Professional Usability in Open Source Projects: GNOME, OpenOffice.org, NetBeans

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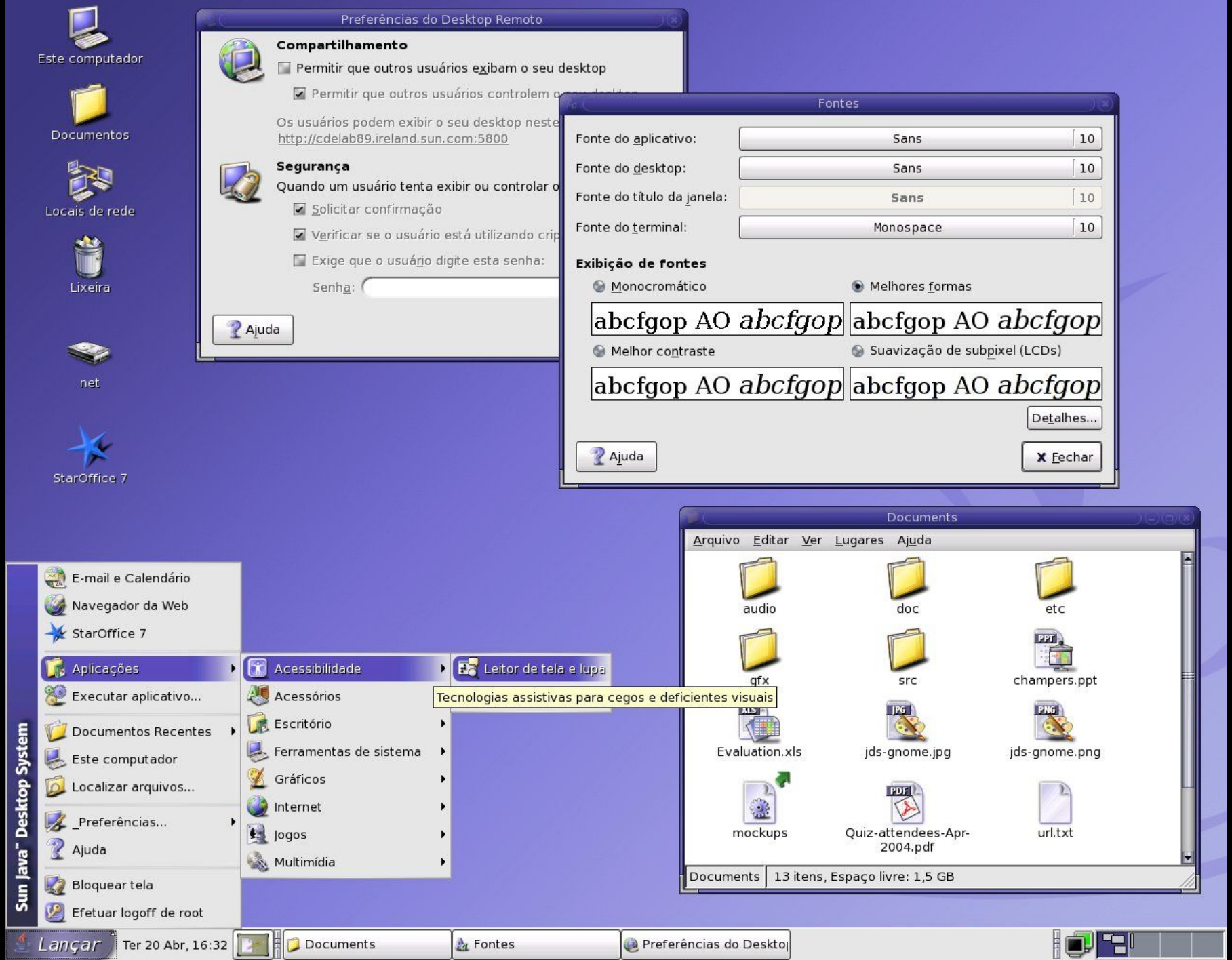
Sun microsystems

Agenda

- Our projects
- Open Source software
- Challenges of Open Source
- Contributions to improve Usability
- Conclusion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StarOffice 7
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Professional Usability in Open Source Projects:GNOME, OpenOffice.org, NetBeans - StarOffice 7

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Professional Usability in Open Source Projects: GNOME, OpenOffice.org, NetBeans

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ABSTRACT

Working as a usability professional in the ope
is a challenging task. The decentralized an
driven approach of open source projects can l
corporate processes and usability engineering
Nonetheless, there is great potential for large
contribute to open source projects. Providing u
how that leads to usable and useful product
situation for developers, the corporations,
importantly – the users.

