Talking About the Fluid Project

Brief Summary of the Fluid Project

The Fluid Project is an open source project dedicated to improving the user experience of other open and community source projects including uPortal, Sakai, and OpenCollection.

Fluid builds accessible, rich user interface components that can be reused across web applications. Fluid also provides design guidance and accessibility support for user interface designers and developers within open source communities. Our work is freely available under the BSD, Educational Community, and Creative Commons licenses.

For more information or to get involved in our community, check out our website at http://fluidproject.org.

Official Proposal-Speak

The Fluid Project is an international community of academic institutions, community source software projects and corporations working together to address the precarious values of usability, accessibility, internationalization, quality assurance and security within academic software projects. Fluid combines both design and technology to create a living library of sharable user interface components that can be reused across community source projects. These components are built specifically to support flexibility and customization while maintaining a high standard of design quality. The Fluid framework will enable designers and developers to build user interfaces that can more readily accommodate the diverse personal and institutional needs found within community source projects. Fluid will encourage user-centered design practices within community source software. To this end, Fluid is creating a designer's toolkit that will offer useful design, accessibility, and usability strategies and documentation. Members of the Fluid team are available to provide usability and accessibility support within the Sakai, uPortal, Kuali Student, and Moodle communities. OpenCollection will be the first project outside of these communities for which will Fluid will provide support.

Useful for Presentation Abstracts and Proposals

Fluid was formed in April 2007 by members of the Sakai, uPortal, Kuali Student, and Moodle communities. The project is led by the University of Toronto, represented by the Adaptive Technology Resource Centre, with core participation from the University of California, Berkeley, the University of Cambridge, the University of British Columbia and York University. Many other universities are contributing resources and expertise. Corporations participating in the project include IBM, Sun Microsystems, and Mozilla Foundation.

Fluid represents a vibrant community of expertise in inclusive design, serving as a resource and collaboration space for usability and accessibility work within open source projects. Our user interface components are integrated into a variety of software packages relevant to higher education institutions and museums, including current releases of Sakai, uPortal, and OpenCollection. More broadly, Fluid's technology and design patterns are relevant to developers of other open software projects as well as in-house developers of campus technology.

Fluid's technology framework helps developers to build better, more accessible user interfaces in collaboration with designers. It provides a user interface layer that works across applications, encouraging designers and developers to share their designs widely within the community.

Fluid components provide richer and more direct interactions that are well-suited to being customized and embedded within a variety of tools and workflows. They are composable and highly configurable, providing greater flexibility to deliver a user interface that can best meet the needs of both institutions and individual users.

The User Experience (UX) Toolkit provides resources, tools, and documentation to help make user interface design easier. It includes personas, scenarios, and use cases tailored for higher education, along with accessibility guidelines intended to simplify the task of inclusive design.

About the Design Handbook

UI Design Patterns

Fluid is launching the Open Source Design Patterns Library (http://www.uidesignpatterns.org), the first truly collaborative library for sharing user interface design patterns across open source projects. User interface design patterns provide advice and guidance for designers and developers. Patterns embody a proven solution to a problem in context, serving as a kind of recipe for creating effective new user interfaces. UI design patterns also serve as a jumping off point for information about how to use Fluid components, with example screenshots and links to useful CSS and markup. All of the patterns in the Open Source Design Pattern Library are freely available under a Creative Commons license.

UX Walkthroughs

UX Walkthroughs are a combination of usability and accessibility heuristic evaluations with cognitive walkthroughs. The goal of Fluid's walkthroughs is to identify current user "pain points" in uPortal, Sakai and Moodle and ultimately to prioritize user interface improvements that will address these issues. UX Walkthroughs are widely applicable. Fluid's Design Handbook provides instructions and advice on how application developers can perform their own UX walkthroughs to identify usability and accessibility problems and solutions.

Boilerplate Email Responses

Redirecting Queries to the Mailing List
Hi <name>,

Thanks very much for your email. I'd like to suggest that you share your <idea/inquiry/question> with the larger Fluid community. The <infusion-user or fluid-work> mailing list is the best venue to get a response about your issue. If you're not already subscribed to Fluid's mailing lists, you can do so on our web site at:

http://fluidproject.org/index.php/mailing-lists

If you don’t receive a response on the mailing list within a couple of days, please feel free to get in touch with me again and I will try to help with your <idea/inquiry/question>.

Thanks again,

<yourn name>

Getting Involved

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We'd love to have your involvement in the Fluid project. I think you'll find a community of sympathetic usability experts, designers, and developers on the Fluid mailing lists, and I encourage you to join our discussions. One of the best ways to get started is to introduce yourself to the community on the <fluid-work> mailing list and offer your help with whatever areas of the project you're most interested in. We're always happy to have new people get involved. You can subscribe to the Fluid mailing lists on our web site at:

http://fluidproject.org/index.php/mailing-lists

You can find more information about our current activities on the Fluid project wiki at:

http://wiki.fluidproject.org

Welcome to the community!

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Using a Component in a Commercial product or in general

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I'm glad you like the component, and we'd be happy to see you using it in your commercial products.

All of Fluid's code is fully open source, and is licensed in a way that can be used freely for commercial applications. We offer you two choices, the Educational Community License (ECL) 2.0 or the standard BSD license. The text of both licenses is available in our wiki:

http://wiki.fluidproject.org/display/fluid/Fluid+Licence

In either case, you can use and modify our code commercially as along as you respect a handful of simple requirements:

1. If you redistribute the source code, you must retain the copyright and licensing notices.
2. You must include the copyright notice and license in the documentation of your product
3. You won’t use any of our institutional names to promote your product without checking with us first

The Uploader component is still in active development. We're improving it on a regular basis, and would very much appreciate any improvements or modifications you may make to the code. You may also find it helpful to join the infusion-user mailing list if you have any questions while you're using the component.

http://fluidproject.org/mailman/listinfo/infusion-user

Don't hesitate to get in touch with me if you have any other licensing-related questions,

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