Written by
Sarah Allen, Erika Drushka,
and Michelle Thorne,
Festival Organisers

Finding a Rhythm

The first MozFest wasn't technically a MozFest. Instead, it was the Drumbeat Festival, a convening of leaders making radical disruptions in learning and in web technology. Held at the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, sessions took place in the museum, in tents at a nearby square, and in a Hack Bus that arrived spontaneously and parked (illegally) on the street nearby. There were 200 attendees, bad acoustics, and the shared sense that this was something special.

With a design philosophy that was half deliberate, half laissez-faire, Drumbeat had a can-do atmosphere, with no one exactly sure what was going on. Activities were loosely organised in tents where a person or team coordinated activities around themes like Open Education or Open Hardware. The idea was that participants could spend the whole weekend in one tent, join sessions in different tents, or just enjoy the ambient action around the festival.

Thanks to incredible local support who helped find the right venues, invited amazing local groups, and made the first festival authentically multilingual,

Drumbeat landed on just the right side of weird: one tent featured the internet fortune teller; the Hack Bus was unceremoniously towed by the city; and an unsanctioned popcorn machine accidentally perfumed the entire museum. Throughout the first day, new people continued to arrive, having heard through the grapevine that this strange scene was not to be missed.

"I wasn't really sure why I was there, but I just showed up and met everyone in the lobby. There were big funders and people I'd never met. And there was no script; all of us were inventing a track in the hotel lobby, straight off long-haul flights. It was a community coalition, full of social awkwardness, chaos, and people standing on chairs directing you to the next sessions. Some things were wonderful fails."

Chris Lawrence
Co-Founder, Loup Design & Innovation

Drumbeat served as a springboard for a diverse range of emerging leaders in open education, open journalism, and open internet of things, and fore-shadowed the issues of privacy, surveillance, and data that dominate news headlines today. It nurtured embryonic versions of projects like Open Badges, approaches to interactive storytelling later developed by

the Popcorn.js community, and the DIY spirit borne of maker spaces and fablabs.

The Drumbeat Festival ultimately set in motion ten years of collaborations, created countless friendships, and provided the spiritual underpinning for one of the most important events in the open internet space.

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LEARNING, FREEDOM AND THE WEB

London Calling

A year after the raw but promising Drumbeat Festival, Mozilla moved its annual gathering to London, not realising it was putting down roots that would anchor it in this city for the next nine years. Along with the change in cities came a change in name, and the Mozilla Festival (instantly shortened to MozFest) was solidified as a gathering place for Mozilla's global network.

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"When Michelle Thorne approached me in the spring of 2011, I'd just shut down my first business which had been a terrible shock. The idea of producing a festival set for the first time in London felt like a piece of cake in comparison, and I trusted Michelle as a leader.

The culture of communication at Mozilla was very different than anything I'd experienced, and after many a late night Etherpad session with people on the team in the U.S. and Canada, a broad plan was hatched and anything vendor-related was mine to hold onto. My experience in conferences and hackdays really informed my decision-making, so I focused a lot on the catering and coffee experience of the 2011 and 2012 editions. I worked closely with Claire Selby, who would become a lifelong friend, to find the best caterer and get coffee trucks set up on each floor, and I worked with the formidable Diana Ilinca to manage our very large pool of volunteers

It tickles me when I've been back, either to run a session or catch up with friends, to see how much it's grown and how large the team is now. I can still hear Gunner's voice booming on the end of a Skype call even now. Long live MozFest."

Alexandra Deschamps-Sonsino
Author of 'Smarter Homes: how technology will change your home life'

Our new host was Ravensbourne University, a specialised design and media campus with a desire to innovate and change the world through creativity. Its open floor plan and collaborative atmosphere made it the perfect place to call home. There was a great sense of co-designing and co-ownership with the Ravensbourne team, and the opportunity to collaborate with a constant evolving student network. Here was home-grown talent that could support our event through camera teams, AV set up, event management, and new ideas.

"The first couple of years, we had a tiny delivery team working to assist Mozilla in the production of the event in the venue managing several hundred people. Ravensbourne's IT capabilities weren't sufficient to cope with every super-connected festival attendee on their laptop, iPad and mobile phone – the infrastructure just wasn't there. Serving food to large numbers over three days was also tough with no onsite cooking facilities.

As the festival grew and adapted, so did Ravensbourne. A few years into the relationship, the two worked together seamlessly and the partnership hit its stride. We managed to embed Mozilla projects into the curriculum for both Graphic Design and Digital Advertising, with the Product and Interaction students working on accessibility in the Firefox browser. Truly peak collaboration!

I remember that the first advocates were the students. I mean, who wouldn't want to wear a fox suit and appear on stage? Most of them saw the festival as an opportunity to strengthen their portfolio, and applied to join the Ravensbourne or Mozilla production teams. They were working on everything from making sure people got fed, to running, production, filming, and IT set-up and troubleshooting. Students taking the Web Media course at Ravensbourne acted as live journalists during the festival. And I love the fact that one of those original volunteers who wore the fox suit is now a full time Mozilla employee.

Like any partnership, Mozilla Festival and Ravensbourne hit bumps in the road over the years. But it was an amazing ride and both came out the other side with experiences and lessons learned that have strengthened how communities can be served best – especially where they intersect."

