

Mozilla's Manifesto Forums: Input Provided at Sessions at 2012 MozCamps & MozFest

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Overview

The lead up to Mozilla's 15-year anniversary on March 31, 2013, provides an opportunity for us to consider the timeliness and relevance of Mozilla's Manifesto.

Recognizing the many important ways in which the Internet has become an integral part of the everyday lives of billions of people around the world, we set out to engage our community on an exploration as to whether our core values, as articulated in the Manifesto's 10 principles, will continue to serve the needs of the organization and those of our community members for the next 15 years.

Through a series of discussions with around 200 members of Mozilla's community who attended our MozCamps and MozFest events this year, we learned that:

- The Manifesto remains timely, relevant and actionable to Mozillians around the world;
- The ten principles capture the challenges inherent in promoting the open web; although participants made several suggestions for various enhancements; and
- Mozilla should seek new ways enhance the link between our various initiatives and the Manifesto, thereby bringing it to a wider audience.

The following sections provide brief summaries of the four sessions held over the course of the year on the Manifesto and highlight key comments and insights from each of these informative discussions.

The next step is for us to consider what we would like to do with the Manifesto for our upcoming anniversary celebration (e.g., potentially relaunching the Manifesto web page, tweaking any of the principles based on community input and even mapping specific principles to our products and services).

MozCamp LATAM Buenos Aires, Argentina, April 21, 2012 Summary prepared by Stacy Martin

Around 150 participants from the MozCamp LATAM session, which was virtually all the attendees at the event, participated in the evening, townhall style session on the Manifesto. Mitchell was joined by Bruno Magrani de Souza, a longtime Mozillian and a Brazilian law professor.

The main takeaways from the discussion were:

- Legislative proposals to regulate the Internet in the US get huge attention worldwide given that most servers are located there and that countries tend to import many of the American legislation. Also, the community mobilization on SOPA/PIPA and its reaction to it showed that these issues have a global impact and are watched closely by the world.
- Internet and media companies are spending millions of dollars lobbying Congress and the increasing attempts to regulate the net. This raised the question of whether Mozilla should do something to protect the interests of its users and its community.
- Mozilla has shied away from engaging in policy debates in the past, but it seems that when a legislation has a deep impact on the basic structure of how the Internet works, that's when Mozilla will voice its position and engage in the debate.
- There are three main ways for Mozilla to act:
 1. as a neutral advisor to the government, providing technical expertise on such issues,
 2. by engaging in policy debates, and
 3. by providing training on technical issues to judges and policy makers.
- The experience of providing training on technical issues to judges by the Center for Technology and Society at Fundação Getulio Vargas has had a great impact (with judges quoting course materials on court decisions) and shows that such initiative might have good results;
- I did get the impression that privacy is becoming a pressing concern in Latam. Much to the contrary, some of the first data protection and privacy legislations are being drafted in countries in LATAM now.
- There is interest from the community in organizing some sort of community-driven mobilization to engage on Internet policy issues. People felt like it makes sense to create a fork in the community to take care of policy issues.



MozCamp Europe

Warsaw, Poland, September 8, 2012

Transcript prepared by Stacy Martin

Around 40 Mozillians participated in a lively discussion moderated by Mitchell and Matjaz Horvat, a Mozillian from Slovenia with over a decade of experience working with the Mozilla community in Europe.

Matjaz – when I read the title of the session, I wondered if we were trying to change or rewrite the

Manifesto and was a bit surprised because it's a bit like the Constitution – you don't change it every so many years.

Mitchell – The Manifesto came not at the beginning of Mozilla. We built the product first. It was so obvious that the world needed another browser. We knew that without some freedom in how we access the network, we couldn't control our lives. Firefox was a runaway success. It became clear that we needed to describe why we built it. Firefox is only a tool for something more – freedom, individual empowerment, open source. After I wrote the Manifesto, one of the board members said, "Well this is really beautiful, but far reaching and hard to do." My response was, "We are already doing this." The Manifesto is a statement of a set of values and goals. It's like policies described earlier – wasn't made up out of thin air – it's values and goals, plus what we're already doing. The Manifesto underwent a pretty elaborate discussion process with core community. The document is still an 0.9 version – as translated, might find things we should change or that other languages express better. Never really had that discussion.

