



# Fvwm History

## Fvwm Timeline

- Fvwm was created by Robert Nation as a fork of [TWM](#) and the first version 0.5 was bundled with [Rxvt](#) and released June 1st, 1993. This version was maintained until [Fvwm-0.91](#).
- In the fall of 1993 Fvwm became an independent package and Fvwm-1.0 was released. This branch ended with the final release of [Fvwm-1.24r](#).
- In 1995 development of Fvwm2 was started and about that time Charles (Chuck) Hines took over and maintained Fvwm2 during the 2.0.x pre-release.
- Fvwm switches to a version system that 2.even are stable releases while 2.odd are development releases. Starting with the development version 2.1.beta, Fvwm uses [CVS](#) to track the releases, and all releases from Fvwm 2.1.beta onward can be seen in the [Fvwm2 release history](#).
- Between spring and fall 1998 Charles Hines passes maintenance of Fvwm to Brady Montz who then passes it to Dominik Vogt.
- Dominik Vogt transitions Fvwm from a single maintainer to a community model, and through a group of Fvwm-workers releases Fvwm 2.2.x in February of 1999. With the release of 2.2.x, the development version 2.3.x starts.
- At this time the list of [Fvwm authors](#) gets quite large and there is no longer a single maintainer. From this point onward the Fvwm-workers community has continued to support and develop Fvwm.
- On February 25, 2001, Version 2.2.5 is released. This is the last version of Fvwm with its original license before it switched to GPL-2 in version 2.4.x. Due to this license change, OpenBSD still ships 2.2.5 in its base operating system to keep Fvwm with its original license.
- Version 2.4.x is released July 3, 2001 and the new development branch 2.5.x is started. This releases changes the license to GPL-2. The final release of this branch is 2.4.20 on December 9th, 2006.
- Development of Fvwm slows to a crawl but the development branch 2.5.x slowly gets bug fixes and new features. Eventually this branch gets turned into the next stable release.
- On August 15, 2011, version 2.6.x is released. During this release the development branch is deprecated and no longer used. Fvwm development slows to mostly bug fixes, but a few features are added to 2.6.x.

- In March 2016 Fvwm moves from CVS to [GitHub](#), where the sources currently live.
- In early 2017 Fvwm 2.6.x version freezes and is put in maintenance only development. [Fvwm3](#) is created as a fork of Fvwm2 for any future development with the intent to break compatibility with Fvwm2 to allow major changes.
- In 2019 Thomas Adam has started work on Fvwm 3.x, the next major Fvwm version, which is currently in the alpha stage.

## History Conversation

Here is a conversation that took place around 2005 about the history of Fvwm. The conversation is between various authors of Fvwm including Dominik Vogt (**DV**), Charles (Chuck) Hines (**CH**), and Robert Nation (**RN**):

**Dominik Vogt**

DV> ((Chuck, are you still lurking? Can you fill in the gaps before



**Chuck Hines**

CH> I am still lurking, yes, but not sure how much I can fill in as m  
CH> getting a little fuzzy in my old age...I'll see what I can do...

CH> I apologize for leaving all of the cited text in here. I normall  
CH> out most of it but for filling in a history it seemed appropriate  
CH> in.



**Dominik Vogt**

DV> Robert Nation started it back in 1993. The first time anything  
DV> was heard about it in public was on the 1st of June in 1993, when  
DV> Rob bundled a development version (0.5.something) with an rxvt  
DV> release (a still popular terminal program). In the next few  
DV> months, fvwm became an independent package and fvwm-1.0 was  
DV> released in fall, still 1993. Originally, the "F" in fvwm stood  
DV> for "feeble". But then, Rob seems to have forgotten this at some  
DV> point in time and thus the famouse FAQ question 1.1 was born. Bu  
DV> although there is strong evidence on the meaning of the "F" in ol  
DV> new group archives, we nowadays prefer the "mysterious F"  
DV> interpretation ;-)



