

# **The Fluid Community**

**Innovative design and development  
processes and great outcomes, an overview**

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# Talk overview

1. What is Fluid?
2. The Fluid community
3. Our design process
4. Our development process
5. Design + development = happiness
6. Q&A

**WHAT IS FLUID?**

# The Fluid Project

- \* Fluid is an open source community for inclusive design
- \* Our mission: improve user experience of open source web applications
- \* Fluid is much more than a software project. Fluid is **culture change, best practices, a way to approach design, development, and the power therein.**

# Some of our projects

- ✱ Fluid Academic
- ✱ Decapod
- ✱ Fluid Engage
- ✱ CollectionSpace

# **THE FLUID COMMUNITY**

# Fluid community

- ✱ Distributed across North America and Europe
- ✱ Diverse, cross-functional team
- ✱ Community processes evolved from agile development

**Individuals and interactions** over processes and tools



# Distributed communication

- \* Mailing list
- \* Wiki
- \* Shared calendar
- \* Video conferencing system

A single work mailing list

Wiki for research and documentation

Public, shared calendar

Standup meetings

# OUR DESIGN PROCESS

# What is design?

- \* Graphics/visual design vs. UX/Ix design
- \* User experience and interaction design
  - \* Not just about “look and feel”
  - \* It’s about designing the behaviour of technology





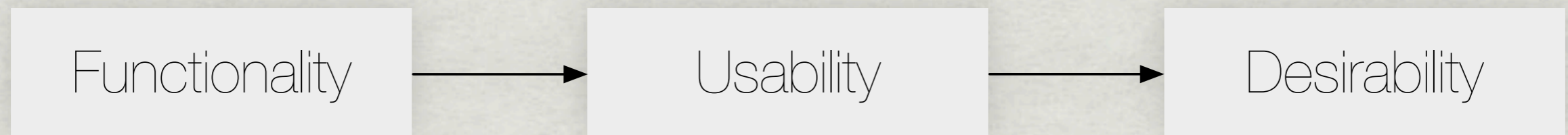
# Design in OSS

- \* Design in OSS doesn't happen as often as it should
- \* Systemic problem of poor and inconsistent user interface and experience
  - \* Often left to programmers
  - \* Tackled at the end
  - \* Inadequately tested and refined

# Design in OSS

- \* Why isn't there more design in OSS?
  - \* Design apathy: OSS often utilitarian
  - \* Lack of resources
  - \* Tricky for designers to get involved

# Evolution of technology



Fogarty, J., Forlizzi, J., & Hudson, S. (2001). Aesthetic information collages: Generating decorative displays that contain information. Proceedings of the 14th Annual ACM Symposium on User Interface Software and Technology, 141-150. New York, NY: ACM Press.

