

Getting involved with Xubuntu

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Building an operating system like Xubuntu needs a lot of resources and people. To be honest, Xubuntu wouldn't exist without volunteers. In this article I will present ways to get involved with the Xubuntu community and contribute back to your favorite operating system.

Versatile community

The Xubuntu community has many teams which work on various areas. Some of the core areas are quality assurance, support, documentation, marketing, artwork, translation and development. Each team is lead by a team leader appointed from the contributors and responsible for that area of development. In addition to the team leaders, Xubuntu itself then has a project leader, who is responsible for Xubuntu as a whole.

To help the leaders steer the development, Xubuntu has a strategy document written and revised by the project leaders and approved by the community at large. Amongst other things, the document defines the mission statement and the areas of focus, which provide the general direction for all contributions. In addition, it describes some of the most important pro-

cedures in the development should be organized and implemented.

Different skills are needed

As mentioned before, the development of Xubuntu happens inside and between various teams. Working with different areas needs different skills and that in turn guarantees that there is something to do for everybody. In addition, there are no strict boundaries on the teams so any combination will do as well. The following listing will shed some light on the different tasks you can get your hands dirty!

If you are artistic, get in touch with our artwork team. The Xubuntu artwork team creates and maintains all artwork related to Xubuntu, from themes and wallpapers to flyer designs and the official logo. If you like working with little details, help us fixing and improving our themes. On the other hand, we always have some marketing projects ongoing and needing artwork if you want to create something new instead.

If you have good verbal skills, help the Xubuntu marketing team in their efforts to make flyers and other material as appealing as possible. If you have some insight or experience on Xubuntu you want to share with others, consider writing a guest blog article for the Xubuntu website. If you like technical writing, work with the documentation team to make our documentation as helpful and thorough as possible.

If you like communicating with people, get some marketing material and start spreading the word in your workplace, libraries, local cafes... You can share your knowledge and solve diverse problems by joining the Xubuntu users mailing list or the support IRC channel and help people out. If you know social media as well as your pockets, you can help us maintaining our official social media outlets.

If you wish to live on the edge, join the Xubuntu testing team and run daily tests with the absolutely latest Xubuntu distribution images. The Xubuntu testing team also needs help working with the stable release updates to the long term support releases. Testing is one of



Figure 1. Project leader Pasi Lallinaho presenting on Xubuntu at the Ubuntu Developer Summit

the best ways to contribute when you have limited and sparse time.

If you are inclined to work with code, join the Xubuntu developers in their discussions and processes. New contributors can start with triaging bugs to gather information to help the developers be able to fix the bugs. If you wish to dig deeper in the code, you can start fixing bugs in Xubuntu-related packages and ultimately, implement new features to be included in the new Xubuntu versions.

What if I didn't see anything I'm interested in?

Do not worry! There are much more activities which can't be listed in this article due to space restrictions. There are always have many things going on, including specifications in the roadmap for the next release as well as other projects that are release independent.

Being unsure where or how you can or want to help is okay. Get yourself familiar with the community – I am sure there is something that will scratch your itch!

How do I get started?

First of all, thanks for your interest! Here's a few tips how you can get familiar with how the community works, see what's going on right now and ultimately, get in the development:

- Join the Xubuntu-devel mailing list. This is where a lot of the development discussions takes place. You can also search the list archives for previous messages.
- Join the #xubuntu-devel IRC channel on the Freenode IRC network. This is where the Xubuntu team hangs out and where most of the day-to-day development discussion takes place.
- Introduce yourself, talk to people when you see interesting discussions and finally, attend the Xubuntu community meetings, which take place in our developer IRC channel.

To read more about the different teams and getting involved, go to the Get Involved -section [3] on our website.



Figure 2. Project member Elizabeth Krumbach presenting at a Linux Users Group

Not just blood, sweat and tears

While I can only scratch the surface of the reasons I'm contributing, I hope the following words can inspire you to give something back to open source projects as well.

I have learned a lot of new skills and have been able to improve existing ones. While I have been contributing my time for free, the work has been beneficial to my commercial work projects to the point where most of my tools are open source projects.

Contributing is more than just working hard year after year. It is sharing your passion with other people, interacting with them, laughing and crying with them... It is an opportunity to work with people you'd

never be able to work otherwise with people from different time zones, continents and cultures. The people definitely make the community.

Come and join us, we're a friendly bunch! ■

Links

- Xubuntu Strategy document: <https://wiki.ubuntu.com/Xubuntu/StrategyDocument>
- Xubuntu-devel mailing list <https://lists.ubuntu.com/mailman/listinfo/xubuntu-devel>
- Xubuntu community meetings <https://wiki.ubuntu.com/Xubuntu/Meetings>
- Get Involved on Xubuntu.org <http://xubuntu.org/contribute/>



Figure 3. Xubuntu project members Micah Gersten (micahg), Elizabeth Krumbach (pleia2), Pasi Lallinaho (knome)