"Ten years ago, Mozilla was fighting a technical risk. Today, the same risk exists, but now big companies are moving in on the Internet and creating new risks. Is it time for Mozilla to move on that front and state that the Internet needs to be something more?" - Participant, MozCamp Europe

Audience – One thing that attracted me to Mozilla, but is kind of captured in 4 and 5, is about security and controlling your experience. However, I miss privacy/tracking in there because it's become a big concern – not completely covered.

Audience – As was mentioned already, the core of the Manifesto is really strong, but need to make it more public. It's a really strong message when talking to people that we don't follow the money, we follow the betterment of the internet. Lots of newsgroups discussions on how to phrase some of those things. Privacy came up, but weren't sure how bold to be phrasing it. We don't want to alienate those who want to make money. Today we may want to state more strongly. Did change our mission statement. Privacy might be an area where can point things out more specifically.

Mitchell – Remembers the security and privacy piece very clearly – but differently. Was trying to keep things short. Felt that security covered privacy because to feel secure, must feel privacy is at a level that is acceptable to you. In hindsight, that was probably a mistake. May want to call out product and privacy specifically. Tried to write it for those who weren't Mozillians.

Audience – Ten years ago, Mozilla was fighting a technical risk. Today, the same risk exists, but now big companies are moving in on the Internet and creating new risks. Is it time for Mozilla to move on that front and state that Internet needs to be something more?

Audience – The manifesto seems to have stood the test of time extremely well, except omission of

privacy. When I read security, I think technical vs. a personal feeling of well being. So, if one change, would make that one. From info architecture standpoint...don't see the needs changing much at all.

Matjaz - When I wrote a speech about ACTA for Serbian parliament, it was based on the Manifesto. Official statements - pretty conservative - territory is slippery and might hurt ourselves more than help. Would need to be convinced on why Mozilla should be more politically active.

Mitchell - Also very conservative. A couple reasons. Very diverse group - the nature of the Internet holds us together. Political stance on anything else is no. There are many good causes that not all of us will agree with. Inclusion of all people in activities is important inside of Mozilla. For many years, it only came up in US settings. Too easy to be US focused. Most laws are very local - need to understand the local environment. The kinds of things that might affect the Internet- we have taken a position - net neutrality - affects the distributed nature of the Internet. Very narrow scope, very carefully. Contemplating a policy module in the governance structure - Harvey to own - scope will be very narrow - affect the core structure. Actual activism - more likely to support others.

Audience - Agree about being very wary WRT politics, but continue involvement in those that are directly connected to the manifesto. Net neutrality debate is going on now - too many are motivated by commercial interests. Big debate about liability of intermediaries - tendency towards limiting access to content online. Privacy in narrow context of tracking - biggest impact is here. Manifesto - really like the level of generality - add paragraphs to explain how they apply in current political climate. Principle #5 could deal with tracking - explain to users what you mean.

Audience - really love our Manifesto - amazing how relevant it remains. When started, liked Linux, but Mozilla was able to make some sacrifices to get our way. Realizing wanted a perfect web, but reality was that 99% of websites were written for IE. Had to find a way for the Gecko engine to support that. We aren't end of the rainbow principles - they are for today. May need to reflect it in the principles. Markets where we're not penetrating today. Can we make it more explicit that we're pragmatic?

Audience - Love things that don't need to be changed. Do we need to change them or should we invest that energy and time in how to explain them in fun ways so more people know them and care about them?

Audience - thinks it stands the test of time, too, but we are reinterpreting it with today - what are we doing today to map it back and bring it to life. What does FF OS advance? The piece that is missing is making something great that people want. Can't see it from the outside. Central to impact. Big source of our power.

Matjaz - Manifesto still fits our needs even though the web changes radically every day. Congrats Mitchell - That doesn't mean it should be taken as a bible, but don't think anyone wants to change it dramatically.