Claire Selby
Former Head of Commercial Relationships, Ravensbourne

Year two of the festival gathered revolutionaries on the front lines: journalists, documentarians, indie game designers, amateur music video makers – people using web media to express themselves and show the world as they saw it.

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2011 RAVENSBOURNE UNIVERSITY

MozFest was built as a platform for the community, but programmatically it reflected what was happening inside Mozilla. This year we focused the festival on media, which reflected our nascent open journalism program and our growing partnerships with institutions like The Guardian and the BBC. Mozilla was hosting journalism hack jams across the UK and East London's Shoreditch – the Silicon Roundabout – was becoming an epicenter of the web and its possibilities. Technology was bringing people together in a way that felt creative and kinetic.

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"My very first MozFest (then Drumbeat Festival) was in Barcelona in 2010. I'd only been a Mozilla staff member for two months. The experience opened and blew my mind.

When London was touted as a possible followup venue for 2011, I didn't hesitate to help with the planning. When Michelle Thorne arrived from Berlin (with an umbrella and a bag of Haribos in tow), we hit the streets (pubs, actually) and actively engaged with active local tech communities. These included representatives from Design Jam to Barcamp London to Girl Geek Dinners to London Web Standards and others. Freshly armed with our findings and knowledge around what exactly would entice the local community to engage and attend a-hard-to-explain event, we went venue shopping (in the rain). When we later replayed our findings, it was obvious that Ravensbourne stood head and shoulders above others as our venue of choice. It oozed fun with its open and creative spaces. It had little quirks just right for a bunch of misfits trying to reshape the web. And an external architectural design that screamed, 'selfie'.

Location-wise, London was certainly making a strong case to be a worthy successor to Barcelona to nurture and grow the Mozilla Festival. And we were raring to get our hands dirty to plan, wrangle, and curate the upcoming event.

'Where would we go to next?' was always on our mind after selecting London for the second festival. But little did we know, nor could have predicted, that we'd end up staying in that very venue for nearly a decade. It's a legacy that's certainly created everlasting memories for everyone involved."

Dees Chinniah, @cyberdees

A Generation of Webmakers

MozFest's third year marked the rise of the maker spirit. The theme continued to evolve with the festival, this year to 'Making, Freedom, and the Web'. We invested more in nurturing the grassroots innovators doing incredible work creating, organising, and educating in their local communities. Mozilla was working to help millions of people move from using the web to making the web. Participants clamoured to be active: they wanted to get their hands dirty designing, making, and coding. Our attendees were an increasingly eclectic bunch and it felt vital to provide an environment where they could share opinions and expertise, while creating inroads for others to join them.

The desire for more active participation forced us to rethink our definition of a successful session. Experts had valuable knowledge to share, but the traditional session format of using Powerpoint presentations and speaking at, not with, audiences needed to be banished from the festival. We used the call for proposals to spur this change, challenging session hosts to consider how participants could interact, what they could learn and make, and how the work could continue post-festival.

The maker spirit attracted new audiences, too. Youth had an explicit invitation to attend the festival in the Hive Pop-Up. Hive, a US-based model that brings together youth programs to collaborate and co-organise, was in its second year at the festival.

"The intention was to transform the learning landscape by providing creative ways to share the unique Hive experience with more youth in more cities. We had 12 organizations from NYC, Chicago, San Francisco, and London facilitating hands-on activities like remixing board games, producing radio podcasts (before podcasts were cool!), designing virtual hang-out spaces and becoming digital storytellers around themes of freedom and remembrance. A few local school groups

showed up. They arrived as students and left as active media makers! They could make their way around the room to sample each of the activities or they could camp out as long as they wanted with the activities that sparked their interest the most. It was impossible not to smile watching the literal "a-ha" moments on their faces."

Lainie DeCoursy
Mozilla

Relationships formed at the Hive Pop-Up were the genesis of what would later become the Youth Zone. Initially, we envisioned containing the youth activities on the ground floor of Ravensbourne, but the feedback was clear: kids wanted full access to the festival. Regrettably, we hadn't foreseen this desire, but through the guidance of dedicated youth advocates, we began working with our Facilitators to ensure all sessions and activities could welcome young people.

Our Volunteer program was expanding and self-organising with people from all sectors uniting to support the frame of the event. Volunteers were fast becoming the heart of the festival, with individuals returning year after year and dedicating their time to ensure the festival ran smoothly.

"I gave a guest lecture on How To Start A Business for media students at Ravensbourne College, which just happened to take place the same week as the first London MozFest. There wasn't enough time to get my company properly involved, so I signed up to volunteer.

Mind. Blown. The experience was rich and captivating, such that I completely ignored the assigned shifts and worked through the entire weekend.

Each year, the festival has grown and evolved slightly, from its roots as a hackathon-meets-science-fair to the slick operation of today. What hasn't changed is the reason all Volunteers come back: the people. I'm confident you won't find many other events able to boast such long-term commitment from a Volunteer team.

MozFest Volunteers are like a family. The family you choose to be with. We share this whirlwind experience each year, taking on any challenge thrown at us, and making sure the festival runs without a hitch. Participants "come with an idea and leave with a community"; the Organisers, Facilitators, and Volunteers help to make sure that journey happens.

