

FreeMind constitution

some rules to live and develop together

1 Introduction

This document aims at giving one of the bases of democracy, legal certainty, and governance structures. It has been written in the optic of having simple but effective rules, allowing the project to gain and retain new developers and other helpers. Assuming that users will be more attracted by quality software than by the structure of the project, those are less considered in these pages.

The release cycle will be detailed as being the main purpose of an Open Source project, then the different roles explained, and some final notes added.

2 Release cycle

2.1 Kickoff

At the beginning of a new release cycle, a release topic should be decided to give some consistency to the release (bug fixing release, documentation release or more specifically “collaboration”, “import/export”, etc...). A new page is dedicated to the release in the Wiki where each developer can describe the features he wants to implement for the upcoming release. Only condition for acceptance into the new release is that a sponsoring-developer sponsors the feature, i.e. accepts to introduce it into the source repository.

Sponsoring-developers should base their decision to accept (and sponsor) a new feature on alignment with the release topic, soundness, compatibility with new and existing features, etc... It is also important that the “Feature requests” tracker is considered, in order to satisfy the users.

Once a reasonable set of features has been defined, the release cycle can officially start; it is the role of the administrators to kickoff this phase.

2.2 Alpha phase

During the alpha phase, each sponsoring-developer can release one or more alpha versions out of his own development branch. Each alpha release can have one or more of the new features, even incompatible; i.e. alpha1 can have features A and B, where alpha2 would have features B and C, or even only D; file formats might differ, etc...

The alpha phase stops when all features decided during the kickoff have been released once and reached a reasonable level of stability, or have been deemed to be skipped. The administrators take the decision to go to the beta phase.

2.3 Beta phase

The beta phase starts with a first beta release which contains all new features introduced during the alpha phase, as well as a consolidated and stabilized file format.

The main purpose of the beta phase is to fix bugs. The following might also happen but should be avoided as much as possible:

- addition of new features
- modification of the file format

Bugs and Patches from the corresponding trackers need to be closed as much as possible, none of critical importance kept open.

The test manager decides together with the administrators on when to close the beta phase. In case of disagreement, a vote can be organized where the test manager has a decisive voice (i.e. he decides the ballot in case of 2 against 2 votes).

2.4 Release candidate phase

After the first Release Candidate, packagers and translators are invited to provide their updates. This means that the structure of the program, strings used and file format should only be modified if they are required to close critical bugs.

A second Release Candidate should be created once packages and translations have been provided; further ones only if required for bug fixing purposes.

The test manager decides together with the administrators on when to close the Release Candidate phase (and have a new official release). In case of disagreement, a vote can be organized where the test manager has a decisive voice (i.e. he decides the ballot in case of 2 against 2 votes).

3 Roles

All roles have this in common that the people carrying those need to be on the freemind-developer mailing list.

3.1 Administrators

There must be 3 administrators at any time, to have a critical mass and avoid pat situations 1 against 1. To make it simple, Administrators have the last word on almost everything, but need to involve the community, and name the other roles.

If one administrator retires, the two others have to agree on a new one; if two administrators retire together, the remaining one names one, and they name together the third one; if three administrators retire together, we have a problem, better not think about it.

3.2 Test manager

The test manager has the main responsibility to test the application during the beta and release candidate phases, and decide about the end of those phases.

The test manager has full access to the trackers and the release system.

3.3 Sponsoring-developers

Sponsoring developers are developers who have access to the source repository

(CSV or SVN).

3.4 *Developers, packagers, translators*

Their roles should be pretty obvious, don't they?

3.5 *Supporters*

(I think it would be good to have some people who somehow officially support our users in the forums, check their issues, make them reproduceable, create bug reports and assign them to the right developer.)

4 Notices

- No important decision can be taken, even by the administrators, which hasn't been discussed on the freemind-developer mailing list; and, once taken, it is only effective once clearly announced on the same list.