Mitchell – Living the Manifesto – advancing it – as Mozilla – we are pragmatic. We live in a marketplace. We are innovators. What does it mean to be living it? Does advancing it cover those things? Political advocacy – scope is narrow but something. Really interested in question of whether making them real might be a good place for making something new today. With the exception of privacy, spend time and attention on that. Is there some approach you would be interested in spending time on?

Audience – Crazy idea – in the apps – which principles are covered by it? Consider highlighting the specific principles that are in play for a particular product or service, perhaps in the About Rights page.

Audience – Mozilla is one of the few entities in the world that can do something. Manifesto is OK, but it isn't out there. People don't know it. Lots of lobbying. Enforce Manifesto principles on lawmakers.

Audience – solid, don't need to touch them. Have other values that should be listed. Basic understanding of how the web works. Section on values we share, beyond principles. Staying out of politics is a good idea.

Audience – Remember Gerv saying don't write by saying what you don't like – but what you do. Politics is often about what you don't like. Help shape the Internet Freedom Act.

Matjaz – Can't fight something without providing an alternative. Easy to say this is bad, but what is our plan, our alternative.

Mitchell – really struck by the idea of what is FF really all about, here's a set of values. Referencing the manifesto from within the product could help make our viewpoint better known.

Audience – In terms of "Internet" vs. "web," "Internet" says a lot about verticals and the "Web" is two syllables shorter. Mozilla appears to be now focusing more on the Web and less on the Internet. Doesn't mean we need to change the Manifesto.

Audience – Go back to the question about what do you want to do with this? Explain the meaning of the principles in real life. A lot of people aren't aware of the threats or how it shapes their experiences. Bring it to the average person and help them understand.

Audience – Text is around Internet, but it's just technology – we are protecting the freedom of communication. Internet is no value without the people. User perspective – what we want to do for you.

Mitchell – Yes and no, or maybe. Public policy questions get tricky. Freedom of communication is a topic that's broader than technology and what draws us together as Mozilla. Ex: printing magazines. Many different relationships with our government. Agree with more people focus, but Mozilla is about the digital nature. Human rights issues. If we aren't careful, it can become that. Others are better at it. We are

about building it into the technology. We try to help make sure technology is not tracking you without your knowledge. The harder questions are on the edges.

MozCamp Asia

Singapore, November 18, 2012

Transcript prepared by Alina Hua and Mike Manning

Mitchell Baker, Channy Yun, Li Gong co-facilitated a forum on Mozilla's manifesto at MozCamp Asia in Singapore.

Mitchell - Why the Manifesto came to be. The browser was the choke point to the web, it let you see what it wanted. When we got to Firefox and were successful overnight, the environment didn't change. People wondered if Mozilla was done. The web was open, we had innovation, did we achieve our purpose? It was clear to many of us that we weren't done, that it was the beginning, but we didn't have a written goal to point to. The browser was the tool for freedom on the Web, and we needed to express that. We went through a long review process on the Manifesto, I went out and got people together who were interested in the topic. The board was the start, and they liked it but thought it was tough to do. It was a description of a community that already exists. Within the Mozilla world, there are people interested in evangelism, some in products, some in organization and what the leadership is. We call that governance and there's even a mailing list for it. I want to get more people involved in that group, I want to modernize it with new people. You may see there's a 0.9 number on the document online – it's a precisely written document but I wondered if there was language that needed explaining in other languages.

Channy - I'm a Korean community member. In 2002 I was a web dev, very interested in browsers. Many

"The manifesto is a solid and precise set of rules and philosophies, but to prove it we need to point to which context we're in." - Participant, MozCamp Asia

people used Netscape, and I tried open source. My first job was Korean translation for Mozilla 1.0. In 2003 there was a big change to the project. I was surprised and found it difficult. There was no alternative on the web ecosystem so Firefox was important, a whole other ecosystem. I was motivated by these things.

Li - In 2001, there was a reorg when I was at Sun working on the Netscape browser for Solaris. Then Netscape became Mozilla, and in 2005 we did the Mozilla China foundation and in 2007 I fully joined. One of the first jobs was translating many things to Chinese. It's critical that we're an org where I can refer to it and build my thinking, do what your manager says, whatever the senior exec says. In the Manifesto you say we're all going for this. It enables people to think and behave in a way that's not constrained. You can make an independent decision. Mitchell speaks Chinese, and when you hear manifesto people in China think of the Communist Manifesto.