The work we do is intense. It requires close collaboration and great teamwork. I have worked with incredible people. Simon Howard was someone I will never forget. For two years running, Spike paired us to tackle the AV and equipment support issues on the venue's upper floors. Simon never slowed down and never stopped smiling. He passed away five years ago. Simon is missed."

Dan Monsieurle

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Less Yack, More Hack

By 2013, MozFest had built a reputation as a gathering of passionate thinkers and inventors from around the world who met to learn from each other and help forge the future of the web. The maker vibe had taken off and the community was fully immersed and leading the charge. The festival was increasingly chaotic, and this year we doubled down by declaring "less yack, more hack," encouraging both experts and novices from wildly divergent fields to bring their ideas to the table and spend the weekend building prototypes.

Mozilla's commitment to fostering a web-literate world was a driving force in the work, whether that meant teaching basic coding skills, spreading an understanding of privacy and security, or integrating the open web into non-traditional fields such as journalism and scientific research. Building off the previous year's success with increased participation, more interactive sessions began popping up, addressing topics like robotics and circuitry, gaming, and online data.

"The magic of MozFest is all the people working together – the participants, Wranglers, Facilitators, and Volunteers – to create and make an experience together, bigger than the sum of the parts. It is truly a demonstration of collaboration where each person can be a leader, a maker, and a learner at the same time.

When I think back on my years of MozFest, I always imagine running up and down the stairs with more tape and more markers all while watching each floor come to life. As wrangler of the Wranglers, I have a special place in my heart for the Space Wranglers – the dedicated souls creating interactive and inviting pathways for participation.

MozFest is not just what happens during the weekend in London. It's also all the relationship-building, planning, and collaborations that happen throughout the year as we co-create the event together. I'm not sure how it is possible, but every year at MozFest is always the best year of MozFest."

Misty Avila

The weekend was wild, with sessions starting and finishing whenever they wanted. Thankfully, an astute Volunteer realised we needed some way to keep track of it all, and so created the first iteration of our digital schedule. It required constant updating to account for changes in times, floors, emergent sessions and extensions to existing sessions, but it was a foundational building block in the festival's growth.

The constant development of new ideas into new sessions into new collaborations created an intoxicating, exhausting, and enormously productive environment.

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"Laura Hilliger and I had agreed to curate an entire floor of crazy at the event called Build and Teach the Web, which became the craziest (and busiest!) track of the festival.
    The focus? Bringing together digital makers and educators of different kinds to build new tools, curricula, and ideas for the creation and sharing of digital knowledge. To prepare, we put together a chaotic set of activities including a massive green screen, scrum tables, and scavenger hunts. We covered all surfaces with Post-It notes and built a massive Scrum Board (project tracking structure) of tasks that could be done together, centered on seven themes from Cultural Archives to Glitch Remix to Diversity. These were all suggested through a set of community planning sessions with the 60+ Facilitators who came together to build the track with us. Our aim? To move as many Scrum tasks as possible from "To Make" to "Made".
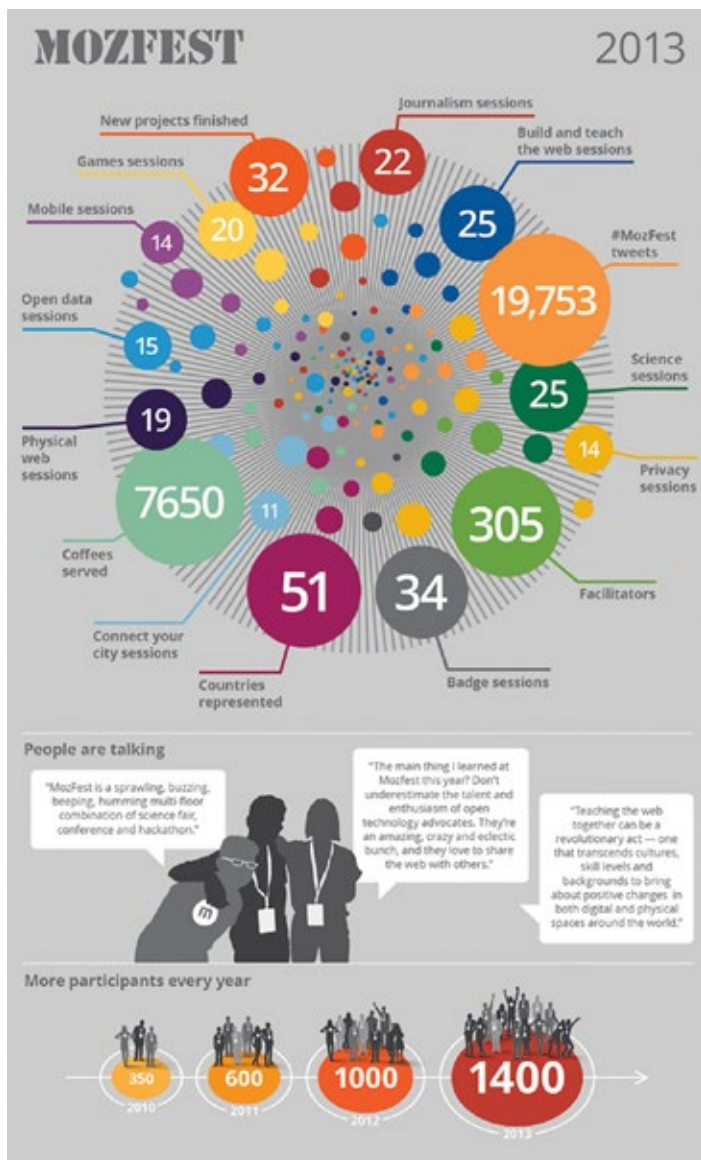   And to our immense relief, MozFesters dug in and took to the challenge with enthusiasm, shipping more than ¾ of the Scrums together and creating a remarkably welcoming, creative space where teaching methods could be shared openly with all."