### Chuck Hines

CH> I never agreed with "feeble" myself, even early on. That was one  
CH> reasons I came up with that list in the FAQ, to provide alternate  
CH> possibilities, hopefully mostly positive. Many of them were sugg  
CH> emails on the mailing list, if I remember correctly. Of course,  
CH> explicitives to that list because they were what I most often use  
CH> trying to figure out bugs. :)



### Robert Nation

RN> There were two or three reasons for starting FVWM and RXVT. First  
RN> a need 33 MHZ 486 laptop PC with only 4 MB of RAM, and I thought  
RN> way better than the windows versions of the day. X11 with TWM and  
RN> my PC, but just barely. Second, I had a need at work to analyze s  
RN> were about 4000 x 200 pixels when displayed at full resolution (a  
RN> signatures for the DOD) - twm couldn't display  
RN> that, although some other window managers could (they used more m  
RN> I thought it would be nice to learn a few GUI software skills.

RN> I think I did rxvt first. The source code fro xterm was pretty ha  
RN> so I found xvt on the net somewhere. I cleaned it up a bit and im  
RN> compatibility in a few areas. Next, I tore apart twm to find out  
RN> generated a very simple, low memory, low-flexibility version of a  
RN> the virtual desktop stuff and started using it at work too, since  
RN> spectrograms very nicely.

RN> After I put the these things on the net, it was fun and education  
RN> the programs became more capable. But as my kids got a little old  
RN> attention from me), and the maintenance function got to be mostly  
RN> from various people (and the patches had little or no utility to  
RN> away, and Chuck Hines stepped up to take over.



### Dominik Vogt

DV> I know litte about what happened between 1993 and 1996. Rob  
DV> stopped maintaining fvwm and Charles Hines took over the project  
DV> for several years(?). When Chuck resigned, Brady Montz became  
DV> the new maintainer for a couple of months, I believe in late 1997  
DV> or early 1998. Anyway, it took almost 8 month between the 2.0.45  
DV> release (22nd of January, 1997) and 2.0.46 (20th of August, 1997)  
DV> I can only guess why, but probably this was a foresign of Chuck's

DV> approaching retirement. At this time I had been using fvwm-2.0.x  
DV> for about two years at home and wanted to implement some of the  
DV> features I liked in CDE to fvwm. In December 1997 I sent Brady m  
DV> patches and never got an answer. I tried again half a year later  
DV> and contacted the mailing list, but fvwm development was as dead

#### **Chuck Hines**

CH> I believe that I maintained fvwm from Aug 95 through May of 98.

CH> I had been using it actively from an early point (probably right  
CH> 1.0 version, but I can't be sure, I have some saved emails about  
CH> early in 1994 and I know I had been using it for a while before t  
CH> working at IBM and the machines we had at the time while fairly p  
CH> still brought to their virtual knees by mwm, so I believe I searc  
CH> (comp.windows.x.apps) for a good replacement. Found fvwm and nev  
CH> back... :)

CH> I kept a close eye on fvwm after discovering it (I believe there  
CH> list at "fvwm@shrug.org", and stuff on comp.windows.x.apps of cou  
CH> contributed a couple of minor patches to fvwm in those earlier da  
CH> get it to compile nicely under AIX and some stuff with colormap b  
CH> so happy to not have an 8bit display any more). By the way, if a  
CH> can track down) any archives of that earlier mailing list, it'd p  
CH> pretty cool to resurrect them...

CH>

CH> Then one day Rob had sent out a message (on the mailing list, I b  
CH> stated something to the effect that he didn't want to work on fw  
CH> and was looking for someone else to maintain it. I wanted to off  
CH> over (as an X11 learning experience - I had dealt with X at the t  
CH> but was curious about the more low level stuff) but didn't feel I  
CH> to properly devote to it so I didn't say anything at first.

CH>

CH> Then after about 2 weeks of watching people say "I'd love to, but  
CH> program" I figured I'd better make that offer after all, qualifyi  
CH> something like "I don't know if I have time to do this right, but  
CH> to make an attempt". Rob remembered my previous contributions an  
CH> be able to make a go at it, so he turned it over to me. That was  
CH> "pre-2.0-patchlevel-33" if I remember correctly.

