

RE: FreeBSD's Visual Identity: Outdated?

Source: <http://unix.derkeiler.com/Mailing-Lists/FreeBSD/arch/2004-12/0172.html>

From: Ted Mittelstaedt (*tedm_at_toybox.placo.com*)

Date: 12/28/04

To: "Roger 'Rocky' Vetterberg" <listsusb@401.cx>, "Simon Burke" <simon.burke@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, 27 Dec 2004 21:36:36 -0800

> -----Original Message-----

> From: owner-freebsd-questions@freebsd.org

> [mailto:owner-freebsd-questions@freebsd.org]On Behalf Of Roger 'Rocky'

> Vetterberg

> Sent: Monday, December 27, 2004 4:57 PM

> To: Simon Burke

> Cc: freebsd-www@freebsd.org; freebsd-arch@freebsd.org;

> freebsd-questions@freebsd.org; freebsd-advocacy@freebsd.org

> Subject: Re: FreeBSD's Visual Identity: Outdated?

>

>

> Simon Burke wrote:

> [snip]

>>>2. If it wasn't for the interesting content and structure of the FreeBSD

>>> website, it would be among the less beautiful. Yes, it serves its

>>> purpose well by being simple and straight to the point. But

>> a redesign

>>> could offer just the same -- simplicity and accuracy -- without being

>>> ugly.

>>

>>

>> Aesthetics are not everything, the web site does what its supposed to

>> do. Also i actually like how it looks.

>> A lot of people have strong feelings about all these all singing all

>> dancing webistes. There is just no need. Keep it simple and easy to

>> navigate around thats all thats really important. If the aesthetics

>> really matter more than function to such people who use BSD then they

>> would probably be not using BSD but either windows or linux, where you

>> have a nice pretty GUI to look at all the nice pretty sites.

>

> This is where I think a lot of people simply does not understand the

> problem.

Roger I understand the problem, I wrote a book on FreeBSD integration in 2000. The problem is I think you don't understand the problem.

freebsd-arch: RE: FreeBSD's Visual Identity: Outdated?

- > *Im a FreeBSD user. I like FreeBSD because it does not have all the*
- > *flashy installers and pretty GUI's that many linux distros seems to*
- > *have today.*

That frankly isn't the reason you should like it. You should like it because it works better than most commercial operating systems let alone most operating systems.

- > *But still, Ive been screaming for years for someone to*
- > *improve the website. Why?*
- > *Anyone that has stood in front of a boardroom full of CEO's or similar*
- > *and tried to promote the use of FreeBSD in a big organisation knows*
- > *why. They might like all the facts about the os, the rock-solid*
- > *stability, the lightning-fast performance and its solid reputation as*
- > *a server os, but one look at the website and they will run screaming*
- > *towards the nearest linux advocate instead.*

Most of the CEO's I've dealt with don't give a shit on a shingle about a product website. What they care about is: 'can what I need done be done in a way that is a) cheap and b) works and c) won't lock me in to you'

FreeBSD meets criteria A and B really well but it does not meet C. Linux meets A and B but BARELY meets C. Windows definitely meets C and usually meets B and doesn't usually meet A.

The problem of course is that A and C are related. If I am a CEO and I sign a FreeBSD or Linux deal – and you are a sole-source provider, then once I have all my business processes into you, I'm locked into you. Once that happens my thought processes are that your going to become very expensive to me – why, because there's no competition to you out there. I'm not going to do that unless I trust you implicitly. And there's very few business people I am ever going to trust implicitly, save perhaps unless your a son or daughter, and even then I may not.

You have to understand of course that this is old-school knee-jerk thinking. The CEO's are scared to death of you Roger. They don't understand what your selling, they don't understand how to integrate technology into their systems, they don't even understand their current system.

CEO's choose Windows because they think that there's enough Windows guys out there that if they don't like the one they have they can boot him out and get another. They only will give up choosing Windows if they either absolutely cannot afford it, or if Windows simply won't do what they need done.

If they cannot afford it, what they will then do is keep dragging Windows consultant after Windows consultant in to present to them, until they stumble over an ignoramus (which is not hard) who over commits himself and promises the world. They will then burn up

freebsd-arch: RE: FreeBSD's Visual Identity: Outdated?

this guy, threatening lawsuits and everything else until they have extracted the last drop of free work they can, then they will jettison him. If they simply cannot find any ignoramuses then I've seen them try deputizing some sales guy or secretary to manage their Windows deployment, and finally a year afterwards when they have a house full of Windows XP Home edition and no server, and a giant workgroup that's falling apart, and they have lost some critical files because they weren't backing up Sally Sue's workstation and her disk crashed, then they will panic and overspend on a Windows installation.

The CEO's that choose FreeBSD or Linux are the ones where even the Windows consultants they drag in all tell them "I can't do that" either because Windows cannot do it, or because the price they want it done at is so unbelievably cheap that even the ignoramus Windows consultants can see that it's impossible.