Kat Braybooke
Visiting Scholar, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin IRI-THEsys

Poster culture began to take hold, with individual session hosts working to recruit participants. The walls, steps, elevators, and bathroom stalls of Ravensbourne sprouted colourful, hand-drawn signs, and paper banners hung from the balcony railings.

As the leading organisation of the festival, Mozilla was front and centre with our products and programs. The main stage became a place for announcements and demos, from the global unveiling of the privacy add-on Lightbeam, to the Firefox phone, to the introduction of a new cohort of journalism fellows. The opening keynote stretched for more than an hour, with a parade of faces crossing the stage.

Another quintessential Mozilla activity gained traction in 2013: karaoke! Sessions were over by 5:30pm, which left hours to cultivate newly-formed friendships in different settings around the venue and elsewhere in London. Never has there been an audience more enthusiastic for the microphone. While some drank beer and belted out American pop songs, sentimental British classics, and Bollywood hits, others sipped tea in quiet corners, engrossed in conversation or bonded over board games.

MOZFEST 2013

New projects finished
32

Games sessions
20

Journalism sessions
22

Build and teach
the web sessions
25

Mobile sessions
14

#MozFest
tweets
19,753

Open data
sessions
15

Science
sessions
25

Physical
web
sessions
19

Privacy
sessions
14

Coffees
served
7650

11

Facilitators
305

Connect your
city sessions
51

Badge sessions
34

Countries
represented

People are talking

"MozFest is a sprawling, buzzing, beeping, humming multi-floor combination of science fair, conference and hackathon."

"The main thing I learned at Mozfest this year? Don't underestimate the talent and enthusiasm of open technology advocates. They're an amazing, crazy and eclectic bunch, and they love to share the web with others."

"Teaching the web together can be a revolutionary act — one that transcends cultures, skill levels and backgrounds to bring about positive changes in both digital and physical spaces around the world."

More participants every year

350
2010

600
2011

1000
2012

1400
2013

2014

Teach the Web

As MozFest turned four, equitable access to the web was becoming an issue of global concern. Billions of new internet users came online thanks to affordable mobile technologies, spurring big questions like, "How do we shape and grow the web we want?" How do we build for mobile adoption? How do we maintain equality in ownership, and teach web literacy to empower new generations?"

We saw the answer in the grassroots organisers who were teaching and innovating with the web: They ran Maker Parties, they coached and connected others to explore and invent, and they brought a pragmatic approach to solving the local problems facing their communities.

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"Being from a tier-3 district of India, the web has empowered me in many ways including skill development. I always wanted to help others who have the same experience. I was actively involved in Maker Party and Mozilla Clubs. But I also realized not everyone has access to computers. My experience with Webmaker for mobile and with MozFest really shaped who I am today, working with a not-for-profit to build a civic movement with grassroot mobilisation (and an app called SolveNinja!) in India."

Gauthamraj Elango
Reap Benefit

We recognised a need and an opportunity to develop best practices for community leadership, and had a vision for how MozFest could contribute: Facilitator training.

In the first iteration of what would grow into a key pillar of the festival, Michelle Thorne and Gunner hosted a workshop before the festival began that tried to cultivate a sense of awareness and mutual respect. Session Facilitators could see what they were bringing as individuals and as a collective. We didn't want Facilitators to present from the top of the room, but instead to ask their participants to help advance the work of designing and advocating for an equitable, accessible web.

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"Ask not what you can do for your participants, but ask what your participants can do for you."

Dirk Slater
MozFest Facilitator Support Guru

The trainings were also a place for us to communicate how the festival had evolved since the previous year, empowering Facilitators to act as ambassadors and to be cognizant of anything that limited attendees' ability to fully enjoy themselves. Design-wise, we acknowledged that we'd hit peak chaos in 2013 and had put in place more structure for how the festival would unfold. We shared community participation guidelines, announced set times for sessions to stop and start, and began to consider how we could accommodate different styles of inter-actions to welcome our increasingly diverse attendees.

Artists were becoming active mem-bers of our community, and for the first time an entire space was dedicated to building and showcasing thought-pro-voking digital art forms and a living gallery. Mobile app-makers flocked to Ravensbourne, too, and put Mozilla's Appmaker through its paces with ses-sions around mobile payments, citizen science, and gaming. Digital literacy was the thread that connected all the Spaces of the festival.

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"We were doing really early user testing of the first Mozilla Webmaker app. At one point, a young kid (maybe age 10) from East London was having a blast and said, 'I published ten apps today!' It reminded me so strongly of one of my formative moments learning programming in the 1980s with LOGO programs and robotic turtles with paper outputs. That sense of 'I made this!' gave me momentum that lasted decades, and I felt so proud to have a hand in that kid having that reaction."

