)

SUMMARY
The release codename for F13 is Goddard. Goddard was a rocket scientist. This wallpaper is meant to be an abstract interpretation of the trails rockets and other spacecraft leave in the sky... [Read More](#)

View 15 earlier events ...

[George the Dog](#) uploaded a new mockup version. Yesterday

[Rocket Trails Mockup Version 4](#)
"I added a little bit more color and texture to this one. What do you think?"
2 Like this 0 Dislike this Comment

[Penny Penguin](#) "Dude I like that purple. Gimme more!" 4 hours ago

Add your own comment ...

#2 ROCKET

5 Like this 1 Dislike this Last updated 2 days ago

LEAD DESIGNER [AI Spaceman](#)

[View this proposal](#)

SUMMARY
This is a literal representation of a rocket ship. It uses a vector-based / cell-shaded cartoon kind of style and is meant to be fun and playful... [Read More](#)

View 4 earlier events ...

[AI Spaceman](#) "What do you think we should do for the background?" 3 days ago

[Sunflower Mary](#) "Maybe try a pattern rather than a flat gradient?" 2 days ago

Add your own comment ...

#3

7 Like this 4 Dislike this Last updated 1 week ago

LEAD DESIGNER [Pink Penelope](#)

[View this proposal](#)

SUMMARY
so I'm just going to describe what should go here than write up actual example stuff ... [Read More](#)

View 4 earlier events ...

[AI Spaceman](#) "I'm the queen of France!" 3 days ago

[Sunflower Mary](#) "My spoon is too big!" 2 days ago

Add your own comment ...

■ <http://live.gnome.org/UsabilityProject/Whiteboard/DesignHub>

Release artwork process



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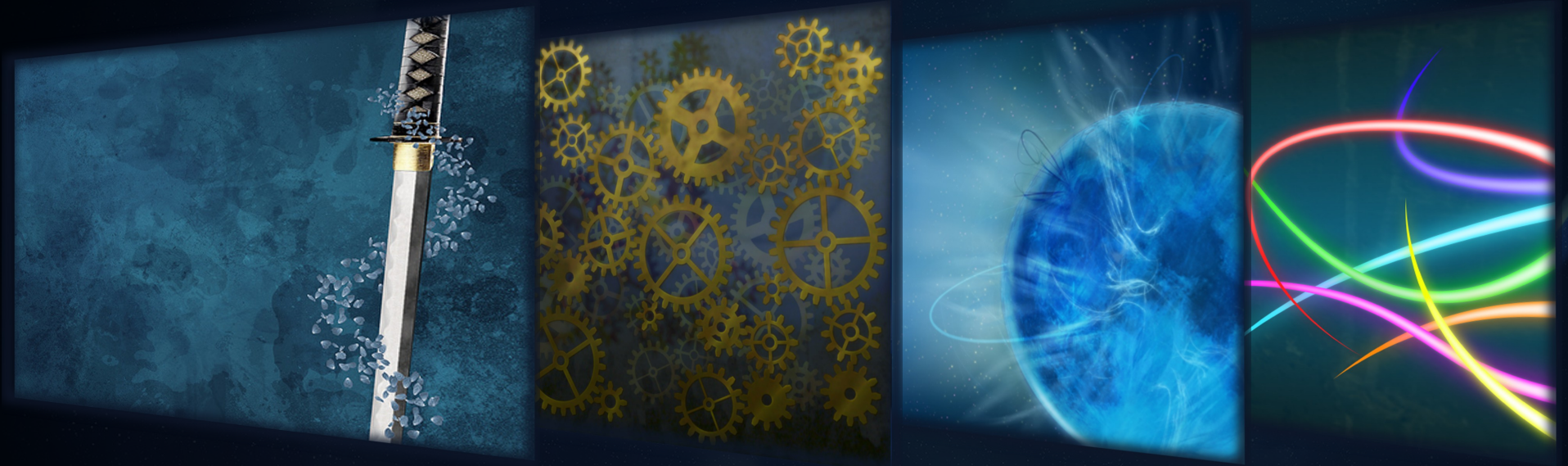
- 3 rounds process:
 - Gathering concepts
 - Selecting and improving
 - Final design
- Release early, release often
- Ideally done by Beta
- Other tasks waiting for it
- The key is cooperation