Author Keywords

open source software development, usability
corporate environment

ACM Classification Keywords

H.5.2 User Interfaces

INTRODUCTION

There is some truth in the common notion th
systems have poor user interfaces. Often they
engineers for engineers. The feedback cycle
does not exist because there are few us
participating in open source development p
problem is well-known and has been discuss
papers and conferences [].

Sun Microsystems, Inc. is a large, multinatio
with engineering teams around the world
tradition in building systems on open sta
involvement in the usability of open source
natural continuation of this strategy.

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http://so-doc.germany.sun.com/Teams/User_Exp

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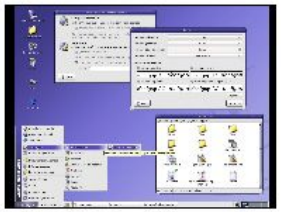

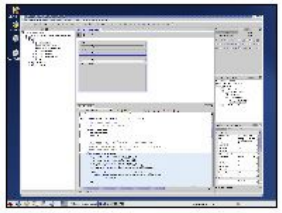

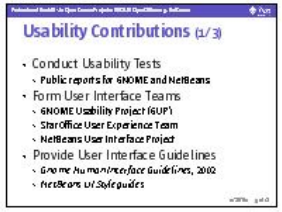

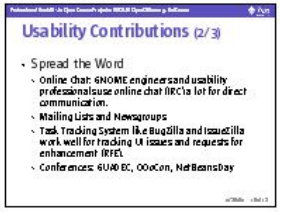

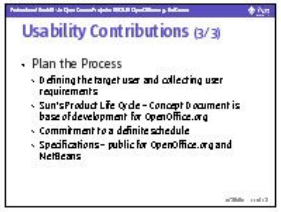

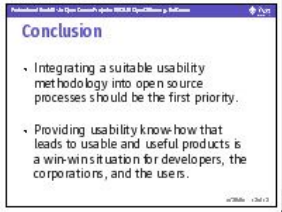

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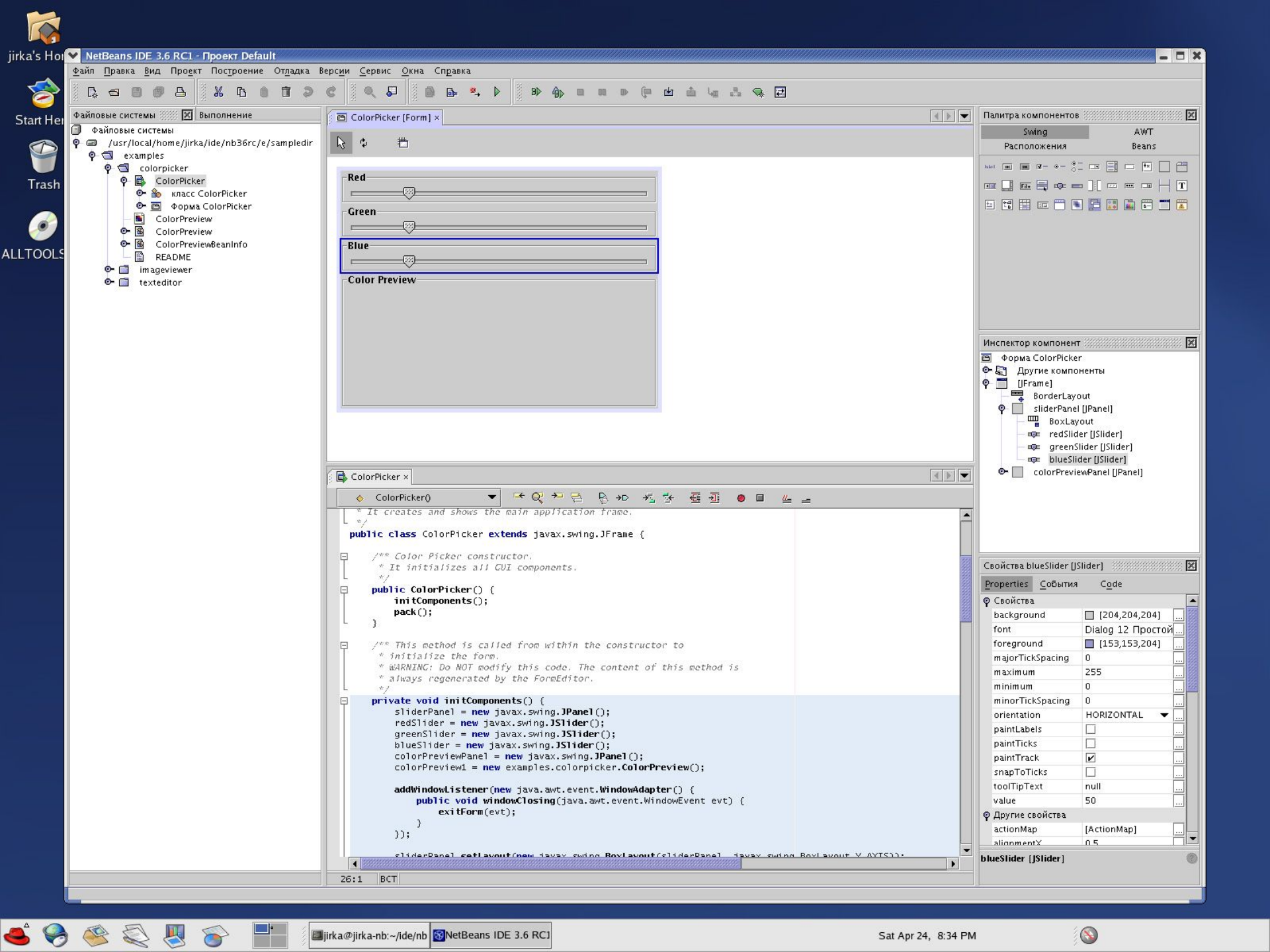
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imageviewer
texteditor
ColorPicker [Form]
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Blue
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Палитра компонентов
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Расположения
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Инспектор компонент
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Другие компоненты
[JFrame]
BorderLayout
sliderPanel [JPanel]
BoxLayout
redSlider [JSlider]
greenSlider [JSlider]
blueSlider [JSlider]
colorPreviewPanel [JPanel]
ColorPicker
ColorPicker()
* It creates and shows the main application frame.
*/
public class ColorPicker extends javax.swing.JFrame {
/** Color Picker constructor.
* It initializes all GUI components.
*/
public ColorPicker() {
initComponents();
pack();
}
/** This method is called from within the constructor to
* initialize the form.
* WARNING: Do NOT modify this code. The content of this method is
* always regenerated by the FormEditor.
*/
private void initComponents() {
sliderPanel = new javax.swing.JPanel();
redSlider = new javax.swing.JSlider();
greenSlider = new javax.swing.JSlider();
blueSlider = new javax.swing.JSlider();
colorPreviewPanel = new javax.swing.JPanel();
colorPreview1 = new examples.colorpicker.ColorPreview();
addWindowListener(new java.awt.event.WindowAdapter() {
public void windowClosing(java.awt.event.WindowEvent evt) {
exitForm(evt);
}
});
26:1
BCT
Свойства blueSlider [JSlider]
Properties
События
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Свойства
background [204,204,204]
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foreground [153,153,204]
majorTickSpacing 0
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minimum 0
minorTickSpacing 0
orientation HORIZONTAL
paintLabels
paintTicks
paintTrack
snapToTicks
toolTipText null
value 50
Другие свойства
actionMap [ActionMap]
blueSlider [JSlider]
jirka@jirka-nb:~/ide/nb
NetBeans IDE 3.6 RC1
Sat Apr 24, 8:34 PM