David Ascher
Apple

Members of Mozilla Reps – the organ-isation's global Volunteer program – played a special role at the festival in 2014. Arriving from countries around the world, they ran sessions, supported activities throughout the building, and saved the day when 1000 Firefox phones were distributed but needed to be upgraded to ensure participants of MozFest had the latest version.

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"The Reps program has a long standing history with the Mozilla Festival, starting in 2012 when Reps were invited to facilitate sessions and share their expertise as local webmakers and event organizers.
    In 2014, Mozilla was focusing heavily on educating people about, and spreading, Firefox OS, the open source operating system built entirely on the web. Reps played an important role as tech and community building experts at MozFest and beyond. From supporting and co-facilitating various sessions at the festival, to flashing 1000 Firefox OS devices on the fly that were distributed to the participants.
    In 2015, the focus of the Reps changed. Since webmaking and Firefox OS were not a primary focus for Mozilla anymore, Reps focused their energy on teaching people how to organise local communities and how to start local movements. MozFest was an amazing opportunity to advance this work and have it spread to all corners of the globe.
    Staying strong to their commitment, Reps have participated as everything from MozFest Volunteers to Space Wranglers over the years. It's been an honor to play such an important role in designing and shaping the festival, and we hope to continue the work for years to come.

Christos Bacharakis,
Konstantina Papadea
Mozilla

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Collaborative Curation

MozFest 2015 reflected a shift in the zeitgeist: The web we knew and loved was under attack. Security breaches, data trafficking, doxxing, and the rise of trolls were just a few of the threats indicating a need for more robust structures to keep individuals and communities safe. Digital citizenry and the protection of the web as a shared global resource had never felt so urgent.

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"When we talk about reading, writing and participating on the web, we often forget that not everyone can participate in the same way, and that not everyone is safe"

Melissa Huerta
Mozilla

Sensing what was at stake, we took the advice of long time festival friend, Jon Rogers, who challenged us to look beyond our usual circle of partners and allies. We were inspired by the slow convenings ethos, and invited a diverse group of global leaders to help us thoughtfully co-design the festival. In this first iteration of MozRetreat, we spent a week immersed in the community and culture of a small fishing village in Scotland. Incorporating experienced MozFest Facilitators, people brand new

to the festival, partners, and Mozilla staff, this collaborative visioning marked our commitment to put a good part of the festival's design in the hands of the network, and drew inspiration from unusual sources.

"I was delighted to have been nominated to take part in MozRetreat as a Wrangler. Perhaps for me it's the lovely surprise that Mozilla is always pushing the margins, bringing on board minoritized groups as a norm rather than an exception. It's also the experience of being in a new city and country.

Gathered together with people from at least 16 countries, across different disciplines, this felt powerful and special.

The retreat program was curated to allow us to talk about our personal journeys defending the web. These conversations were very enriching and eye opening. I listened to a journalist's

experience covering "horror" stories that involve technology. I listened to a culturalist and museum enthusiast who would like to trace back the history of machines. I listened to a financial analyst whose day-to-day work has heart-wrenching stories of how systems have made people's lives miserable.

One of the greatest lessons of this curation process is learning to listen and immerse yourself in other people's journeys."

Winnie Makokha
Space Wrangler

This influx of different perspectives inspired new ways of storytelling and learning at the festival that blurred the boundaries between physical and digital media to create shared community spaces. This year, Ravensbourne featured a garage, a garden, a library and a kitchen – each with a unique request for participation through installations and workshops.

Digital rights were high on the agenda and we explored how we can all act as leaders in the tech, policy, and social spheres to create a better web for everyone.

As we evolved our process, we reached out to other festivals that we admired, whose designers and participants we saw as leaders. BrooklynJS and SRCCON inspired us to be more transparent in our curation process, and we shifted to the open source tool GitHub, which allowed everyone to see changes and contribute. This completely opened up our process of reviewing and sorting sessions – anyone could watch the process unfold and could connect with each other outside of the festival.

Answering our request, Allied Media Projects shared a set of recommendations that would have lasting positive effects on the festival. They encouraged us to tone down the chaos even further and bring more clarity, while creating ways for people to connect without the festival as their epicentre. This encouraged us to tidy our communications, invest in wayfinding, and improve our schedule of activities. The biggest legacy that they set in motion was how we viewed the invitation to our participants.

"The challenge of any intentional gathering that hopes to be inclusive of people who identify all sorts of ways is to build 'green lights' into the space. Green lights are the indicators that yes, you have been considered before entering."

Allied Media Projects

Immersive Experiences

In 2016, our focus was on making MozFest more welcoming. The previous year had marked an evolution of the festival's overall frame. Now, we were ready to find more ways to connect participants outside of Sessions, give space to inspirational ideas, and create visual moments to tell stories and rally behind a cause. Human APIs, the Mozhelp info desk, and our incredible Volunteers were all focused on one thing: The care and the quality of experience of the participants in the building.

