Annual Report
2008

GNOME™

Table of Contents

Letter from Stormy Peters

Stormy Peters is the GNOME Foundation Executive Director and has great experience in the industry and with the open source culture.

Hello GNOME Lovers!

GNOME's goal is to bring free and open source computing to everyone regardless of ability. I consider myself extremely lucky to have joined the project as executive director of the GNOME Foundation. It's a pleasure and a privilege to work with thousands of people dedicated to making free software available for everyone on desktops and mobile platforms. I don't think it's an exaggeration to say that GNOME technology is changing the world for many from smart phone users to kids using XO's.

At my very first GUADEC in 2001, I was greeted with "YOU'RE A GIRL!" This was shouted across a huge auditorium. Then when we went around the room and introduced ourselves one by one, everyone applauded - for each person. From day one I was part of the community, and I was in no way unique. The GNOME community continues to not only welcome new members but to actively seek them out and to invite them to come play. (Actually, I felt welcome from day -1, as I met a bunch of guys on the plane who turned out to also be going to GUADEC. I spent my first day in Copenhagen walking around with some guys from Red Hat and Eazel trying to stay awake through jetlag. I remember Havoc Pennington saying we just had to stay awake until dinner time.)

The spirit and dedication of the GNOME community to their goals of creating a free and open source software ... is unparalleled.

One of the most common questions I get asked is why did you take this job? I took this job because I love the people and mission of the GNOME community. The spirit and dedication of the GNOME community to their goals of creating a free and open source software desktop and their commitment to having fun and welcoming everyone is unparalleled. What is often seen as idealistic sits well with me - we are here to change the world. And we are doing that everyday. People are using free and open source software around the world, from the big enterprises of America to the small villa-

ges in Africa. All of these people are welcome in the GNOME community as both users and developers - they deserve world-class free and open source software.

GNOME has come a long ways in the past 7 years (I can't imagine doing individual rounds of introductions at our GUADEC 2008!) and GNOME is ideally situated to make huge advances forward in the next year.

Global Community. During the past year we've expanded our global reach, in addition to our annual conference in Europe, GUADEC, we now also have events in Latin America and Asia. In 2008 we held our first GNOME.Asia in Beijing. 300+ people attended and a Beijing GNOME Users' group was created as a result! At GNOME.Asia, I was approached by people asking all sorts of questions from "how do I get started in GNOME?" to "how do I find a job that will use my GNOME skills?" But by far my favorite question was translated for me in a room of 20+ women, "why are you worried about women in open source? There are lots of us!" We could all learn about women in computing from Asian countries. Latin America and the US also had lots of activity with Forum Brazil, Latin America Tour and the Boston Summit.

GNOME Mobile. GNOME Mobile is perhaps one of the most exciting areas at the moment. You've all seen the explosion of smartphones as well as netbooks and other mobile devices. GNOME Mobile provides a computing platform

for these devices that is not only 100% free and open source software but it's built on our existing GNOME software. That means that you get the power of your desktop computer on your handheld. This is bringing new products to all fields - at OSCON I got to see Labquest's Vernier, a scientific device for students - it lets them measure everything from water temperature to flow rates- and graph it right on their own device. And it's cheap enough for every student to use their own. Open source technologies like GNOME Mobile enable that type of innovation. The GNOME Mobile team continues to build more innovation and change into our existing software to make sure it meets mobile needs. Motorola, Intel, Texas Instruments and many others all use GNOME Mobile in their solutions. During 2009 we'll continue to add more technologies to GNOME Mobile, more members to the community and we'll see new products launch that use GNOME Mobile.

...we look forward to making sure they have the software they need to make a difference in the world.

Developer community. As I said earlier, the GNOME community is always looking to bring more people into the GNOME community. This year we had a number of successful programs that brought us great new features and code, but more importantly introduced new people to our community. We had 26 Google Summer of Code Students working on GNOME, mentored by some amazing developers. We put together the Accessibility Outreach Program to attract new developers and to add some features that are key to making sure GNOME enables computers to be usable and accessible to all regardless of their abilities. I got to meet a number of them at GUADEC and was impressed with their questions. It's good to see them still part of the community and blogging on Planet GNOME. Next year we plan to build on these as well as participate in programs like the FOSS Humanitarian project and launch new programs around getting business students involved in free software.

Corporate sponsorship. In addition to projects that bring in new GNOME developers and users, we also have had added new new corporate members to our advisory board, Motorola and Google. Both have been a part of the GNOME community for a while and are now strengthening their commitment. Motorola is a member of GNOME Mobile and uses GNOME technologies in their cell phones. Google has been a long time GNOME supporter through projects like Google Summer of Code, GNOME Accessibility Outreach and GUADEC sponsorship. We look forward to having their expertise on the

GNOME advisory board. With these two new corporate additions to its advisory board, the GNOME Foundation continues to strengthen its industry support and shows that the support for free and open source software is growing - especially in the mobile space with technologies like GNOME Mobile. The additional funds and resources will be used on programs that support GNOME's goal of universal access such as accessibility outreach programs, usability studies and internationalization efforts. We also added the Mozilla Foundation and Sugar Labs to our advisory board, two sister organizations that share our dedication to free software and internet and computing access for everyone.

Our existing sponsors contributed much to GNOME this year. For example, Red Hat has worked on many desktop technologies like Online Desktop, OpenSolaris ships with GNOME, Nokia funded the migration of the accessibility infastructure to D-Bus. Big Kudos to all of our sponsors for all the work they have enabled this year: Access, Canonical, Debian, FSF, HP, Google, IBM, Igalia, Imendio, Intel, Motorola, Mozilla Foundation, Nokia, Novell, OpenedHand, Red Hat, Software Freedom Law Center, Sugar Labs and Sun. In addition to funding salaries and our traditional events, they also funded several very successful hackfests and accessibility projects.

Speaking of universal access, did you know that Supersonic Imagine makes a scanner that detects breast cancer using GNOME technologies? Or how about One Laptop Per Child, the tremendously popular laptop for children in developing countries? The people, projects and products that are benefiting from GNOME's free and open source technologies are growing and we look forward to making sure they have the software they need to make a difference in the world.

You can read about all the accomplishments I've talked about and many more in the rest of this report. Please take the time to see the work we're proud of, use GNOME proudly and feel free to join us online!

Best,

Stormy Peters
Executive Director
GNOME Foundation

7

GNOME in 2008

The GNOME community has worked throughout 2008 to continue its efforts towards offering the best desktop and the best platform to develop applications

Offering the Latest Technologies

It has become a ritual over the years: in March and September of each year, a new stable branch of GNOME is released on the day according to the pre-established schedule. This allows users to have access to the latest features and bug fixes very quickly, developers to start using new libraries and technologies as soon as they appear promising, and distributors to rely on a known schedule that they know will be respected.

