Become an Open Source Contributor

My first contribution to Bootstrap was a tiny line of CSS. It was a no-brainer to merge, but the feeling of seeing that bit of code in the project’s codebase was unreal and addictive.You may think that open source is not for you. After all, it has always been a developer-dominant ecosystem. But code is by no means the only thing a piece of software is made of. Open source is first and foremost about community. Whether you’re a designer, developer, writer, doctor, or lawyer, there are many paths to the open source world.Learn what you need to know to set out on your journey, from first steps to becoming a core contributor. It might change your career.

Developers think about their work logically. They break problems down into solvable pieces to make things work. Unfortunately, this deconstruction often results in a "Swiss Army knife" of an interface, with a design that reflects the underlying data structures and APIs available.

This is why the open source community needs you. Not only diversity in perspective, but also diversity of gender, location, cultures, and social backgrounds. Together these become greater than the sum of their parts.

DESIGNERS

Most people who contribute to an open source project are also users of the software. But designers look at the project from a different perspective. Their job is to defend the user, especially those that are not able to contribute to the project but still need the software. They make sure that everyone working on the project understands users’ needs and stays focused on them as the community makes decisions.

WRITERS

Let’s face it: writing is really hard! Designers and developers are usually bad at it. But it’s so valuable to an open source community, where members have to collaborate and communicate remotely, asynchronously, and, more often than not, in a non-native language.

Documentation, especially on open source projects, is rarely up-to-date. It’s worse when it involves the documentation meant for contributors. Information for getting started with a project frequently has gaps, with important information missing.

DEVELOPERS THAT DON’T WANT TO CODE

Coding is optional; even software developers don’t always code. There’s administrative work too! Replying to issues, reviewing contributions, and helping users on forums, chats, Reddit, or Stack Overflow is as important to the success of the project as writing code.