We took a multi-pronged approach. Wayfinding and a coherent design aesthetic helped everyone – from first-timers to festival veterans – to move around the building with more ease and less stress. Info desks staffed with cheerful Volunteers helped attendees with everything from finding their way to a session to locating a laptop adapter. And quiet rooms provided a refuge for those overwhelmed by the bustle of activity.

For the first time, we encouraged activity in languages other than English by localising the call for proposals into several languages, supporting multilingual

sessions and designing signage with our global audience in mind. Like every new aspect added to the festival, language inclusion was a work-in-progress and we learned so much from those brave, multi-lingual Facilitators.

"We can work hard to overcome barriers and access to the internet only to arrive at the place where people are set up for success, have the device in front of them connected to the internet, and then find themselves unable to engage with technology because they don't understand the language. As we develop and grow technologies, we run the risk of repeating colonial/imperial mistakes of the past. Again we are excluding the very people we are trying to reach. We have a beautiful opportunity presenting itself to us right now to create an internet where no one is left behind."

Heather Bailey
Director Translate

Art at MozFest was becoming more ingrained across spaces and was turning up in surprising places. Artists had been part of our community since the beginning, and we wanted to weave them and their work more deeply into

the fibre of the festival. From MozEx, a bold art exhibition curated by the digital art and learning teams at the Tate, and the Victoria & Albert Museum, to youth groups championing code as a form of art in schools, the festival was elevated by the passion and drive of creative visionaries who pushed us beyond our well-worn methods.

Our main stage was undergoing a transformation, too. Saturday morning attendee numbers had dropped in recent years and we needed a way to invigorate the audience ahead of an active weekend. Opting for a radi-cal change, we drastically shortened the opening plenary, took the focus off Mozilla programs and products, and gave the community a starring role. Recognising that we needed an environment where big names could discuss the most pressing issues facing the web in full-length talks and panel discussions, we carved out a new space on the ground floor of Ravensbourne, and Dialogues and Debates were born.

"Dialogues & Debates got its start in 2016: We wanted to give participants a chance to hear how luminaries continents and oceans away are making a difference in the internet health space. Past speakers have hailed from Kenya, France, India, Bahrain, the U.S., the UK, and beyond. They are influential activists, hackers, engineers, journalists, and lawyers.

We designed Dialogues & Debates in a way that complements the existing festival program, rather than disrupting it. On Saturday and Sunday, speakers deliver talks and panels on the ground floor of Ravensbourne. Anyone is welcome to listen in and ask questions. Like all parts of MozFest, Dialogues & Debates is a community effort: Speakers are often suggested by past attendees.

Some of the most memorable Dialogues & Debates moments over the years include techno-sociologist Zeynep Tufekci discussing the unprecedented power of social media; journalist Julia Angwin examining biased algorithms; and world wide web inventor Tim Berners-Lee imagining the future of the internet."

Kevin Zawacki
Mozilla

The festival was never just about what happened around tables, in Sessions, or in Ravensbourne, but also about the people and the conversations. Whether in the coffee queue or the Saturday night party, we tried to design ways for kindred spirits to find each other. By now, our party format felt staid: The pizza party, a crowd favourite, was a nightmare to manage and we fancied the idea of doing something radical. We collaborated with Anagram, an inter-active storytelling company, to create "Only Lean on that which Resists", an immersive spectacle held in an empty warehouse in London's South Bank. From the brass band to the digital monks, it was a wild, one-time-only event that capped an exceptionally creative year.

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Introducing MozFest House

By 2017, MozFest had grown so large, and become such a vital place for people passionate about the web to converge, that we were bursting at the seams. Three days inside Ravensbourne was simply not enough; we needed to expand. Previously, we'd experimented with fringe events that celebrated innovative gatherings taking place around the world with the same open spirit as MozFest, and locally-run iterations of the festival, like MozFestEA. But our core London audience was articulating their need for meetings with invited participants, and longer workshop timings. We responded with MozFest House, a secondary venue designed to accommodate longer, more focused meetings for a defined audience.

Our home for this experiment was the Royal Society of Arts, and it was every-thing we didn't know we needed: Three Georgian-style buildings connected by winding staircases, modern technology, and a long history of innovation and design. We set up a cafe in the most central space, creating a beating heart

for the building as events played out across the floors in a variety of formats: film screening, workshops, conferences, and talks, all focusing on internet health and showcasing the diversity of the Mozilla network.

"MozFest had run out of space, and it was this dilemma that brought me to Mozilla as an event manager to help extend the wonderful weekend into a week-long event. No one knew exactly what to expect from MozFest House, and to be honest, we weren't even sure we could convince our partners to co-host with us!

The week passed by quickly as we got into a daily routine of welcoming people, creating bespoke spaces, responding to hosts' needs, and making tweaks along the way. Our volunteers, our partners, and the participants all rose to the challenge of helping us bring to life this new format.

Thanks to the team onsite, it felt like a real family atmosphere - nothing was too much trouble for any of our team or the RSA, and we think this was reflected in the overall feel of the House.

Returning in 2018 was like coming home! We learnt from 2017, made yet

more changes, but could now speak from experience. We had more events, even more variety, and there was a real buzz from those returning, as well as those who visited for the first time."