GNOME 2.22 offered important improvements in all parts of the stack. Users could enjoy Cheese, a new application to take photos or make videos using webcams, and apply fun effects on those photos and videos. Metacity, the GNOME window manager, also introduced a window compositing mode on capable platforms, which improves the user experience with drop shadows, live previews of windows or real transparency. The Anjuta IDE finally became part of the Developer Tools, successfully filling

a gap. And last but not least, GNOME 2.22 introduces GIO and GVFS for networked filesystems: this came as a replacement to GNOME-VFS, which was known to have several shortcomings. One of the most visible feature introduced by GVFS is a FUSE mountpoint that lets all applications access the remote files, even if the applications are not aware of GVFS.

After 2.22, the community worked hard for six months to offer to the users GNOME 2.24 in September. This release is the first one to include the GNOME Mobile development platform as an official release set. GNOME Mobile brings standard desktop components together to provide a core platform on which distributors and handheld manufacturers can build rich programming environments; it is at the heart of various mobile device platforms, including Maemo, the ACCESS Linux Platform, the LiMo reference platform, and Moblin. The 2.24 Desktop also offered numerous new features and changes, especially in the communication area: the Empathy ins-

tant messenger was included, which is the first step to a properly integrated instant messenging experience. The new version of Ekiga, the SIP audio/video conference client, was a major step forward, with a new interface, support for SIP presence and better video codecs support. Many other areas were also improved to help the user in his daily life; a good example of this is better support for connecting an external screen to the computer (e.g. a projector for giving presentations).

Of course, during the year, the GNOME stack evolved and different tasks clearly appeared. Many contributors pushed

to clean up the usage of old libraries, and many applications were therefore ported away from GNOME-VFS, libgnome, libgnomeui, etc. The future of GTK+ was discussed and a roadmap towards GTK+ 3.0 was prepared, the goal being to clean the library and prepare the way to new features that will make GTK+ even more attractive. GNOME 3.0 was also discussed and the release team has started working on a concrete plan to lead the project to a new major milestone.

New technologies developed around GNOME also star-

ted getting some traction, like PolicyKit. Its purpose is to provide a consistent way for applications to gain extra privileges; a good example of its usage is its integration in the clock applet to enable the user to easily change the current timezone, or the current date and time. The PulseAudio sound server also started being integrated in GNOME, which will make several new features possible.

Infrastructure Behind the Project

With hundreds of modules hosted by the GNOME project, the GNOME infrastructure can certainly be considered a critical piece in the workflow of our contributors. It's therefore logical to see it change over time and be adapted to the various needs.

The GNOME instance of bugzilla has had difficult times with some load issues and has been running an old version of the software. But there are now plans to start a migration to the latest version, and the sysadmins are keeping in mind the load issues as they think about how to improve our bug tracking system.

The Build Brigade worked hard on making continuous builds of GNOME a reality. Thanks to jhbuild integration and to the help of volunteers to set up a few clients, contributors can easily check what

is broken in svn trunk.

One of the most debated topic during 2008 certainly was the use of a DVCS (distributed version control system). It was covered in many threads and IRC discussions, but also during GUADEC and other events. John Carr worked on providing a complete mirror of the GNOME modules via bzr and git, and therefore people were able to actually test two of the main contenders and use them for their daily work. Behdad Esfahbod closed the year by organizing a survey about DVCS, in order to have some real data to analyze and to help the community decide the path forward.

Finally, translators were offered a gift at the very end of the year by Stéphane Raimbault and Claude Paroz, with the merge of damned-lies and vertimus. The former was already deployed by GNOME and generates statistics for all languages, helping track the status of translations and the string changes. Vertimus is a tool that was originally developed by the french translation team to improve the workflow inside a translation team: it enables contributors to know who is working on what, and what is the status of a proposed update to a translation. There are already plans to offer a web interface to commit the translations, which would make it possible to

contribute translations without having to know about a version control system.

Actions in the Accessibility World

The accessibility of GNOME is one aspect many contributors are very proud of. It also helps, with our work on usability and localization, to make the software we create truly usable by anyone.

Much work was done on the technical side. Among other examples, close cooperation with Mozilla has led to excellent accessibility support in Firefox 3 with the Orca screenreader. A vast number of applications also saw their support improved in a similar fashion. New support for mouse accessibility was introduced, adding various features like the ability to open the contextual menu with only one mouse button, or the ability to perform different types of clicks (e.g. single click, double click, context click, and dragging) without using a mouse button.

The Accessibility of GNOME is one aspect many contributors are proud of

Work on a new version of AT-SPI, which is an essential part of the accessibility stack, has also begun, the goal being to replace the use of CORBA and to move to D-Bus instead. This is consistent with the GNOME-wide goal to move away from CORBA to D-Bus, and to use only one inter-process communication mechanism.

And last but not least, the GNOME Foundation organised the "GNOME Outreach Program: Accessibility", with the help of the Mozilla Foundation, Canonical, Google and Novell. This program aimed to increase the awareness of the accessibility-related issues, especially in the context of computer applications, to encourage people to work on them and to improve the accessibility support in free software. Various tasks were proposed to participants, including a revamp of the accessibility-related documentation and the development of an accessibility testing strategy. Smaller tasks were also made available, like fixing minor accessibility bugs or providing new icons for accessibility themes. A new application called Mouse-Trap was created as part of this program and shows promising results: it enables mouse control, via head movements captured by a webcam.

Thanks to the hard work of the accessibility community, the GNOME project won a Lutèce d'Or prize during Paris Capitale du Libre: "GNOME Outreach Program: Accessibility" was awarded the best community-driven effort of the ye-

ar!

GNOME at Events

There was so much energy in the project in 2008 that there were more events than the previous years, especially thanks to the efforts to organize hackfests.

Four Foundation-sponsored hackfests occurred during the year. First, in March, around 30 hackers converged to Berlin (Germany) to participate in the first GTK+ hackfest. Sponsored by many companies, this hackfest was critical in having the right people meet to discuss the future of GTK+ and prepare the road towards GTK+ 3.0. A few months later, in September, a group of similar size also met in Berlin for a Desktop Search hackfest, to try to make this tricky area move forward. In October, around 20 people went to Boston (MA, USA) one week before the Boston Summit to think about the future of user experience in GNOME. This resulted in two main proposals: a new GNOME shell revisiting the panel and the window management, and a complete overhaul of the document management on the desktop. Finally, in November, a handful of cairo hackers went to Bolzano (Italy) to work together on the cairo library.