Mitchell – how did you find the Manifesto?

Audience - When I started as a student rep, I came across it and what struck me was how Moz sees the Internet as open source.

Audience - when I got to the Manifesto in researching Mozilla, that's what made me stick, and why I'm here right now.

Li - we always have the Manifesto principles on a calendar we built.

(About half of people found the Manifesto through the website path. One person had heard the Manifesto from someone else.)

Mitchell - I used the word "security" to cover "privacy" and that's one thing many people have pointed out that they don't see "privacy" on the draft.

Channy - When I translated the Manifesto I thought it was very impressive. This is against the government regulations in Korea. This gives freedom to us and I wonder if it can't be changed. Many things are changing.

Audience - It's very clear and good, I come from LatAm and I think the Anglo Saxon cultures tend to be more concentrated around individuals, and we're more about the group. When I read it, I think about it not tying to groups, although individuals can certainly be part of groups.

Mitchell - that's interesting, the question is when do you pursue the good of the individual and when do you pursue the good for the group, even if it hurts individuals. I think that if you go for group good, you can hurt individuals. But there's a strong 'public benefit' piece to it - what's good for society as a whole? That's a good unresolved question. If you think of something to make it less pointed let me know. Openness and transparency is intention with privacy. Some of the most painful Mozilla conversations are people who don't agree or don't listen to each other, or don't know how to, and each points to the Manifesto. We've had nasty fights about a tool needing to be open, or any info needs to be totally open like our info in the Phonebook. But the other side, if I'm a Mozillian, do I not have any privacy rights? These values can't be absolute, it becomes a problem. Some societies may have a more group approach, some more individual, but it's not absolute either way.

Li - this tension, the aspirations in the Manifesto are hard to reach. In China people would say it looks good, but will never happen. The more practical thing is that the call to action is the least you can do is use Firefox, but lots of people don't connect supporting the Manifesto to using the product. If you ask people if they support the Manifesto, they will, but maybe it needs the next level of the Mozilla expression.

Mary Colvig - the only time I reflect back on the Manifesto is for MozCamp. It still feels relevant and it

feels good that it was written in a way that feels timeless. The web maker and creator aspects are things that we really value and want to get behind, so I could see simplifying it.

Mitchell – Web literacy is very important. Is there one or two things, that the Internet is a public resource for all, or maybe it's #4? You need enough people to be web-literate to make this actually real.

Mary – those that seek Mozilla out as a volunteer have a better understanding of the Manifesto than the paid staff. If you're drawn to a cause, you spend more time with something like the Manifesto to get you going.

Mitchell – we don't get all the paid Mozilla employees together at once anymore. Some employees make it to Mozcamp but not many. When we did have all-hands meetings for employees, they were flawed because they were just employees, but I got a chance to talk to the core of the company. That's why they came to Mozilla but now they're fixing bugs each day. We don't yet have a mechanism to talk about this more broadly; that's on me.

Mary – I think it's our responsibility as leaders in the organization to tie things back to this.

Li – the high-level Moz employees have all-hands meetings, like VP and above, and we need to reflect these ourselves. I use it in those meetings.

Channy – we read the Manifesto together in the community meetings. It's helpful and powerful for people to refer back to.

Audience – we should figure out how to make it only timeless principles. There are some bits that make me think that they may have been retrofitted to fit Firefox. I care about Mozilla on a very general idea after reading this, I came to the conclusion that Moz is about the healthy web. There are things that you can change, but I felt it was Moz's job to adapt to whatever's best for the Web. Adapting may mean knowing when the job is done, or when it isn't, and I don't know yet if it is and if there are some gaps. Are we filling gaps or retrofitting because we're good at desktop. There are some things that are very specific, sometimes rules don't have to be specific if they're meant to be broken.

Mitchell – Does every idea you have go immediately into the public, is that what open should be? People see that “open” definition differently.

Audience – I hear people say that they don't like Moz because it's closed, by which they mean I can't modify the logo. So we should put in only timeless principles.

Mitchell – it's hard because it's about perspective.