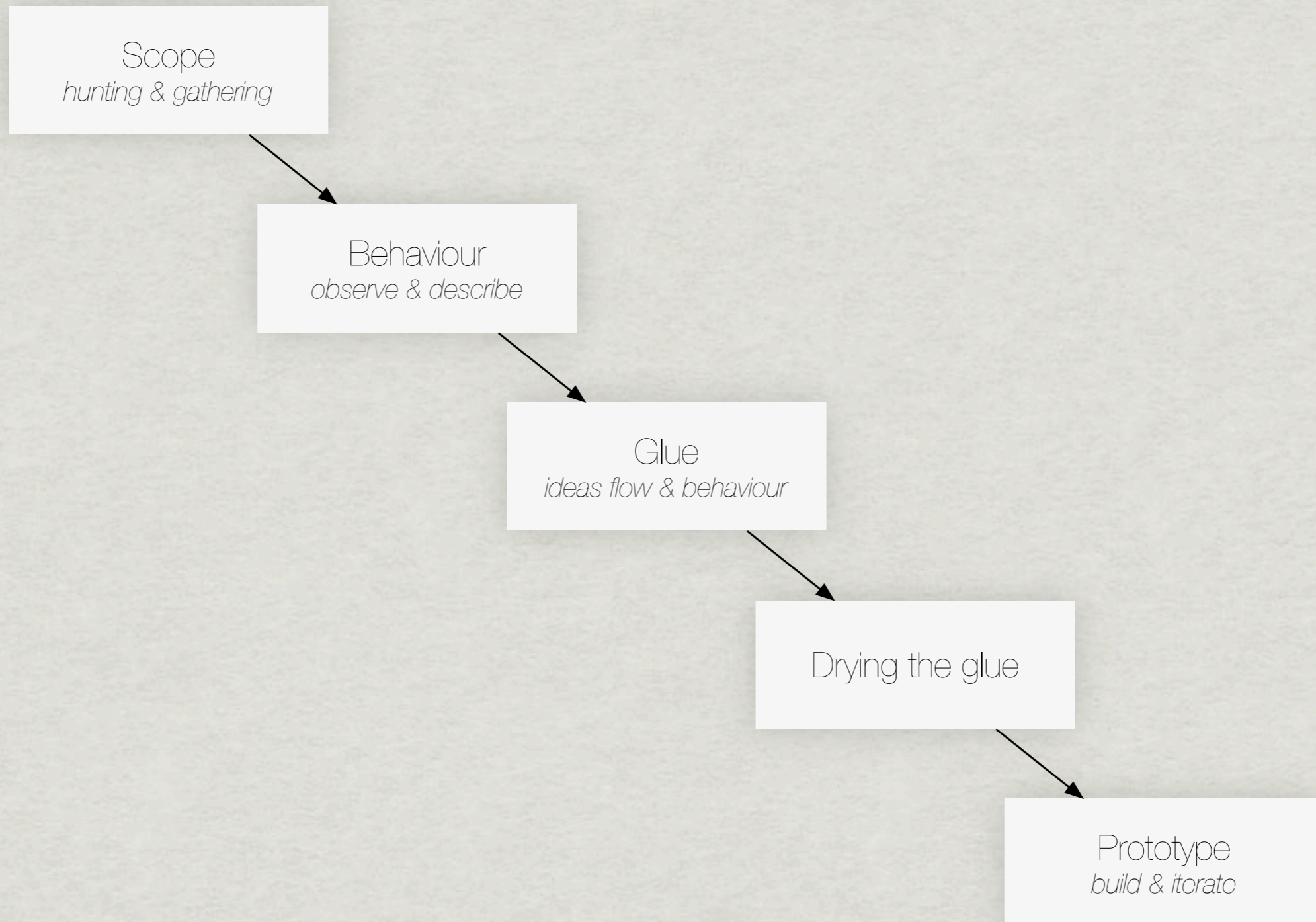
# Five words

*The interface is the application.*

# Design in the Fluid community

- \* Amalgamation of **user/human-centred**, **participatory**, and **inclusive** design
- \* Humans at the centre of design decisions (U/HCD)
- \* Democratization of design (PD)
- \* Design for diversity (ID)

# Fluid design process



# Scope

- \* Requirements gathering
- \* Understanding the landscape
- \* Things we do:
  - \* Benchmarking, contextual inquiries, etc.
  - \* Write problem statement
  - \* Write out goals and scope

# Behaviour

- \* Understanding user + system behaviour
- \* Things we do:
  - \* Write out scenarios
  - \* Create personas



# ‘Glue’, ‘drying’, prototyping

- ✱ Design conceptualization and prototyping
- ✱ Design validation
- ✱ Things we do:
  - ✱ Create sketches, wireframes, and mockups
  - ✱ Get stakeholders involved
  - ✱ User testing
  - ✱ Iterate, iterate, iterate!

# **OUR DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

# Tools

- \* svn for source control
- \* JIRA for bug tracking
- \* Confluence for documentation and research
- \* IRC for real-time communication
- \* Mailing lists for asynchronous communication

# How Fluid is different

- \* Organizing
- \* Mentoring
- \* Shared responsibility
- \* Knowledge sharing

# Organizing

*Iterative development*

# Mentoring

- \* Two level of commit access
  - \* Core
  - \* Incubator

# Mentors

- ✱ Mentors are responsible for:
  - ✱ Code quality
  - ✱ Communicating effectively with the developer
  - ✱ Easing the developer into the community

Collective ownership & shared responsibility



# Code review

- \* One-on-one in real-time or asynchronously
- \* Concrete improvements to the code
- \* Opportunity for the author to learn

# Code tours

- \* Whole community
- \* Conversations about design and architecture
- \* Knowledge sharing with the community

Paired programming == continuous code review

# Architecture & system design

- \* Collective responsibility
- \* Public meetings
- \* Diversity makes a better system
- \* Fireside chats

# Working with other communities

- \* jQuery UI
- \* Sakai
- \* uPortal
- \* OCROpus

**DESIGN + DEVELOPMENT = HAPPINESS**

# Early in the cycle

- \* Roadmapping and release planning
- \* Conversations with and visits to stakeholders
- \* Design walkthroughs

# Middle of the cycle

- \* User testing existing release
- \* Developers developing next release
- \* Designers designing for two releases down



# End of the cycle

- \* Bug parade
- \* Test plan creation
- \* Documentation
- \* Release testing
- \* Release!

## Q&A

**for more information**

[www.fluidproject.org](http://www.fluidproject.org)

[wiki.fluidproject.org](http://wiki.fluidproject.org)

**come hang out with us in irc!**

#fluid-work on irc.freenode.net