FOSDEM is generally one of the first important conferences in the year for the

GNOME community, and it was still true in 2008: with a booth animated by many volunteers and a devroom with technical talks, the GNOME community could not be ignored at FOSDEM in February. The GNOME t-shirt for this FOSDEM also introduced the now famous GNOME equation, with much success: it was quite common to meet people with this green t-shirt during the event. The project had therefore a highly visible presence in Brussels (Belgium), and the success of the first GNOME Beer Event that attracted people from other communities confirmed this.

July saw several hundreds of GNOME contributors go to Istanbul (Turkey) to attend GUADEC, the annual GNOME conference. This event is always a place of celebration for the community, with many friends being able to at last see each other again or live music from a band made of GNOME contributors; but it's also a time in the year where a huge amount of work is realized in relatively little time: talks inspire contributors, decisions can be made much faster, and people are writing down many plans for the next months of development. GUADEC is also where, each year, one person gets recognized for his contributions to the project with the GNOME Pants award: This year, Olav Vitters was chosen for this prize, because of his numerous contributions on bugzilla, in the release team and also in the infrastructure team. Finally, the release team proposed an initial plan for GNOME 3, creating some excitement within the community.

The traditional Boston Summit was held in the MIT in Cambridge (MA, USA) in the middle of October. Many technical topics were discussed, with many people interested in GObject introspection and accessibility, for example. The ideas developed during the user experience hackfest the week before were also presented. The social event was also a good occasion for the contributors to play pool. Or for some, to learn how to play!

2008 was also the first year of a new event, GNOME.Asia, which was organized at the end of October in Beijing (China). The community had long seen that there were not enough important GNOME events in Asia, and a team of people decided to step up to change this. The conference was organized with the help of the Foundation, but also of various industry leaders. It succeeded in bringing together GNOME users and developers, and a large set of topics were debated, ranging from very technical ones (input methods, for example) to topics accessible to newcomers (introductions to various technologies). Everyone

had in mind the will to improve the GNOME community in Asia, and make it even more active than it currently is. And to make sure that there couldn't be any doubt about the quality of this event, a tour trip to the Great Wall was organized.

The local groups also participated in a vast number of other events, but also went on to organize some events themselves like Involucrate+GNOME (Lima, Perú), Fórum GNOME (Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil) and Día GNOME (Valparaiso, Chile).

Teams in Movement

The GNOME community is always moving, with newcomers joining, contributors leaving to focus on other priorities, old friends coming back. This continuous movement is a good sign that the project is alive and well.

The biggest highlight in this area is probably the fact that Stormy Peters joined the GNOME Foundation as Executive Director in July, at the very beginning of GUADEC. Stormy has already brought a lot of energy to the Foundation and is working hard at building stronger links with the industry, as well as helping the GNOME community to achieve its vision.

The Advisory Board of the GNOME Foundation continued to attract new members, with Mozilla Foundation arriving at the very beginning of the year, followed by Google, Motorola and Sugar Labs. Those new members represent well the diversity of the Advisory Board, composed of both non-profit organizations who share a philosophy and goals, and industry key players.

A vote in 2007 approved the decision that the next Foundation Board would be elected for 18 months to have the following board be able to meet quickly after being elected at GUADEC. Hence, no elections were held in 2008. But in December, Jeff Waugh decided to focus his time on other projects and Diego Escalante Urrelo has been appointed to the empty seat: Diego was a candidate in the elections in 2007, and his energy and dedication made him an obvious choice.

The release team itself saw quite some changes, with former release manager Elijah Newren stepping down from the team and being replaced by Lucas Rocha. A few months later, Matthias Clasen of GTK+ fame filled the empty spot left by the departing John Palmieri. And in November, since everybody was impressed by his continuous dedication of tracking latest dependencies and build

failures, Frédéric Péters was logically invited to be the latest member.

Finally, a GNOME Mobile stewardship team was announced by the Foundation Board. Composed of Paul Cooper, Dave Neary and Stormy Peters, the team aims to facilitate the creation of a strategy around GNOME Mobile and to work on communication for this part of the GNOME project.

Reaching Out to New People

Thanks to Google, GNOME could participate again in the Google Summer of Code. This made it possible for 30 students to work with the GNOME community, and lead to various successful projects: the Anjuta IDE gained new features (like a git plugin, and better integration with glade) and the F-Spot user interface got improved, for example. GNOME also sponsored a project for Avahi, the widely used project to handle service discovery on local networks.

GNOME also participated in a similar program targetted at high school students, the Google Highly Open Participation Contest, where students were able to start contribution on all areas of GNOME, from bug fixing, to translations and documentation. This was the first edition of this contest, and it was a good opportunity to have young students learn about free software in general, and GNOME in our case, and to have them start being involved. Some of the participants are still in the community today!

Getting new contributors to participate in GNOME is of course important, but the project was also blessed with many new users thanks to the emerging netbook market. Several companies are indeed offering GNU/Linux-based preloads that are using GNOME as the user interface. This is certainly a big success for the project as it's a recognition of the hard work done by the community on the code, on usability, on accessibility, on translations, on documentation, and in all the other areas!

GNOME Mobile

More time with GNOME.

This year has been eventful in the GNOME Mobile world, to say the least. We have seen new adoption of the GNOME platform in mobile and embedded devices, and increasing momentum from GNOME Mobile participants. We have seen new releases of core GNOME Mobile technologies, and the appearance on the landscape of some high-quality components which will be without doubt valuable additions to the platform. In addition, we've seen some growth in other mobile technologies. While we had hoped everyone would use GNOME Mobile, we are happy to see the industry and the market place grow. As more and more people use mobile technologies in unique ways we are confident they will see the value of free and open source software solutions like GNOME Mobile and will join our growing community of vendors.

Some of the alternative solutions are already moving towards GNOME Mobile. The year started with a bang, as LiPS, the Linux Phone Standards group, an industry group which aimed to define a set of standard interfaces for mobile phone application development, folded up shop and joined forces with the LiMo foundation. LiMo aims to provide a reference platform of Linux for mobile phone manufacturers. Several components of the GNOME Mobile platform, including GTK+ and GStreamer, have been included as required components of the LiMo R2 platform. This is a great boost to the platform as it gives them solid working technologies to build on, and we should start seeing the first R2 phones in early 2009.

