

# **How to complain about usability**

**Matthew Paul Thomas**

**Why are we here?**



**We love LugRadio**



**We love LugRadio**

**We love Linux**



**We love LugRadio**

**We love Linux**

**We love Free Software**



**We love LugRadio**

**We love Linux**

**We love Free Software**

**We want more people  
using Free Software**

**Usability!!!!1!!11**

**Marketing**

**Data migration**

**Seduction**

**Training and  
support**

**Interoperability**

**Usability!!!!1!!11**

**Cost**

**Reliability**

**Performance**

**Security**

**Doing stuff that  
people actually want**



**Usability**

# **Giving usability feedback**

**Six steps**

**1. Raise your standards**

**You have a high threshold  
for pain**

## Preferences



General

Source Specific

Extensions

### File Policies

- Copy files to media folders when importing
- Write metadata to files
- Uppdate file and folder names

### Miscellaneous

- Disable features requiring Internet access
- Enable ReplayGain correction

Close

# Examples of problems:

- **Needless jargon**
- **Bad grammar/punctuation**
- **Repeated user errors**
- **Checkbox with mysterious off state**
- **“Enable” or “Disable”**

**2. Use the appropriate forum**



**Mailing list**  
**Bug tracker**  
**Wiki**  
**IdeaTorrent**



# ubuntu brainstorm

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Idea sandbox



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Ideas in development



Implemented ideas



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## ★ Gmail Integration in Evolution

Written by [Shady3D](#) the 10 Oct 09 at 19:45. Related project: [Evolution Mail and Calendar](#). [New](#) [\[Mark as duplicate\]](#) [\[Delete\]](#)

setting-up Gmail in Evolution every time is a hell for non geeks. calendar, address-book, and notes are a completely different thing.

444 votes



### Solution #1: Gmail Template

Written by [Shady3D](#) the 10 Oct 09 at 19:45. Report as [spam](#) / [irrelevant](#) [\[Mark as duplicate\]](#) [\[Delete rationale<->solution link\]](#) [\[Delete\]](#)

the setup wizard will just take the username and password and thats it.

what will the wizard do is:

1. connect to Gmail using POP or IMAP
2. better address-book sync
3. auto connect with Google Calendar
4. auto connect with Google Tasks(i don't know if there is API available for that)

25 votes

### Solution #2: Import config settings like in Thunderbird.

Written by [ActionParsnip](#) the 13 Oct 09 at 11:33. Report as [spam](#) / [irrelevant](#) [\[Mark as duplicate\]](#) [\[Delete rationale<->solution link\]](#) [\[Delete\]](#)

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#### Administration

- > Process duplicate reports
- > Process spam reports
- > Process irrelevance reports
- > Process offensive reports
- > Process in dev reports
- > Process implemented reports

**3. Avoid the word “usability”**

**Learnability**  
**Memorability**  
**Efficiency**  
**Safety**  
**Satisfaction**

**Learnability:**  
**“A of B people  
don’t understand X”**

**Memorability:  
“A of B people  
forget how to do X  
after Y days”**

**Learnability/memorability:**  
**“X is inconsistent  
with other programs /  
with interface guidelines”**

**Efficiency:**

**“X takes too many clicks”**



**Safety:**

**“Can’t undo X”**

**“X is too easy to do”**

**Satisfaction:**

**“Current design produces  
N% less satisfaction  
than design Y”**

**Satisfaction:**  
**“X is ugly”**

**Satisfaction:**

**“X doesn’t line up with Y”**

# **4. Focus on the problem**

**What happens: \_\_\_\_\_**

**What should happen: \_\_\_\_\_**

**5. Think of multiple solutions**

**Most usability problems have  
multiple solutions**



**The first solution you think of  
probably isn't the best one**

**Suggesting multiple solutions  
leaves developers in control**

**Suggesting multiple solutions  
emphasizes the problem**

**6. Don't be a dick**

# Summary

Don't be a dick.

Do encourage participation.



**Persuasion**

**Words, words ...  
they're all we have to go on.**


**— Tom Stoppard**

***Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead***



**Mea maxima culpa**

## **Matthew Thomas is a lunatic** (Score:1, Informative)

by [alecf \(2079\)](#)  on 2005.04.14 8:45 ([#12226504](#)) [Homepage](#)

He was the scourge of the mozilla project until he finally left in a huff.

He's a whiner and a complainer who thinks that the concept of compromise is an exercise for the weak. Put simply, he doesn't live in the real world.

I could write 69 reasons that any software sucks, that doesn't mean I'm someone who deserves a story on slashdot.

Gwibber 2.0 is awful. Wasteful window design, inane account setup defaults, and even I can't work out how to post anything.

5:36 AM Oct 19th from web



mpt

Matthew Paul Thomas

@mpt Thank goodness you said that. Not being a UI guru I was mostly keeping my mouth shut.

5:46 AM Oct 19th from Gwibber in reply to mpt



**codedragon**

Graham Binns

@mpt ouch! It'd be awesome if you could blog a usability assessment, & provide some mockups for your thoughts regarding improvements? :)

6:09 AM Oct 19th from web in reply to mpt



**oldmanuk**

Dominic Evans

@mpt: your feedback would have been appreciated four months ago when I was posting screenshots in the ayatana channel on IRC.

10:52 AM Oct 19th from web in reply to mpt



segphault

Ryan Paul

- 1. Raise your standards**
- 2. Use the appropriate forum**
- 3. Avoid the word “usability”**
- 4. Focus on the problem**
- 5. Suggest multiple solutions**
- 6. Don't be a dick**