

What translating Thunderbird taught me?

Translations
FOSDEM 26

Me

- I don't use translated software :)
- Motivated by the consumers
- I localize for Mozilla and Thunderbird more than 15 years. (with ups and downs)



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[#Bulgarian](#) localization daily (device) usage of the products I contribute to:

- Firefox Desktop: 130 764
- Firefox for Android: 52 954
- Thunderbird: 20 284

[#localization](#)

[#foss](#)

[#firefox](#)

...and 1 more

Jan 25, 2026, 02:04 PM · · Web

0 boosts · 0 quotes · 1 favorite

Thunderbird desktop

- Problem: Translated by more than 30 ppl over the years with limited success
- Solution 1:
 - Organize a QA session with various groups
 - Provide clear instructions what to test and how to report result
 - Use the media and community to share the news


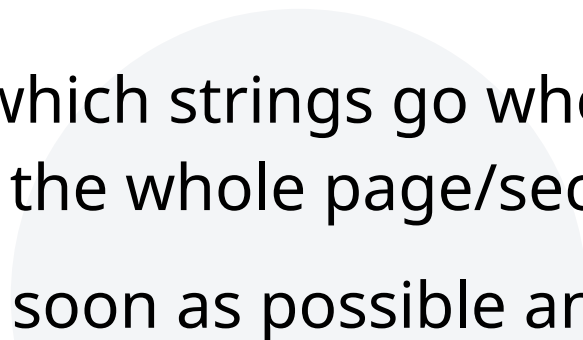
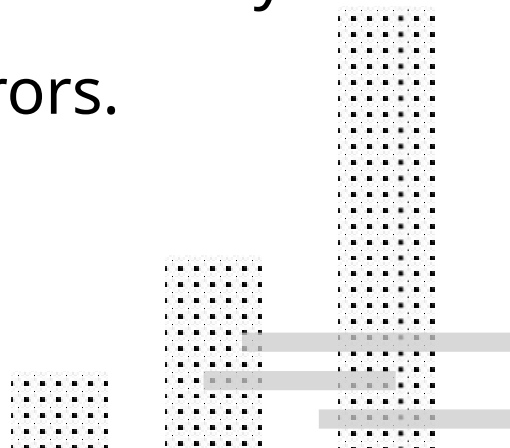


Thunderbird desktop

- Problem: Translated by more than 30 ppl over the years with limited success
- Solution 2:
 - Use a vocabulary for the majority of the terms – **e-mail** can be translated in many ways.


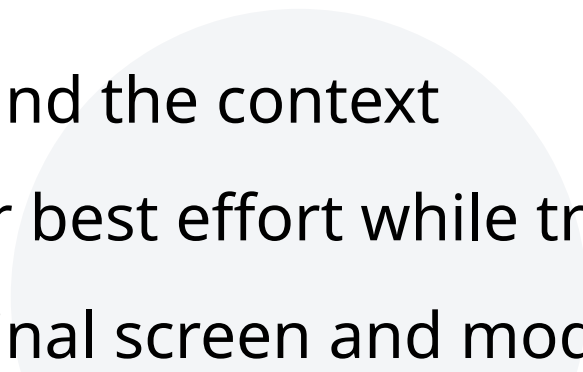
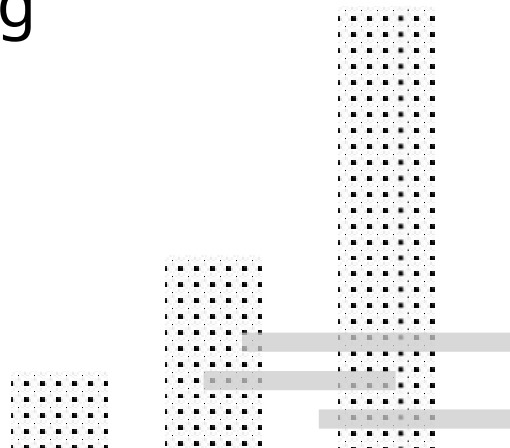