CH>

CH> Then I worked on it sporadically over the next couple of years.  
CH> wasn't too bad about getting releases out, but the length of time  
CH> one got longer as "real life" invaded. Another part of the probl

CH> because I did use it as a learning experience, I would often rew  
CH> that were submitted to me so I really understood what was happeni  
CH> an eye towards making things "easier" in the future (which I'm su  
CH> a couple of people, but at the time I thought I had good reasons  
CH> things that way).

CH>

CH> Finially I had to admit that I just didn't have the time to prope  
CH> it any more. So it May of 1998 (I believe) I sent some email pri  
CH> Brady Montz, as I felt that the stuff he contributed showed him t  
CH> most promise for taking it over at the time, and he (reluctantly?  
CH> give it a shot.

CH>

CH> And you know the rest of the story from there... I wish I could

### **Dominik Vogt**


DV> Then - I believe it was in September or October (I have to look  
DV> this up in the mailing list archive) - Brady resigned and  
DV> everybody on the mailing list thought this would finally be the  
DV> end of fvwm development. Seeing this and not willing to give up  
DV> fvwm this easily, I took over the job as fvwm maintainer for the  
DV> moment. After a lot of discussion we agreed that we should try t  
DV> make a first stable release in the 2.x series as soon as possible  
DV> With a great team effort we were able to resolve the most pressin  
DV> issues and managed to get the stable 2.2.0 release out the door  
DV> in February 1999. (I want to thank all the people who helped to  
DV> make it possible back then).

DV> My memory of the sequence of events is a bit foggy. Some time in  
DV> late 1998 or early 1999 we decided that having a single maintaine  
DV> as the master over the code wasn't such a hot idea. In the past,  
DV> people had been eager to work on fvwm but had been hindered by th  
DV> maintainer, or more precisely: by the absence of a maintainer.  
DV> As a result, almost no work had been done in fvwm for over one an  
DV> a half years. So I gave up my role as the maintainer and the  
DV> responsibilities were since taken over by the people on the  
DV> fvwm-workers list. Unfortunatly I'm still stuck with most of the  
DV> project organizing work.



## Chuck Hines


CH> I have to admit that at the time I didn't think the "rule by comm  
CH> was going to work with fvwm, but all in all it seems to have work  
CH> well. I think that a lot of that has to do with the fact that yo  
CH> to steer it's course. Having some other pretty sharp individuals  
CH> helps too, of course. :)



## Dominik Vogt

DV> Anyway, since that day in October 1998 when a complete X newbie  
DV> couldn't keep his mouth shut fvwm development is as active as it  
DV> will ever be. Some of the people that helped to make 2.2 possibl  
DV> left and some became less active, but we still have an excellent  
DV> team here (with a weakness in writing documentation). Although  
DV> I'd rather not single out anyone, I have to mention Olivier  
DV> Chapuis and Mikhael Goikhman who are doing an excellent job in  
DV> providing some framework (configure, fvwm-themes,  
DV> internationalization, not to mention all the nifty features in th  
DV> fvwm core they have written). Although at times it might appear  
DV> as if I am the one that keeps fvwm alive, fvwm wouldn't be half a  
DV> good without the help of the many people on the mailing lists, be  
DV> it by writing bug reports, complaining about missing features,  
DV> answering questions of other users or simply encouraging us to  
DV> continue our work.

DV> What about the future? Well, the work for the next stable series  
DV> (2.6.x) is proceeding very well. Fvwm will go into feature freez  
DV> again near the end of the year so that 2.6 is ready before fvwm's  
DV> tenth birthday on 1st of June, 2003. I have vague plans for a  
DV> big event on that day to remind people that fvwm is still there  
DV> and that it can easily compete with any other window manager.  
DV> After that there are plans for a version 3.0 that would change a  
DV> lot of the syntax and introduce fantastic new features, but that'  
DV> too far from now.



## Farewell

CH> Ah the future...scary and exciting... :)

>> Perhaps it'd be worthy of a page on the FVWM website too?

DV> That is definitely going to be done for fvwm's birthday.

CH> Cool.

CH> Hope my feedback helped fill in some more of the blanks.

CH> Later,

CH> Chuck