Lesson Learned: Drop the ego, teamplay



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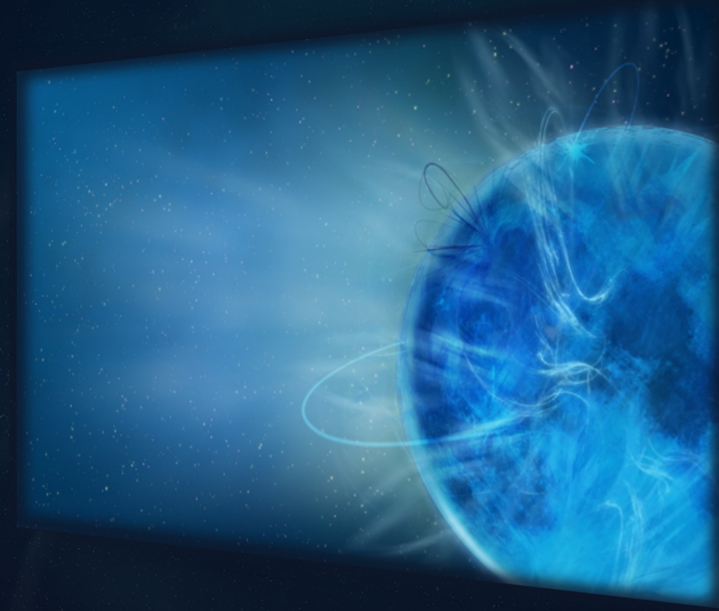
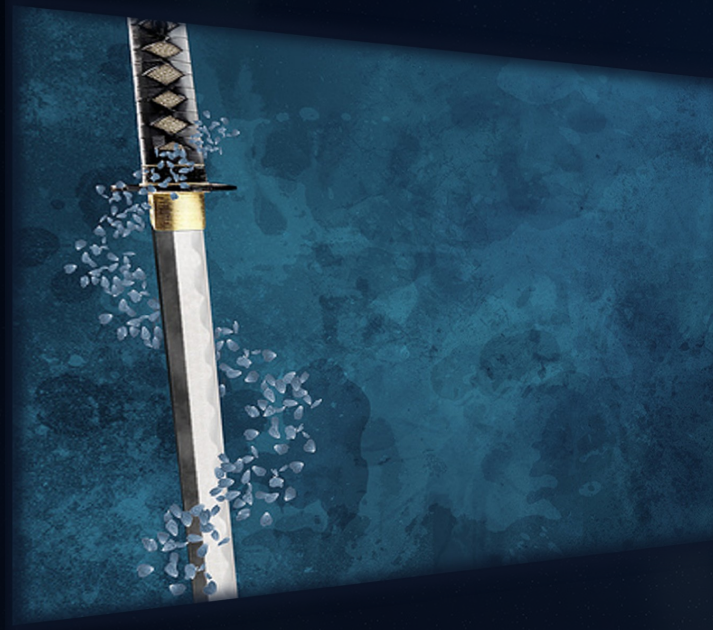


- Neon, Gears, InvinXible, Solar — nobody backed down
- The only solution: a community vote
- Unwanted fights, flamewars, unhappiness, community breackage
- Learn to play, the process was adjusted

Lesson Learned: Check your sources!



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- At the last minute discovered non-free art (photos and brushes) used
- Too late to withdraw from the voting process
- Solar won, the non-free images were replaced

Hot item: photography



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- Photos add a human touch
- Use on the website, release notes, posters, book
- Need signed **release forms**
- Freedom and privacy (release forms) somewhat incompatible
- Still debating, “freedom” is a Fedora foundation



<http://fedoraproject.org/wiki/User:Nicubunu> * <http://fedoraproject.org/wiki/User:Mso>