

Project Vision

Fluid Project Vision

Fluid's Impact on Participating Projects

The Fluid Project will make a lasting impact on the user experience of open source software products. Fluid's reusable component library and Design Handbook will directly benefit development teams as they continue to make UX improvements to their products over the coming years.

Fluid will establish and sustain an open community of expertise in the areas of interaction design, accessibility, and testing. Through our education, design, and development efforts we will help to foster these precarious values within other open source communities.

Fluid will encourage new collaboration strategies within distributed communities, emphasizing the contribution of non-coding responsibilities such as requirements research and synthesis, user interaction design, graphic design, and usability testing.

A User-Centered Approach to Development

Fluid's technical approach is in contrast to the familiar "tool silos" found in learning systems and portals today. Our user interface components will enable a more seamless and direct experience, placing them within the workflows and activities best suited to the user's goals. Fluid components will be flexible and cross-cutting, allowing project teams to reuse them consistently within a variety of tools and portlets. Fluid will provide an interface layer designed to meet user expectations without requiring awareness of the underlying technology.

The Fluid Project will focus on building innovative new user interfaces in the following areas:

1. Content management, defined in a broad sense to include many of the common types of content found in learning systems and portals
2. Effective navigation schemes, including easier and more direct ways to locate relevant information and move around within a multi-tool environment such as a portal
3. Personalization and user preferences, enabling systems that can adapt to individual user needs

A Flexible and Inclusive System

Fluid recognizes the need to build systems that are more adaptive and responsive to the unique needs of our users. We believe that a well-designed, flexible user interface will accommodate diversity in a way that "one size fits all" approaches have not been able to achieve. This approach will also help to meet the often conflicting requirements of differing institutions and disciplines without compromising overall consistency or quality.

Fluid's vision for user preferences is one that reduces the burden on the user for managing preferences, allowing the system to automatically infer environmental preferences where appropriate. In cases where the user's judgment and control is most needed, Fluid will build preferences seamlessly into context, providing the user with a clear understanding of the effect their changes will have on the system.

Conclusion

At its core, the Fluid community supports collaboration between user experience experts and coders to produce software that works for everyone, regardless of ability.