My take on it is that about 90% of the FreeBSD production installs are least-cost deals. All of the ones we have ever sold to customers (and we do both Windows and UNIX projects) are like this. I'm sure that one of these days we might get a plum contract that is a high-power server that cannot be done with Windows and the customer knows it, and wants it done UNIX, it's only a matter of time. But I would be willing to bet that after they ask if we can do UNIX and we say yes, their next question will be if we can do Sun, which we can. And frankly the cost of Solaris for a server is nothing compared to the labor cost.

I've frankly never seen a Linux-vs-FreeBSD deal where Linux won if the consultant wanted to use FreeBSD, and the customer was willing to deviate from Microsoft. VERY few customers are willing to deviate from Microsoft, at least not in the Western states. And the ones that are willing almost always want to do it themselves, and only want us to come in and set everything up for them while they watch us over the shoulder and try to get us to teach them how to do it – because these are people who are too lazy to read the manual and learn how to do things themselves, they just want someone to set it up and teach them how to maintain it, so they can pay the minimum amount of money for the specialist, and spend the minimum amount of time learning how to do anything.

> *We, the users, might not care about our image, but if we want to be
> taken seriously by the rest of the world we better do something about it!*
>

I would suggest that if you really are this lit up about this issue that you direct your customers to you OWN website which is quite obviously superior to the FreeBSD one.

>
> *Clearly, you have not tried to "sell" FreeBSD to a big corporation.*

RE: FreeBSD's Visual Identity: Outdated?

>

Roger you are just being impatient. You haven't defined 'big' here but if you mean 'big' in that the company has over 500 employees in an office building, then even you must know that the check signers in these companies are almost never under the age of 40. Most of them are over 40 and most of them came up through the sales ranks, and not through the technology ranks. These are people who 25 years ago were partying their way through a business degree in some university and the only thing that they really know well is how to sell their companies products. That's why they work at a big company, didn't you know? Deep down they know they are incompetents and they are too scared to go out on their own even when they could make triple the money if they really knew what they were doing.

They don't really understand anything about technology infrastructure and they certainly didn't go to grade school or high school with a personal computer in the house, like kids today. And the worst part is that they matriculated during the time that in business education in this country that the 'cog in the machine' aspect of workers was totally emphasized. Their professors drilled into their heads the idea that every worker in the company must be interchangeable and they deep down detest and hate the idea of there being any such thing as 'key employees'

Why do you think that the current federal government administration just takes the position that workers need to retrain to the new economy, as if just retraining 100 million people every 5 years to new jobs is a good way to run the economy? This is a message that comes straight out of that generation and resonates with todays big business movers and shakers. That is why these people are doing such a terrible job mucking up American big business today, the current debacle with the airline industry is proof of that, and the amount of bankruptcies over the last 6 years has been breathtaking. Very few of these idiots are anything more than closet control freaks.

To be successful in todays market you have to be able to individualize your products to what the customers in the market want, and there is no way for a big business to do that without really drastically increasing the complexity of it's business workflow. Customers today want you to stock 100 variations of your product and build all of them to order, and they want it for the same price that 20 years ago they would buy the cookie-cutter version you could sell them for. The only way to do that is to integrate technology completely in every last speck of business process that a big company does, and it takes a crew of key technicians to do that. The few big companies that have learned this aren't asking consultants what the damn operating system is going to be on the computer systems they are asking the consultants to build for them. They are telling the consultants 'this is what the end result needs to be, you either figure out how to get it for us using whatever things you want to use to get there, or get

the hell out'

Roger, you really need to be dumbing down your presentations, these CEO's your presenting to really don't understand all those big words. Instead of using "FreeBSD" use "UNIX" It's shorter and even the most sheltered of them understand that yooouu-nikx is something that runs computers like winders is. And rather than telling them how many mega-bytes and giga-bits the nice new server is going to run at, just tell them it's going to be big, and fast and powerful like Arnold Schwarznegger. Get them sold on the idea that your providing a -solution to their problems- not that your providing them some freebsd system that is real cool and does something they are pretty fuzzy about exactly what. If they start asking you exactly how your going to do this don't get sidetracked into a technologists conversation.

In fact you might just consider hiring a professional salesperson that doesn't really know too much about what your selling. These CEO's really are more interested in things like when your going to be finished building the new system, who is going to train the end users, how is it going to help them make money, how much money are they going to have to pay for it upfront, and how much money they are going to have to pay for it ongoing. The salesperson should be figuring all that out with them first. You shouldn't even be talking about operating systems until you have sold them on yourself and your company, and if FreeBSD really is an objection to them, then they should like you enough so that they want you to build a Linux solution for them. Once you get them hooked and after a year or so you can switch them over to FreeBSD.

Ted

freebsd-arch@freebsd.org mailing list

<http://lists.freebsd.org/mailman/listinfo/freebsd-arch>

To unsubscribe, send any mail to "freebsd-arch-unsubscribe@freebsd.org"