Moblin, the mobile Linux edition from Intel which targets netbooks and other small form computers, and a significant contributor and user of GNOME technologies, had its second release this year, and with it, a significant announcement - Intel had agreed to acquire OpenedHand, specialists in mobile free software application development, and developers of Matchbox, Poky Linux, Clutter, GUPnP and Pimlico.

Ubuntu Mobile and Ubuntu Netbook

Edition also had releases this year that included GNOME Mobile. When the OLPC project had a change of direction, widespread support of Sugar enabled the charismatic Walter Bender, former CTO of OLPC, to spin off Sugar Labs as a new non-profit to develop the innovative Sugar user interface built on top of the GNOME platform.

These events have brought with them several new participants in GNOME Mobile, and we have seen representatives from Azingo, Motorola, Purple Labs, Canonical, Sugar Labs and LiMo contributing on various GNOME forums this year, alongside long-time contributors like Igalia, Fluendo and Imendio.

Clutter

The prize for star software newcomer of the year goes to Clutter, which has taken the GNOME and GNOME Mobile worlds by storm since its initial releases in 2006. Clutter is a library for creating fast, visually rich and animated graphical user interfaces. It uses OpenGL or OpenGL ES for rendering, but gives the developer a really simple API to use. With integration of some cool stuff like the Box2D physics engine, Clutter has been making waves with impressive demos of iPhone-like functionality. Clutter is now included in the latest Maemo platform, in moblin v2 and in Ubuntu Mobile, and work is underway to enable further integration into the GNOME platform.

Tracker

There are many candidates for runner-up. Tracker has come of age this year, making its way into the Maemo platform. Tracker is an object store and file indexer which stores metadata about files and other objects like emails, and allows fast retrieval. GeoClue, a library which makes supporting geolocalisation in your application easy, has made an appearance in a released device, the Garmin Nüvi 860, and looks set to become a more integrated part of the GNOME platform soon.

Others you might not think of

The year brought other new device releases. Nokia brought out a WiMax edition

of its N810 personal internet tablet. Bug Labs released a new version of the BUG, a collection of easy-to-use electronic modules that snap together to build any gadget you can imagine, with GNOME Mobile-based Poky Linux at its heart. And showing that GNOME in devices does not necessarily mean small devices, French company Supersonic Imagine brought a GNOME-based breast cancer scanner, the Aixplorer, to market. It's applications like this that bring home the potential power of a completely free software platform.

The GNOME Mobile software platform has advanced greatly this year from some key contributions. This year, everyone benefited from the work which was done by Tommi Komulainen and others in the Nokia team in getting their performance fixes, and a major new feature input method, released in the standard GTK+ release. Nokia has also been pushing to get work which was done in Hildon integrated into GTK+ where it is useful. During the year, Tommi left Nokia, and joined litl, a new company which is working on GNOME based technologies - among the work which litl have released this year is Gjs ("Geejays"), GNOME Javascript bindings. This work should enable easlier integration of web-based content into GNOME. Bob

Murphy of ACCESS tuned in at a distance during GUADEC to show off some work that he and his team have been doing with dynamically readjusting the GNOME desktop with XRandr in mobile devices with an accelerometer, and he is working to get that work integrated into GTK+ soon.

While its members make progress with GNOME Mobile and devices that use it, GNOME Mobile is still a relatively new group and participants are still working on the best way to collaborate and co-ordinate efforts in mobile-related work in the GNOME platform. We have had several meetings this year - in Austin, Texas during the Linux Foundation Collaboration Summit, during GUADEC in Istanbul, and again at the Boston Summit in October - and myself, Stormy Peters and Paul Cooper have been talking regularly with participants to try to figure out how we can get high quality development and co-operation, focused on mobile and embedded platforms.

We have made great progress in the past couple of years, and the value of the platform has proven itself. GNOME has been good at attacking problems from top to bottom, and addressing problems at every level of the platform from the kernel through Xorg right up to the

user interface. To address the specific needs of mobile applications in terms of performance, power management and memory usage, all of the GNOME Mobile participants will need to apply this same thinking to the GNOME stack.

Using existing GNOME technologies, GNOME Mobile is a project to make GNOME technologies effective for mobile devices. GNOME Mobile provides the infrastructure for discussing the needs of mobile technologies and making changes to technologies in order to support mobile solutions. GNOME Mobile members include individuals working on GNOME technologies to companies providing mobile solutions built on them.

Roll on 2009.

Interview with Willie Walker

Willie Walker is the GNOME Accessibility Project leader. Dave Neary interviewed Willie about the state of Accessibility technologies in GNOME and the GNOME Outreach Program: Accessibility.

Can you describe yourself & what you do for GNOME a little?

I've been working on Accessibility for nearly 20 years, with all of that being focused on platforms using the X Windows System. Some of the early work I did was to develop AccessX in collaboration with Mark Novak at the TRACE Center. AccessX, which is still in use today and is now part of the XKB standard, provides keyboard enhancements (StickyKeys, SlowKeys, RepeatKeys, etc.) for people with physical impairments. In the very early 1990's, I also helped create the first service oriented architecture for accessibility, RAP (the Remote Access Prototol). This work was done in collaboration with Georgia Tech. All of the ideas carried forward into modern accessibility infrastructure designs such as that seen in the Java Accessibility API (which I helped create) and the AT-SPI (which was based on the Java Accessibility work). I also led two open source projects around speech -- FreeTTS is an open source speech synthesis engine and Sphinx-4 is an open source speech recognition system.

These days, I'm focused mostly on the Orca screen reader project, but I'm also acting as the person to help coordinate and organize accessibility activities across GNOME. It's a very busy job.

Can you explain what accessibility is, and why it's important to GNOME users?

Our main goal with accessibility is to make a platform where people with disabilities have equal and compelling access to the graphical desktop. This is important for many reasons, the most important of which is that it is the right thing to do. As we see with projects such as Dogtail, LDTP, and Strongwind, all of which use the AT-SPI infrastructure, we also see how the accessibility support can be much farther reaching. A stale cliche we use to describe this effect is "electronic curbcuts." In the physical world, sidewalks have ramps on them that cut through the curb to make a smooth transition to the street. While these curbcuts were for wheelchairs,

they also benefit others such as those pushing strollers.

What exactly are you announcing with the accessibility outreach project, and why do you consider it significant?

The outreach program is a way for community members to test the accessibility waters by doing their choice of several long term and short term tasks. The long term tasks are on the order of 6 months, and the short term tasks are on the order of 2 weeks. The tasks were chosen by the GNOME accessibility community as being some of the most important work needed and include areas where developers and non-developers alike can participate.