Open Source Software

- Collaborative development
- Communication in public
- Ability to adopt the software to different needs
- Distributed ownership of code
  - Does this imply ownership of modules?
- Engineer(ing) driven

- Several contributors vs. one major contributor

The integration of software cannot be achieved by committee, where everyone has to put in their own additions (featuritis again). It must be controlled by dictatorial artists with full say on the final cut.

Ted Nelson, 1990

Challenges

- Attitude of developers
- Communication is scattered between different channels.
- Responsibility for the product rather than just for his code
- Process – Early involvement of usability and clearly defined decision-making process
- Defining the target audience – We assume that users on mailing lists are not typical users.

Usability Contributions (1/3)

- Conduct Usability Tests
  - Public reports for GNOME and NetBeans
- Form User Interface Teams
  - GNOME Usability Project (GUP)
  - StarOffice User Experience Team
  - NetBeans User Interface Project
- Provide User Interface Guidelines
  - *Gnome Human Interface Guidelines*, 2002
  - *NetBeans UI Styleguides*

Usability Contributions (2/3)

- Spread the Word
  - Online Chat: GNOME engineers and usability professionals use online chat (IRC) a lot for direct communication.
  - Mailing Lists and Newsgroups
  - Task Tracking System like BugZilla and IssueZilla work well for tracking UI issues and requests for enhancement (RFE).
  - Conferences: GUADEC, OOoCon, NetBeans Day

Usability Contributions (3/3)

- Plan the Process
  - Defining the target user and collecting user requirements
  - Sun's Product Life Cycle – Concept Document is base of development for OpenOffice.org
  - Commitment to a definite schedule
  - Specifications – public for OpenOffice.org and NetBeans

Conclusion

- Integrating a suitable usability methodology into open source processes should be the first priority.
- Providing usability know-how that leads to usable and useful products is a win-win situation for developers, the corporations, and the users.

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