Li – you can't make it universal for all, an approximation needs to be close enough.

Mitchell – Even closed ecosystems provide opportunity. Facebook provides a ton of opportunity. It's hard, that's why I got more specific in the document.

Audience – I like the inspirational and aspirational parts of it. A global public resource that has to remain open and accessible. One important thing is the conversation we're having now, to have that type of conversation in more places. Working out the details – what does that mean? When I joined Mozilla it wasn't that we had details on what meetings should be. Contributors asked about notes for the meeting, and over time it worked out in 2-3 years, but I don't know that others do different things. We don't have conversations about the day-to-day details. If you use a Google doc that only paid staff gets, is that open?

Li – It's very hard to have precise rules, every situation is so different. You have a staff meeting, and some of it needs to be limited to the outside. At the moment you take something out, so it's very hard. Our default action is to share, unless we make a conscious decision not to. There are some results.

Mitchell – there's some info we don't share, and that's a question. I view Mozilla as an "impure" open source project, it's been that way since we started at Netscape. You'd think we're best friends with Linux and not necessarily. Many things the Linux community wants are similar to what Apple and Microsoft wanted. Since we're cross platform we're not as aligned as you would think. We share core values of free and open source software, and it's distressing that we can't work better together. We came out of a corporate environ at Netscape so we've always been impure. We do keep employee info confidential and keep biz dev confidential. We don't strive to be totally pure, but we do want to find the core and live up to Manifesto, but describing how and what community processes we find are lacking, I bet we'd find that we're lacking.

Audience – Regarding interpretations of "open," I have something interesting to share. I'm a free software guy, more extreme than open source. The question of why we're doing something is more important than how we do it, and what we do. The important thing is why. The philosophies of freedom...it's an idea. Counter-examples to talking about impure, one of the most popular Linux distributions now is all closed. The issue trackers and how the software goes into the mainstream is all closed. It's accepted as one of the most successful free and open source software in the world. We have four definitions of free software, it's short and concise but needs living examples. We have version one and it's not relevant, than we have version two and three which are appropriate. The manifesto is a solid and precise set of rules and philosophies, but to prove it we need to point to which context we're in.

Mozilla Festival

London, UK; November 10, 2012

Summary prepared by Tom Lowenthal

The session on Mozilla's manifesto at the MozFest brought together around 25 participants, mostly

experienced community participants. The format for the session was a mildly mediated group/subgroup discussion. The moderator introduced the topic and purpose of this consultation, then Mitchell explained the motivation and development of the manifesto.

Participants started in groups of two, talking about what the manifesto means to them, how they understand it, and the challenges they see for the manifesto. The pairs then recombined

"Mozilla has to continue to fight for what's right. However, is the Manifesto 'bold and beyond' enough for the future?" - Participant, MozFest

into groups of four to consider the same topic from more angles, and highlight the most insightful thoughts from the previous discussion. The groups recombined again into three groups of eight, before bringing discussion back to the whole group, in the format of questions and answers back and forth with Mitchell.

Main topics of the discussions related to Mozilla and its manifesto included:

- An open web requires open infrastructure and service providers:
 - concern for the asymmetries between the bandwidth, processing power and of large organizations versus individuals
 - how do the implications for freedom change when resources are operated by commercial/private entities, versus the public NGOs; what balance of commercial and principled work is needed?
- Anonymity, identity, and privacy aren't mentioned in the manifesto
 - does the term "security" imply privacy?
 - are these principles understood the same way by different people?
- Self-determination leads to freedom and is a critical enabler of human rights
- Is the manifesto comprehensible or does it pack too much information in? Does a reader need already to be familiar with Mozilla's work, products and history to understand the manifesto and for it to provide value?
- Regarding the use of the term, "Internet," do we need a bigger concept? Do users know when they're experiencing the "Internet?"
 - Networked computing, something covering mobile, apps, what a typical user understands to be involved with
- Inclusive terminology is important; is education required?
 - technically precise language versus general user comprehension
- How do local laws, values, and infrastructure limit or balkanise the internet?
- Focus on going against the grain
 - Mozilla has to continue to fight for what's right. However, is the manifesto "bold and beyond" enough for the future?