The significance of this effort is that accessibility is being recognized at the board level. When I started working on accessibility 20 years ago, it was always a game of "Mother May I?" and continual negotiation with developers and management. Accessibility was always viewed as that once-in-a-while special interest segment you see on the nightly news -- sappy music playing in the background with the narrator using words such as "bravery," "overcoming hardships" and other content-free ilk meant to focus on the disability and tug at people's heartstrings.
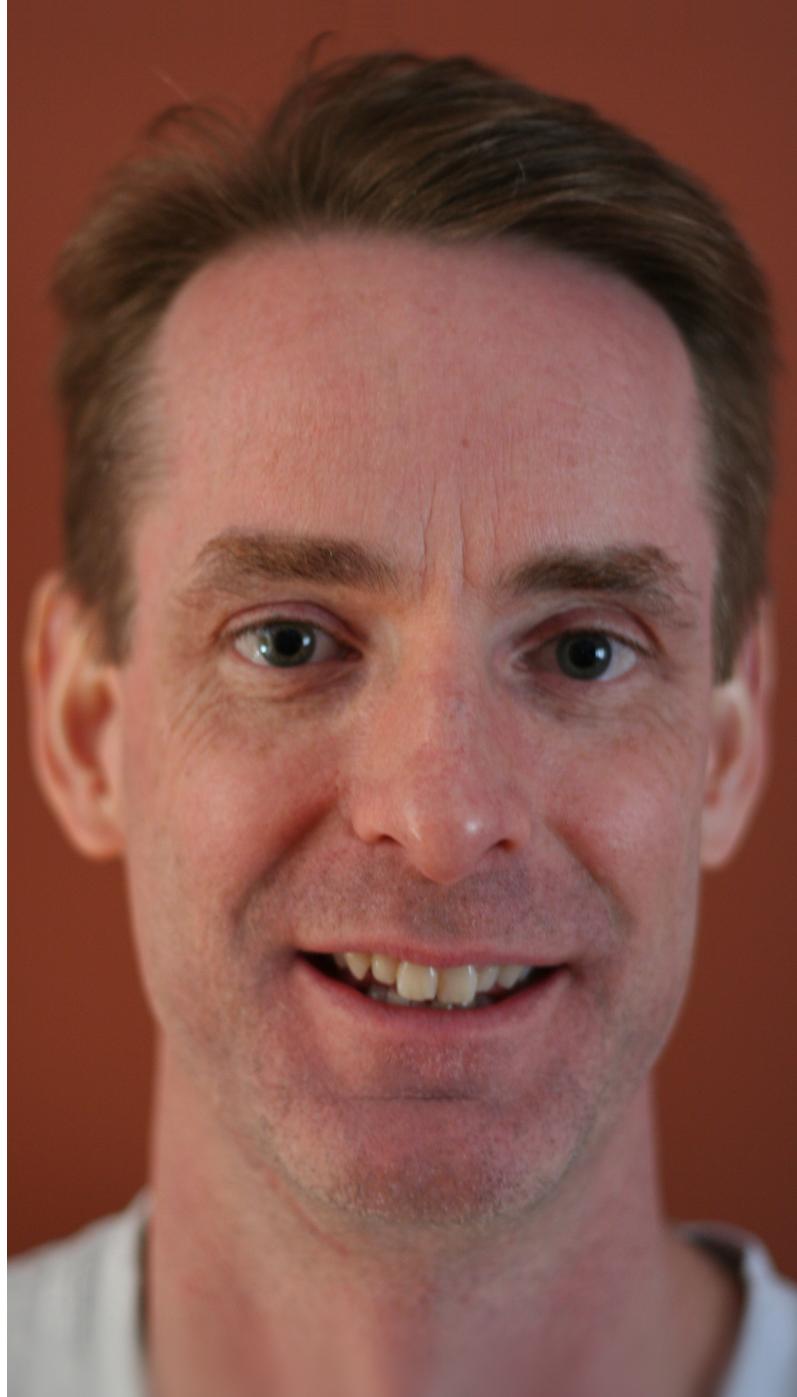
Over the years, I've seen the mentality change. There are still those special interest segments with sappy music narrated by some teary eyed tart, but we're also seeing people making accessible design part of their normal everyday thinking. People "get it." We see companies like Sun Microsystems supporting leadership roles in creating and building accessible design into platforms such as GNOME. We see accessibility having an impact on the decisions being made to procure and deploy software. We see mainstream developers incorporate accessibility considerations into their applications. We see increased understanding that it is about independence, efficiency, and productivity for everyone.

So, "GNOME Outreach Program: Accessibility" represents more exposure to more people, especially people who will "get it" and have the ability to make a difference.

What results are you expecting from the initiative?

I'm expecting that accessibility awareness will grow within the community, that we will get more developers to include accessibility considerations in their daily designs and work, and that we will get some really important work done in the process.

Can you perhaps give an overview of existing GNOME technology for accessibility, describing what the target audience is, and how it helps?

[1] is a good spot to start for the target users. The underlying AT-SPI infrastructure, which is used by many of the assistive technologies, is discussed at [2].

From the base platform perspective, GNOME has:

Built in keyboard navigation. This allows people to use the desktop and its applications without needing the mouse. This is very important for users who cannot use the mouse.

AccessX keyboard enhancements. AccessX features allow people to use the keyboard who may not otherwise be able to do so. For example, the StickyKeys feature of AccessX allows people who can only type with one finger to do chording operations such as logically holding down a modifier while pressing another key.

[1] http://live.gnome.org/Accessibility/Users
[2] http://live.gnome.org/GAP/AtkGuide

Theming. The theming support of GNO-ME allows people to select the default fonts, colors, etc. Built into GNOME are themes for people with visual impairments who might need themes such as high contrast and large print.

Assistive technologies. When the base platform support above is not enough, assistive technologies provide additional means for interacting with the desktop. These include:

• GOK - the GNOME Onscreen Keyboard. GOK provides people with the ability to interact with the desktop via devices such as switches (e.g., a user can make some movement to open/close a switch) and/or pointer manipulation devices (e.g., the user has hardware to allow them to turn head movements into mouse pointer movements on the screen).

• Dasher - Dasher is a predictive text entry tool for people who have pointer manipulation devices. With Dasher, we find that people are able to enter text at speeds much higher rates than they otherwise would be able to.

• Orca - Orca is a screen reader for people with visual impairments. Through customizable combinations of speech, braille, and magnification, users can access the desktop through non-visual means.

• MouseTweaks - MouseTweaks is new for GNOME 2.22 and is for people who have pointer manipulation devices. The main application provides dwell-clicking (i.e., you hover the pointer over something for a period of time) which simulates different mouse clicks without using physical buttons and a delay-click feature which opens context menus by holding the left mouse button for a specified amount of time.