Thunderbird desktop

- Problem: String by string translation caused bad UX.
 - Solution:
 - Identify which strings go where (not so easy), translate the whole page/section/functionality
 - Test is as soon as possible and fix errors.
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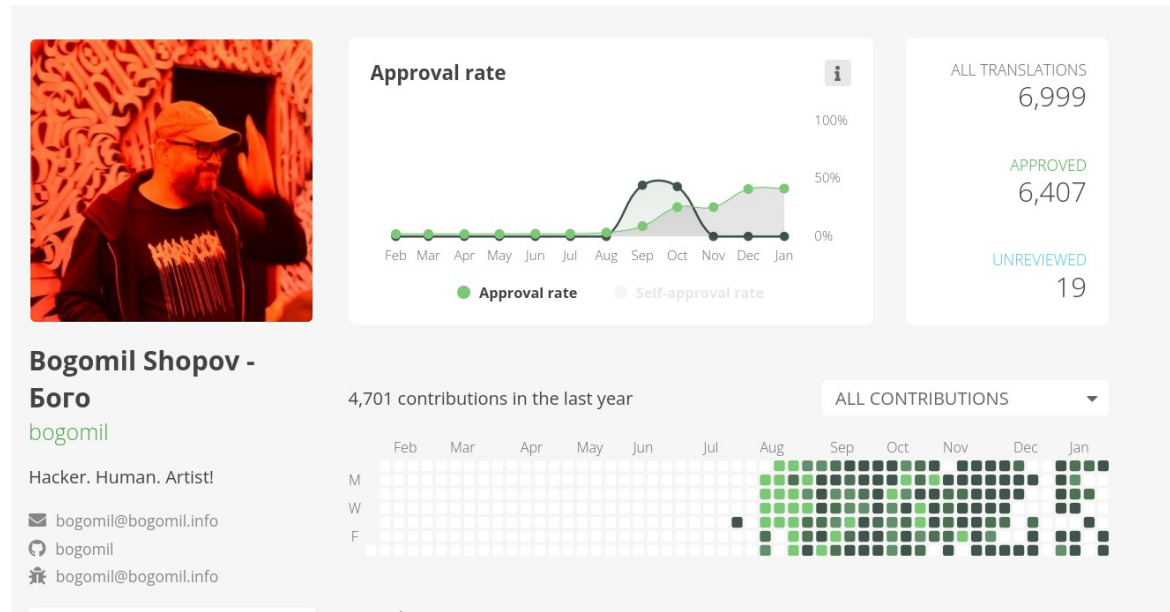


Thunderbird desktop

- Problem: Oh, in my language we have genders.
 - Solution:
 - Understand the context
 - Give your best effort while translating
 - See the final screen and modify
- 
- 
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Thunderbird desktop

- Problem: I don't have time for the translation
- Solution




Thunderbird Mobile

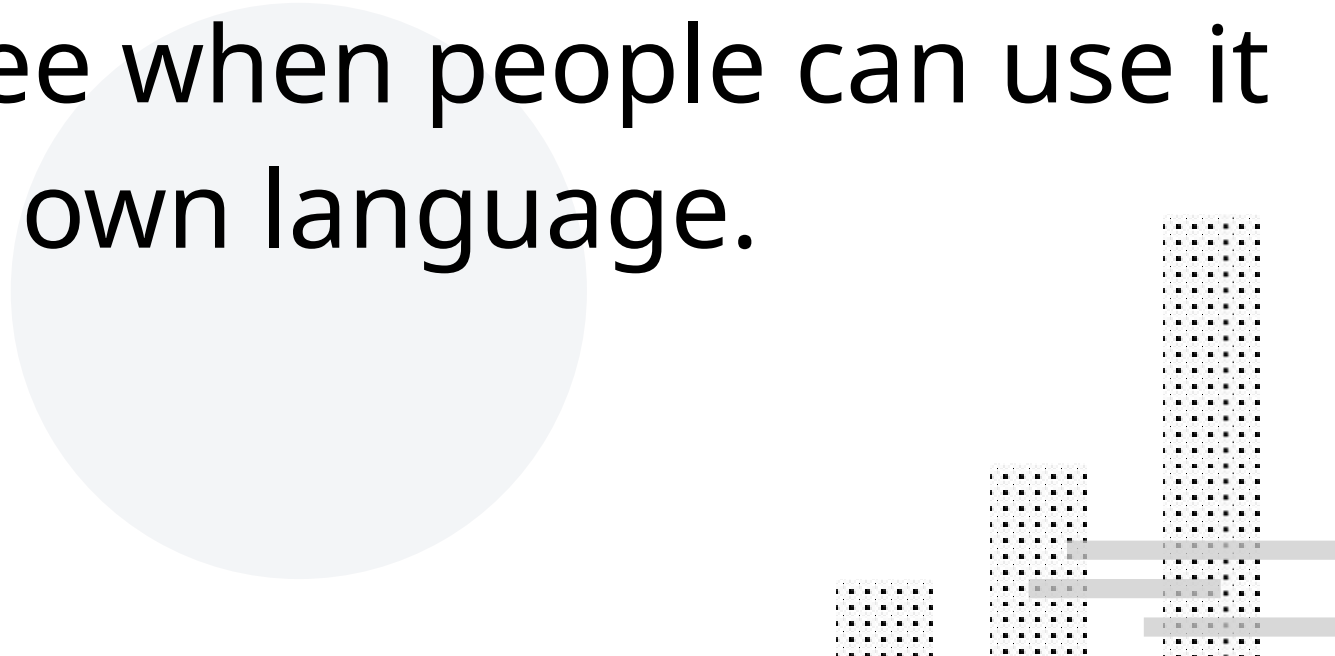
- K9 >> Thunderbird Mobile challenges: community didn't trust the move.
- Edit vs. Редактиране (len4 vs len11)
- Translated by **different** translators - not a consistent terminology even with Thunderbird desktop
- 1:1 translation <> UX – not with a mobile thinking



The One Thing Worth Remembering



Free software only becomes truly free when people can use it in their own language.



Join my network!

- fediverse/mastodon:
@bogo@happyyr.com
- web: Talkweb.eu
- mail: bogomil@talkweb.eu
(PGP)