Lucie Click

Ravensbourne was evolving, too. Our Youth Zone, once relegated to the ground floor, was now distributed across the building with youth-led Sessions in every Space (not to mention an 11-year-old speaker on the Main Stage). Ravensbourne students were designing and building installations, running the main stage AV, and creating subversive characters to playfully disrupt the festival's narrative.

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"Ravensbourne's partnership with Mozilla not only gives students the chance to gain important real-world experience, adding an industry-leading organisation to their CV before they graduate. It also teaches them important lessons about collaboration and critical thinking. They are given the chance to work with industry figures on professional briefs, challenging them to interrogate their own work and explain their rationales."

Professor Lawrence Zeegen
Executive Dean of Design, Ravensbourne

Building on our previous year's work creating a more inclusive environment, and recognising the major issues threatening the health of the internet, there was a big need to raise awareness of what we can do together to make our online experience more inclusive, safe, and empowering.

At MozFest House, gatherings like MisInfoCon were raising the alarm that

the internet was moving in the wrong direction. Speakers on the Dialogue & Debates stage questioned how we could connect everyone — regardless of gender or geography — to the entirety of the internet. Across the board, conversations focused on how the web could be a civil, safe space.

The right questions were being asked, and we turned to the community to help us understand what they needed from us as an event. Many generous people helped us improve our accessibility through extra care for our neuro-diverse attendees, and live transcription of our Dialogues & Debates. We created new channels for participants to raise issues both onsite at the festival and while in London, including a local safety number and an email address to report issues and ask for assistance. We also ensured our community participation guidelines were more prominent: They were printed on the back of lanyards, read aloud on stage, were posted throughout the building, and were required reading as part of the ticketing process. More languages were being supported, too, and it was not uncommon to see posters in Spanish or to hear German and Hindi spoken in the hallways.

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"We're making a real effort to make the festival even more accessible to people with disabilities so as many people as possible can attend in comfort. Our brain or body may work in different ways, but our ideas are equally valid."

Martha Sedgwick

Making It Personal

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Over the years, MozFest has been a powerful platform to tackle broad challenge areas like media, education, and access. 2018 marked major data breaches, and the Cambridge Analytica scandal revealed that governments and for-profit companies were exploiting our data in ways we'd never consented to. It was against this backdrop that we began the annual co-design process with our network and partners, and we committed to making an impact the most powerful way we could: by making it personal.

common-sense tech policy. The solutions reflected a commitment to putting community first.

"MozFest not only shaped what tools and solutions we built but how we built them, with an open and participatory approach. The best uses of technology inspire us not because of what technology can do but because of what people can do."

Sam Dyson
Learning Design Consultant

"Your Data and You" was the thread that connected interactive sessions, art, games, Dialogues & Debates, and experiences at MozFest 2018. Attendees were presented with an urgent call, shared in many formats, in many languages, from many corners of the web, to take control of our data, our online lives and our collective future.

Activism experienced a powerful resurgence at the festival as the community strategized its next moves in global campaigns for net neutrality, data privacy, online freedom, and advanced thinking on topics like ethical AI and

Looking out for each other never felt so important, and we asked ourselves how we could build trust and carve out safe spaces on a web that had become increasingly hostile to so many. We examined the different lives that are impacted by the state of the web, from content moderators who are responsible for filtering content, to LGBTQ communities that remain marginalized in many online spaces. By taking a deep look at how the internet and human life intersect, we searched for ways to enact positive change.

Over the years, the idea of storytelling through design and inspiration became more and more powerful. From the Global Village built of cardboard boxes, to Xenshana, a futuristic landscape populated by characters not of this world, storytelling was not just visible in Sessions but in how we dressed the Spaces and buildings. This outpouring of imagination from the Wranglers had unexpected and delightful results: people were cooking chocolate cakes in an IoT kitchen, discussing accessibility while hula hooping, and relaxing in a plant-filled garden of learning.
It felt like the festival had become an art piece itself. In addition to being playful and fun, these installations and experiences created the safe spaces that many craved, which supported many different styles of learning and interacting.

"I've been to MozFest for six of the 10 years and if I'm lucky, I'll make it out for year 10, too. No two years were in any way the same for me. In my first and my last, I was an outside participant. In between, I've been a chaperone, a Wrangler, a host, and a Mozillian. There were years that I did back-to-back sessions and years that I just wandered around aimlessly. Years that I was in the front row of the photo and years when I missed it altogether. I participated in science fairs, firesides, circles, workshops, closing demos, pitch competitions, speed dates, gallery walks, seminars, and games. I've gotten acquainted over lunch, gotten serious over dinner, got lost in a dance party, and got to last call at hotel bars. I've hosted overflowing sessions of 40 and also, when almost no one showed up, tossed out the slide deck to work one-on-one. No year was the same and each one channeled my passions in creative new directions."

Robert Friedman

Untold

Write this chapter at MozFest:
Add notes, photos, stickers and
write your own 2019 experience.

2019

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Closing The London Chapter

2019 marked a year of change, of celebration, and new horizons. It was the 10th festival, the end of the first decade. As we planned for this festival, there was a lot of reflection on the evolution of the event since Barcelona and hard questions asking what will the next 10 years hold for us — how can we continue to grow and be the platform the internet health movement needs? We knew we had to stay true to our roots, and as always we knew we wouldn't come to find answers to these questions alone.

