Making GNOME Release Videos: Leveraging GNOME's modern UX in production.
Christopher Rogers

>> All right. Everybody. Welcome back. So we're going to kick off the next round talks this time with Christopher Rogers and his talk is making GNOME release videos: Leveraging GNOME's modern UX in production. Here we go.

>> You're muted.

>> Hello. Of course I'm muted. Hello, my name is Chris and I'm one of Ryan's partners that created Freehive. I first like to thank you all to bring GNOME to people like myself. Let me explain a little of my background and how I came to choose GNOME as ideal desktop user. I used to use Windows. Windows would slow down over time and a complete reinstall over time. As far as I knew though that was just how computers worked. Graphic design courses and when you could get a laptop these were pretty slick. They offered a little more than above average at a premium price point. No story board or mockups, the problem will still persist to this day unless you enjoy carting around a second keyboard. So I stuck with Windows on my Toshiba drawing on my laptop. This is when I got a chance to use Fedora Linux. Sorry, can you see that? I think I lost the connection here.

>> We can see.

>> You can see it okay? Okay. Okay. Let me start again here. This was around the time I got a chance to use Fedora Linux. It was a full feature desktop that you can customize to make some flashy desktop. It was awesome. But Adobe owned the creative market, so I stuck with Windows because what else was going to do? After graduation and seven years later Windows pissed me off for the last time. This was when I went out of country and of course that's when Windows decided to force an update and subsequently run the battery completely out. On top of losing all my notes I spent the next nine hours in the hotel to try to get Windows to reinstall. There just had to be a better way.

This is when I discovered UBUNTU Linux. So switching from Windows provide to be quite easier. So my delight the install was very simple. Unity was good but a bit buggy. Then I just dated to GNOME three. And I hated it. It was completely different. Nothing was where it "should be." Where were my four desktops. It took everything away. It was actually pretty good and once I figured out how you can get anything at all just by hitting the super key, I wonder why I didn't spend time looking for this. I type vaguely what you wanted, and it searched up real quick. That's just awesome. So it stored like a top down list. I figured you can drag applications and GNOME would get rid of any apps you wanted to take away. Using this from the top down to do list was very handy. I supported a workday like creating the GNOME release videos for examples.

My process for creating the GNOME videos starts with this text. From this and conversations on GNOME Rocket chat channel we started playing around with this. While the script is being approved, I started building the illustrations for the animations in Inkscape. And I experimented in Blender for the new animations that I wanted to include.

In the first video for the project 3.34 I wanted to create this style and taking photos from GUADEC and avatar images that I put together. So I could quickly reuse and modify parts of GNOME developers and contributors. Community software is first and foremost about the community after all.

The second video was for 3.36. I wanted to add more animations about not having enough movements characters. New animations were things like typing on a keyboard or dealing with interruptions. This is the actual editor. I mixed the music and the excellent voice other from Karen and the screen captures for the latest running of the GNOME and once the animations were done, I'll go add those Easter eggs. Once it's done, I'll make changes that the folks would like to see. And I collect all of that. I got to say after playing with the new version early it actually does feel like a celebration even despite of Window party crashers.

I'd like to conclude with a huge thank you to all of you in the GNOME project. You're the reason I can work in a pain-free modern desktop. It's my pleasure to you as GNOME and my pleasure to share with others.

>> No, come back. You have questions.

>> Just kidding. Are there any questions?

>> Yes. Let's go for it. That is not the right -- we have one. So questions for Chris. So how did your workflow dramatically change from the first video to your second?

>> I would say -- I don't know if there was much of a difference. The difference was more in we had done the video. So it was a little bit easier. So I had more time to concentrate on the actual animation so people waiving. And I probably should have shown the videos just as part of the presentation. Although most people have seen the GNOME videos. But, yes, I would say not very much change from the first to the second. Not that I recall anyway. How about for you, Britt? Was it better or worse? Needs improvement.

>> It's hard to be both actually.

>> I have another question. How long does a release video take?