There are definitely areas for improvement, such as better support for learning disabilities. The Orca team is currently investigating features to incorporate into Orca to help with this. These features include highlighting text as it is being spoken, providing the ability to speak the word under the pointer, allowing the speech output to be customized more for the visual user, etc.

GNOME around the world

Around the world, GNOME users and developers gather together in their own communities to spread the word about our project. Here is a quick look at some of their activities from 2008.

Spain

Grouped under the GNOME Hispano umbrella, Spanish users and developers have had a great year of activities and were recognized for their efforts. We began the year with the 5th GUADEC-ES (the Spanish version of GUADEC) which was held in Fuenlabrada at Universidad Rey Juan Carlos on July 3-4. Sixty users and developers were present to discuss topics from innovation to developing with GNOME libraries.

Later on, the Polinux user group from Valencia invited GNOME Hispano, for the second time, to collaborate on the organization of GUADEMY (a joint conference for Spanish GNOME and KDE developers). The conference attendees included hackers from outside Spain and is shaping up to be a big event for project coordination and collaboration.

During its many years of existence, the group has been recognized and awarded for their many achievements. This year they received a bunch more: the Navegantes de Hoy award given by spanish internet users and the Iniciativa Focus' Awards to Conoci-

miento Libre.

As you might know, in 2009 GNOME Hispano will be, for the third time, supporting the GUADEC organization since the next yearly GNOME meeting will be held in Gran Canaria, Spain together with the annual KDE conference, Akademy.

Brazil

Being the biggest country in Latin America, the work of GNOME Brazil is not easy.

In April, GNOME Brazil was present in FISL - the biggest free software conference in Latin America. As always, the GNOME booth was raided by people wanting to join the community by helping or learning more about the project.

During the year, Jorge Pereira and Jonh Wendell, among others, travelled throughout Brazil giving talks and workshops on GNOME topics. Vicente Aguiar presented an interesting article about the GNOME Project for the 13th National Association of Research in Administration Meeting.

To close the year of activities, hackers and contributors from Brazil and some others from Latin America met in Foz do Iguaçu for the Fifth Fórum GNOME held in Latinoware 2008. It was one of the stops in the GNOME Latin America Tour. GNOME Brazil's hero Izabel Valverde was crucial for coordinating with Latinoware to bring more GNOME contributors from around the continent to the conference.

This year the Brazilian translation team saw improvements in their workforce and workflow thanks to new volunteers and new tools. And to top all, there are a bunch of proud Brazilians that just joined the Foundation: Vladimir Melo, Licio Fonseca, Fábio Nogueira and Leonardo Fontenelle.

Chile

During 2008, GNOME Chile grew as a community. People who attended GNOME events were not only attendants; they felt part of the community. This growth speaks well of the health of our community.

The number of FLOSS-related conferences has grown in the last year in Chile. GNOME Chile was represented at almost all of them with speakers and/or a booth.

In March, a group of Chilean contributors were kindly invited as speakers to the event Involucrate+, which was held in Lima, Peru. It was a great opportunity to spread the word about the GNOME project, share experiences, and meet developers and enthusiasts from different places and projects.

In April, GNOME Chile participated in the Festival Latinoamericano de Instalación de Software Libre (Santiago, Curicó, and Concepción) with talks about the project and how to get involved in both Free Software development and the GNOME Community.

In September, contributors from different cities across the country gave talks about GNOME during Freedom Software Day.

In October, GNOME Chile had a booth at the main Linux Conference in Chile (9º Encuentro Linux), and also gave several talks about GNOME as preamble of the Día de GNOME (GNOME Day).

In 2008, the GNOME Day --part of Latin American Tour-- was held in the beautiful

city of Concepción. It was a great event, with the happiness in the air. It was not only a chance to meet new people, sharing experience, knowledge, and motivation, but also to discover new gems in the community and, last but not least, the beginning of new contributors of the Spanish translation team.

It was a progressive conference, starting with talks about community and getting involved in different projects (art, translation, bugsquad, development), but also with small talks given by newcomers in GNOME Chile and finishing with more technical and specific topics.

At the end of October, a couple of Chilean contributors traveled to Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil, to give talks in the Fórum do GNOME which was en event part of Latinoware and Latin American Tour.

Perú

Trying to foster the involvement of new contributors to free software projects, the team of Involucrate.org asked the Foundation for the chance to have a meeting of GNOME hackers and contributors in early March at Lima.

The event gathered a good number of volunteers, attendees, and local hackers from other projects and was a great place to meet and discuss different projects and ideas.

Later on during the year, two new GNOME

contributors, Sergio Infante and Juan Rojas, started to meet to work together in bug triaging, translations and patching. Still on the first stages of formation, they are already planning to have frequent meetings to hack together and help others join the community.

GNOME Latin America Tour

Planned since the beginning of the year, hackers from Perú, Chile, and Brazil crafted a project to spread the word about GNOME around the continent in all the big conferences they could find. This year they arranged big meetings during October: Encuentro Linux and Día GNOME in Chile, and Latinoware and Fórum GNOME in Brazil.

Thanks to the Foundation's support and local communities' coordination with the organizers of Encuentro Linux and Latinoware, we were able to travel contributors to meet, plan and... party :-).

Because there is no better way to get closer to each other than trying to survive in foreign countries or new cities, lots of new friendships and planning took place, from which we hope will bear fruit soon.

China

Hosting the first ever GNOME.Asia summit, the Chinese GNOME community started its

activity on the right foot. Ranked as one of the top three FOSS conferences in China by its government for 2008, the summit has already created a lot of expectancy for its next edition which will be held in India.

The Beijing group, known as the Beijing-GUG, meet every month to chat about their favorite desktop. They train each other to get involved in GNOME with an internal mentor-student program where Accessibility related projects are getting a special focus.

Belgium, France & Switzerland

The GNOME-FR community was active in various events during the year, with booths at Solutions Linux in January (Paris), at the RMLL in July (Mont de Marsan), and the

JDLL in October (Lyon), among others. Due to popular demand, some stickers were printed for Solutions Linux and given away, and of course some t-shirts were available for people.

Many talks were also delivered during these conferences: Dave Neary explained what accessibility is and how GNOME is working on this topic during the RMLL and the JDLL; Frederic Peters organized a workshop during the JDLL to introduce people to the GNOME development process; Dodji Seketeli presented the Nemiver debugger at the JDLL; and Vincent Untz gave an in-depth review of the release management in GNOME to RMLL attendees.