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"It didn't matter where we all were from, we all faced the same thing. And by coming together at MozFest it was easier for us all to discuss what was going on in our different contexts and then collaboratively find solutions that worked."

Hildah Nyakwaka
MozFest Facilitator

We began the planning of MozFest 2019 through careful reflection and intro-spection together with our community.

We reflected on events of the past, of MozRetreats, main stage moments, and the feedback we received along the way. We remembered those who had joined us along this journey, year-on-year, bringing new iterations of projects to each event — those who had truly customised MozFest to be their own festival. We consulted Wranglers, Volunteers, Facilitators, Staff, and Mentors who used the festival platform to meet their needs, and those who participated to help others achieve what they need to move forward in their goals. In this reflection, we started to think about what the future could hold for the Mozilla Festivals of the next ten years, and what the community will need in this ever changing digital landscape. Throughout this process, together as

a community, we highlighted familiar issues, new frontiers, and acknowledged new challenges to be faced, which all shaped the festival's theme for this year: Healthy AI.

Since it's beginning, MozFest has always taken a positive approach to fighting issues online, and we truly believe in the collective power of the movement to create change, to keep the web we know and love to remain free and open. One thing became clear after our months of reflection: this collective power is what anchors us in these heavy and constantly changing times that we all face online. This collective power is what made us the festival we are today, and so we trust it will direct us for the next ten. And that is a reason to celebrate.

Celebration

We went into 2019 excited to celebrate with those who helped the evolution and success of the last 10 years. We invited as many people from our community — Wranglers, alumni, old partners, former staff – and took a breath during the festival to remember the work, the projects, and the people of years gone by.

Our science fair showcased the last 10 years of projects, ideas and people, who shared how the work had evolved since their first MozFest in Barcelona. Allies, friends, and partners from over-the-years returned as valued participants, sharing their experiences and knowledge within sessions. We invited back special projects first built at MozFest or with Mozilla but now hosted, managed, and were thriving under new organisations. We had created a visualisation of the arc of the open web across

the demo tables, and the festival was flowing with energy!

We had traditional birthday moments, with a cake and candles during the Opening Circle and a massive party on Saturday night, that spilled over three

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"I wanted something that would allow others, like me, to openly express themselves when they may not have been able to in the past - to feel empowered. Over the festival, I watched the collage grow into an expression of identity and difference just as I had hoped it would."

Leena Haque
MozFest Neurodiversity Wrangler

floors bursting with entertainment: a silent disco, drag queen bingo, karaoke, and much more. As a birthday gift for the community, we shared the first edition of this book and people passed around their copies for signatures and added notes - not only from sessions, but poems, words of encouragement, and messages of friendship and love for the festival, and each other.

New frontiers faced: Healthy AI

Going into 2019, the internet health issues MozFest has always focused on were as relevant as ever, but we faced new emerging challenges too. Everywhere we looked we were facing dystopian futures — how our own data was used against us, lack of accountability and agency with AI, and how easy it is to access extremist content on video. Mozilla understood that defining and narrowing these issues would help us achieve a more long term and sustainable change within Artificial Intelligence — a future of Trustworthy AI. A future where all AI is designed with

personal agency in mind and privacy, transparency, and human well being are all considered. We want to see a future of accountability, where companies are held to account when their products make discriminatory decisions, abuse data, and make people unsafe.

MozFest sessions are the fuel that feed the movement, ensuring we can create change. We need positive energy when what we face is insurmountable. And the community at MozFest was up for the challenge. Healthy AI was too big, too new, and too unyielding to tackle alone. This new direction was the evolution of everything we had ever learnt, tested, and defined across the last decade.

The sheen of this year was bright, and the Healthy AI theme flowed through the Spaces. Our Art and Culture Space was as provocative as ever, raising the risks, fears, and challenges of how AI affects society, and our hopes for AI in the future. Across two galleries there were live demonstrations, workshops, and unique artworks critically reflecting on the collection and preservation of art and culture in collaboration with AI.

This year we also had the first Neuro-diversity Space, including a Babbling Brook sound room, stories told through a collage, and a session that challenged us to think outside the box and learn how to materialise mental health.

When one Facilitator didn't show for their Decentralisation session, in true MozFest spirit, the waiting crowd of about 30–40 people stepped up and collaborated to run the session them-selves. In another session, inspired by

Dia de los Muertos, participants col-laboratively created an altar as part of a session "An Ofrenda to Tech Ghosts" by Kara Carrell commemorating dead and dying tech projects. In the Digital Inclusion Space, participants found quiet moments under paper tents, and the Queering Space provided connec-tions to a constellation of people, to find your guiding star, and create the inclusive world we want. Plus the very popular opportunity to take selfies with a giant, inflatable unicorn was there for the passersby.

The largest contingent of MozFest House sessions sought feedback on work started earlier that week, and encouraged sharing next steps on topics from decolonising the internet to public interest tech eco-systems.

On the Sunday afternoon, it was bitter-sweet looking over the balconies of Ravensbourne University, enjoying the view of our biggest festival yet, knowing this was our last year in what had truly become our home. Yet with the sadness that comes with change, you could feel the excitement for what the future would hold. Safe in the knowledge that we don't go alone, and that friends we made over the last ten years are by our side, we look forward to what is yet to come.