>> I actually don't count the hours. As long as it takes to make it entertaining. I try a bunch of little extra jokes in there, you know, kind of reward people for watching a video. I worked at like -- I guess it's probably a good week and a half worth of solid eight to ten-hour days to do it. And most of that is the illustration and animation work. Basically when I run the script, I'm committing to do all the things in the script. So that can go my way or not my way depending on what I said I do.

>> Another person asked what's the most challenging part of putting the video together?

>> The most challenging part is probably getting all the screen shots and all the screen captures. Actually, this was something I did change from the GNOME developers that put together this. So I can just spin up a machine that had the latest one for GNOME. Unfortunately, I didn't have Internet access. So I had to fix some things. But, yes, I enjoyed the heck out of making the video. So it doesn't seem like a lot. There wasn't anything like, oh, man, I hope I don't have to do that again. It's a lot of fun.

>> So when a video is posted we see that you're pretty active in the YouTube comments talking about the video, how do you balance with the feedback that you get with constructive criticism versus the negativity?

>> I try and always be positive even if you they're severely negative. And I'm hoping that shows through. If somebody is bashing or something, I post examples on how they're absolutely wrong. I don't call people names or anything like that. If it's a valid criticism like it could actually

help the next video. So if this animation sucks, okay, why does it suck? Because I want to know, right. Fie can make it not suck or suck less, then I want to, right. And I think a lot of that comes from working with the Inkscape project because we deal with a lot of frustrated users. I guess I have thicker skin now because of that. There's no point in arguing with people. I rather design stuff.

>> So kind of in partnership with the talk that Ryan just gave, we're in a unique position here that the professionals that are using the tools can also be a part of the community that's building the tools. How do you think that's different than from like the traditional Adobe users?

>> Oh, it's completely different. Have you ever had an Adobe developer or talked to an Adobe developer?

>> No.

>> And you never will. They don't have a bug report. I don't know how this has changed lately. It's been probably about four or five years since I've actually used Adobe as my main software for creative work. It's making me feel old now. But yes, being able to reach out to the developers and actually getting involved in making things better. So I do their videos and do some of the UX design and some troubleshooting bug and bug reports and helping new users get to grips with the software. And I enjoy all that stuff. It's rewarding to me to be able to pay back what's been given to me as far as developer time and great software tools that I use every day.

>> So in that same thing, so when you're using proprietary software and it breaks in production, you can yell at someone, what about when you're writing the software?

>> Yeah. I just find the mirror and let that asshole have it. No, I mean, you don't. If you find a bug in the software, it's community software, right. So that means you can do something about it. But you have to be patient. You can't go in and demoralize everybody in the project which is easy to do by the way. But we're kind of at the mercy of whoever shows up and complains. So hopefully they treat us nicely. The first thing I try to do is calm them down. They do come -- it's kind of like a shell shock or detailing with proprietary companies. So if you have something wrong with the software and all you have to talk to is somebody who doesn't know the software who hired a sounding board for you to yell at. They can't help you. They may pass along the information or they may not. But, yes, in the project we want to make things better. And when you have that kind of mindset it is more of a project, right. If something is wrong with the project you don't go out and scream at somebody. So you try and see if other people are having the same problem.

I made a video about what to do if you find something wrong like in Inkscape and how to formulate it and its good information that we can act on quickly. It takes some training.

>> So in our last two minutes I have one last question for you. So one of the keywords you said was patience. What would you say to your design colleagues out there who just want a piece of software to work and get on with their lives?

>> I would say to them too bad because everything has -- I mean, I've been using Adobe software for a long, long time and it's never been bug-free. There might be other bugs in the open source software, but that's kind of the name of the game for proprietary and non-proprietary software. So I mean if they're happy with what they have and they're truly okay with buying a new machine every time Windows gets slow or only working on a Mac OS on their hardware because they basically made it not illegal not to. Then maybe it's a good tradeoff for you. And that's okay. We're not trying to force everybody our free software. I think most of the GNOME software license.

I start out with this software I presented it to everyone in hopes that it will be useful. So if it's useful then use it. If it's not, then stick with whatever you like.

>> Great answer. Okay. And with that, Chris, we are done. Thank you for joining us in this GUADEC conference this year.

>> Sure. Thank you.