GNOME-FR also applied for the Lutèce d'Or award, which is organized as part of Paris Capitale du Libre. The application was specifically about the "GNOME Outreach Program: Accessibility" initiative, explaining the various issues related to accessibility and why accessibility should get more visibility. The organizers recognized this effort from GNOME and rewarded the project with the award for the best community-driven effort.
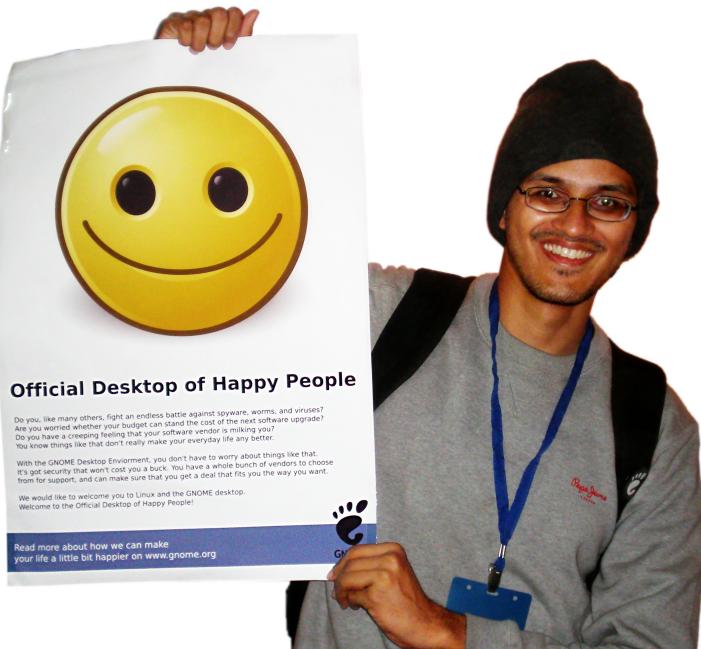
While not a French-speaking event, FOSDEM (Brussels, in February) has a special place in the heart of many GNOME-FR members. That is why the GNOME presence there was mainly prepared by GNOME-FR. The event itself was handled by the whole community, with people from many different countries manning the GNOME booth. With a widely acclaimed t-shirt introducing the GNOME equation, the booth attracted many people. Also, available were some small white and black GNOME badges. The devroom had a full schedule of talks, which were well-received by the audience. Also this FOSDEM was the first one to see a GNOME Beer Event organized on Saturday evening: all the GNOME community that was in Brussels went there to discuss a wide range of topics, and was joined by many other FOSDEM attendees.

India

The Indian community had a special year for l10n, taking the Kannada language from 8% to 75% and Marathi to 97%. GNOME

was present with talks and a workout project (Profiling GNOME with DTrace) at FOSS.IN, India's biggest Free Software conference. Also a Beagle hackfest was held at FOSSKriti, together with some talks and general GNOME presence.

Looking forward to 2009, the Indian team is preparing translation sprints for Indic languages to increase GNOME outreach.

Turkey

Putting together a big number of volunteers and ideas, GNOME Turkey held the annual GNOME meeting, GUADEC, in the beautiful city of Istanbul. GUADEC 2008 was really cool, as every year, and the GUADEC team made sure everyone had a great time. Thanks to all the people that helped the organization, GUADEC 2008 was a huge success!

Germany, Italy, United Kingdom & Netherlands

This year, Berlin was the scenario for the GTK+ hackfest where hackers from all around Europe and the world got together to discuss the future of GTK+ and other technologies. Among the biggest results was the draft of the GTK+ 3.0 roadmap, which is now slowly materializing into something concrete.

Some Italian hackers and people from all around the world met and got the opportunity to work together at the SpeckHackFest prior to the South Tyrolean Free Software Conference. The topic of the hackfest was Cairo, while the SFSCon closed the week with general public talks, concentrating on promotion and spreading the word about free software. The hackfest was kindly put together by Daniel Siegel, the maintainer of Cheese.

In the old and charming city of London, GNOME users and developers held a good number of meetings to get to know each other and discuss their favourite desktop. While you can't just live from having beers with your fellow GNOMErs, they took care of the GNOME booth at Linux Live Expo in London, which ran for 3 days, spreading the word and -even better- the cool feeling of being part of the GNOME community.

The GNOME-NL team had a lot of translation work done this year, having two Dutch vertaalspurt (translation sprint). The result of this work is a very healthy Dutch translation of your favorite desktop.

Foundation Finances

The GNOME Foundation collects donations from companies and individuals and spends the money on developing the GNOME desktop, development platform, and mobile technologies.

Income

In 2008, the GNOME Foundation raised roughly $290,000, over 90% of which came from our corporate sponsors. As we move in to 2009, we are hoping to diversify our revenue stream, starting with a new Friends of GNOME program that allows people to subscribe to support GNOME for $10/month. We encourage GNOME fans to sign up for this program, especially as the economy is affecting our corporate sponsor´s ability to give more.

2008 income came from the following sources:
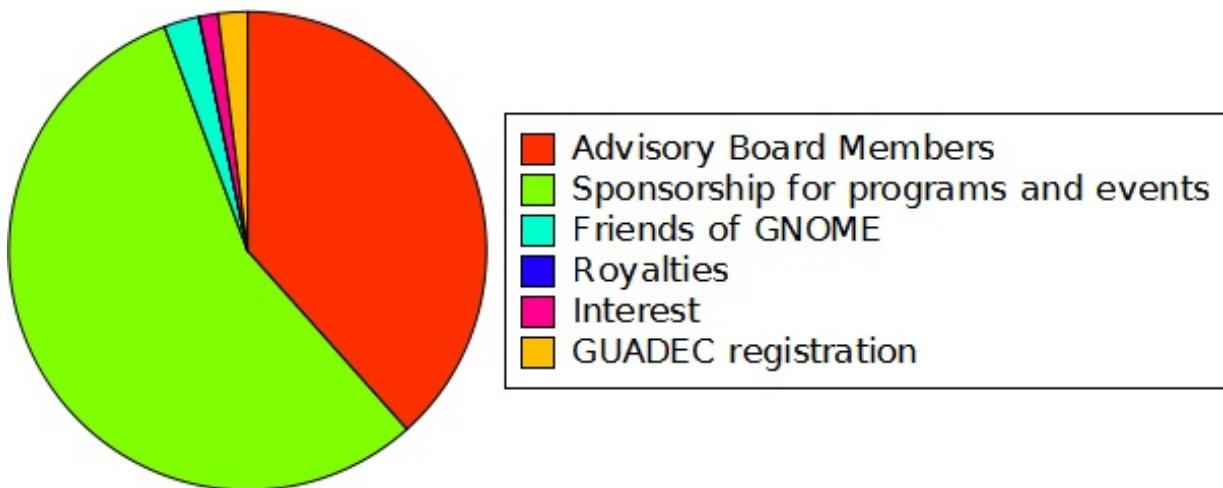
```
Advisory Board Members    $110,000
Sponsorship for programs and
events                    $160,344
Friends of GNOME          $6843
Royalties                 $68
Interest                  $3664
GUADEC registration       $5670
```

The sponsorship for programs and events was primarily for GUADEC, the Accessibility Outreach Program, Google Summer of Code and the GTK+ hackfest.

Our income breaks down by sponsoring company in the following way. This chart does not include GUADEC sponsorship. Also note

Legend:
- Advisory Board Members
- Sponsorship for programs and events
- Friends of GNOME
- Royalties
- Interest
- GUADEC registration

that some of our sponsoring companies gave quite a bit directly to events, like Nokia fully funded a hackfest.


We spent our income helping bring existing developers together to plan for the future of GNOME, introduce GNOME to new developers and to meet with users. Of particular significance in 2008 was the GTK+ hackfest and Accessibility outreach program. We believe they delivered significant value to the GNOME project and community. Also in 2008, we had our first ever GNOME.Asia which not only sparked GNOME efforts in Asia but also ended up with a surplus of their own to start planning GNOME.Asia 2009.

Most of our budget is spent on conferences, travel for developers to conferences, and staff salaries.

Access	$10000.00
Canonical	$20000.00
Google	$30000.00
IBM	$10000.00
Intel	$10000.00
Motorola	$5000.00
Nokia	$10000.00
Novell	$10000.00
Red Hat	$13000.00
Sun Microsystems	$10000.00
Igalia	$5000.00
Imendio	$5000.00
OpenedHand	$5000.00
Mozilla	$10000.00

Expenses

Our spending in 2008 breaks down as follows:
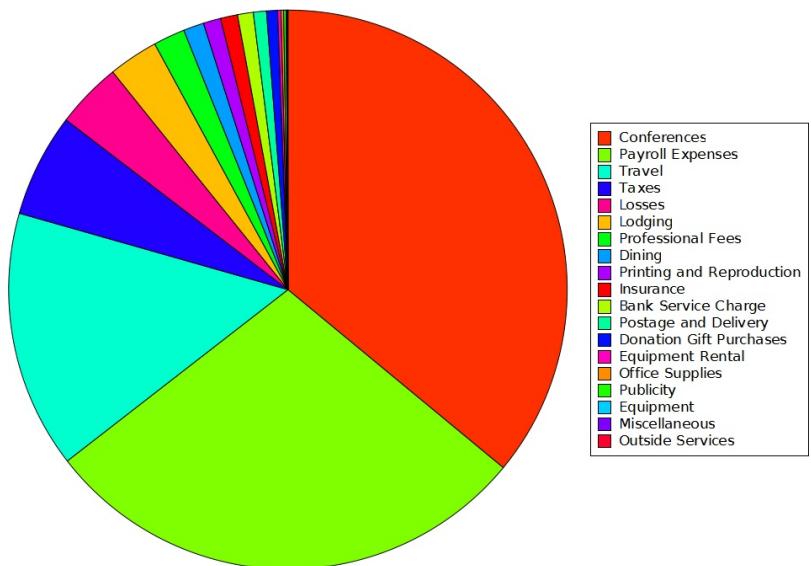
Conferences	$94315.64
Payroll Expenses	$74733.96
Travel	$39063.81
Taxes	$15681.37
Losses	$10000.00
Lodging	$7556.20
Professional Fees	$4795.35
Dining	$3119.53
Printing and Reproduc.	$2651.83
Insurance	$2587.48
Bank Service Charge	$2382.42
Postage and Delivery	$1981.39
Donation Gift Purchases	$1670.87
Equipment Rental	$517.50
Office Supplies	$391.62
Publicity	$383.40
Equipment	$103.46
Miscellaneous	$100.00
Outside Services	$50.00

While we are hoping to grow our revenue significantly in 2009 in order to expand our efforts on both the mobile space and new developer and user outreach, the economy might affect new sponsors' ability to join our Foundation as well as existing sponsors´ ability to fund more events.

The GNOME Foundation also has a surplus that we intend to start spending in 2009 at the advice of our accountant. We are also hoping to raise significantly more money from new sponsors, our Friends of GNOME program and grants.

2008 Donors

These generous people have donated to the Friends of GNOME program during 2008.

Victor Cortes Abad
Susan Roelofs
Alessio Bolognini
Henning Bitsch
Tim Scheit
John Fromm
Glen Shennan
Charles French
Jayce Vaidyan
Soren Impey
Antoine Voizard
Martin Raißle
Kamil Páral
Mark Noda
Juan Pablo Ortiz Arechiga
Carl L Cason
Hermann Zeile
Alexandre Savio
Christopher Boczko
Ross Sechler
Arnaldo Combi
Xavier Orr
Dave Baldic
Alexandr Zablotsky
Laurence Deschênes-Villeneuve
Cenk Oguz
Edward Chidgey
Robert Schouwenburg
Landon Baine
Ken Kilfedder
PeopleWare SL
Mikael Fridrik Hunfjord
Mario Gonzalez
Regis Boudin
Guillaume Brehier
Cédric Drolet
Jan Joris Vereijken
Cesar Jimenez Perez
Paul Kissel
David Norman
Gerry Ferdinandus
Aram Agajanian
Livio Iurissevich
Ivan Gomez
Wolfgang Pribitzer
Galina Anikina
Jochen Schmitt
Edward Swartz
Peter Philippe
Devin Lussier
Marcin Lancucki
Robin Robertson
Adam Monsen
Stephen Borg
Stoyan Dafov
Kathy Stuart
Gerhard van Gorkum
Chyetanya Kunte
Mark Nenadov
Erik Verkuil
JV

Perhaps more than anything else, GNOME is a worldwide community of volunteers who hack, translate, design, QA, and generally have fun together.

www.gnome.org

Free (as in freedom) Pictures:

The cover picture is a Johannes Freund photograph.

The love tree is a version of "Love is natural I" by Marina A.J. (aka Shekynah).

The flower with a bee is "collects honey" by su neko.

The Maemo device is a version of "Maemo devices" by Kai Hendry.

All others are cool GNOME Community photographs.

GNOME Foundation
PO Box 101
Groton MA 01450
United States of America