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a complex, multi-platform app in Rust
for secure chat using [matrix]

Kevin Boos, PhD

Architect @ Futurewei Technologies

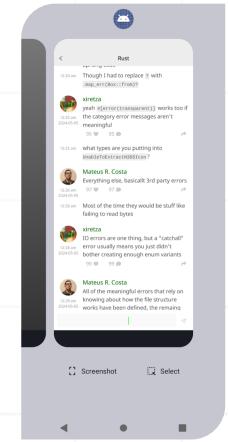
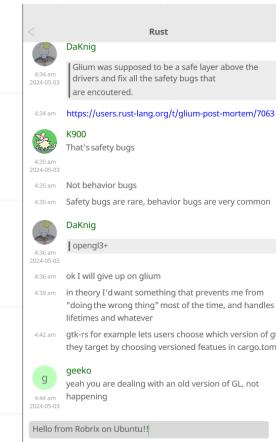


A screenshot of a Matrix client interface. The main window shows a room named "Matrix Rust SDK Development". A message from Jorge says: "thx for your work on the latest SDK changes for the new room version! just double checking, is there anything else that needs to be merged before it's considered ready?". Another message from Jorge says: "No, everything should be ready.". Below this, a message from Kevin Boos says: "Awesome, thanks! for letting me know!". At the bottom of the screen, a message from DaKrig says: "You don't have permission to post to this room."

A screenshot of a Matrix client interface. The main window shows a room named "Rust". A message from Mateus R. Costa says: "The problem so far seems to be that dumb me decided to fully load each file (which can take upwards of 4GB of storage) into RAM and do byte slicing to get what I want". Another message from Curid says: "And this is my CIA collection, that I usually test the thumbnailer on". Below this, a message from Curid says: "Why do you make 2 readers btw?". At the bottom of the screen, a message from Curid says: "Don't you care about the skinned".



one code base,
one language ,
many platforms!



A screenshot of a Matrix client interface. The main window shows a room named "Testing2". A message from bnjbvr says: "voiced their profile picture". Another message from Alan Poon says: "Thanks, I found the issue. I have been using". Below this, a message from Ralf Zerres says: "Kevin Boos accepted an invitation to this room".

A screenshot of a Matrix client interface. The main window shows a room named "Matrix Rust SDK". A message from bnjbvr says: "Again, we manage to do that, so if you want more help, please provide us with a code example, errors you run into, maybe? Anything so we can help in a useful way :)". Another message from Alan Poon says: "Hi there, how is everything going?". Below this, a message from Element Web/Desktop says: "Encrypted by a device not verified by its owner?".

A screenshot of a Matrix client interface. The main window shows a room named "Testing2". A message from Edward Tan says: "#Looks good". Another message from Yue Chen says: "runs great on my windows". Below this, a message from Kevin Boos says: "you're welcome to discuss room. Just don't use that purposes".

A screenshot of a Matrix client interface. The main window shows a room named "Testing2". A message from Edward Tan says: "#Looks good". Another message from Yue Chen says: "runs great on my windows". Below this, a message from Kevin Boos says: "Great!". A sidebar on the right shows a profile for Kevin Boos with the name "Kevin Boos" and the handle "@kevinaboos:matrix.org".

You can now build complex apps in pure !

- Robrix is built on a **strong Rust-only foundation**:

 +  Makepad – high-performance GPU-based UI toolkit with live reload, custom shader styling

 Robius – abstractions of platform features / OS services, build tooling, and more

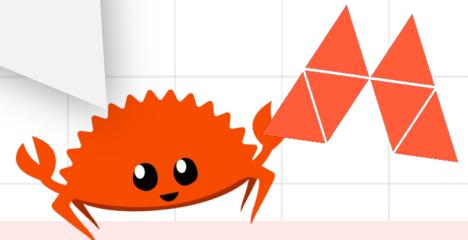


Background & Motivation



1. High-performance UI framework in pure Rust
 - Custom DSL for UI design: mixed immediate + retained mode
 - Shader-based styling with built-in hot reload
2. Lightweight & efficient; ~10-second compile time
3. Supports mobile + desktop + web + VR: iOS & Android, macOS, Windows, Linux, WASM, Meta Quest
 - And recently, OpenHarmony too! (in progress)

Makepad at a glance



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1. Provide everything else needed for app dev **beyond the UI**
 - Fill in missing support for many platform-provided features
 2. Make Mobile a first-class concern in the Rust community
 - The Rust experience has felt neglected on Mobile
 3. Bring frontend devs to Rust, and app dev to Rust users
- Devs can:
- leverage the robust, safe, and performant Rust ecosystem
 - avoid dealing with multiple languages/environments
 - never write a single line of platform-specific code

Project Robius at a glance



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Makepad + Robius = better Rust app dev



- Makepad recently released v1.0 (May 2025)
 - 5+ years of active development, still improving every day
 - However, there's more to app dev than just drawing a UI
 - This need fostered a joint collaboration with Robius, ongoing since 2023
- Both are fully open-source, decentralized, and community-driven
 - Independent collaborators across US, Europe, South America, China
- All components written entirely in Rust, *for* Rust devs
 - Direct, lightweight use of native platform APIs,
no heavy deps like underlying web engines or bridges
 - Subverts the older app style of “less Rust, more other code”
(a small Rust core surrounded by big platform-specific wrappers)

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What is [matrix] and why did we choose it?



- “An open network for secure, decentralized communication”
 - Similar to 钉钉/DingTalk, Microsoft Teams, Discord, Slack, but open & federated
- We needed a “killer app” to drive Robius development
 - “What kind of app is highly **demanding**?“ (of UI & platform abstractions)
 - A modern chat client!
 - Requires network, geolocation, storage access for files/images, multimedia capture & playback, system notifications, clipboard, connectivity mgmt., rich text formatting & input, persistent device storage & cache, biometric authentication, secret key storage, and so much more!
 - Why Matrix? It’s also open-source, decentralized, and Rust-oriented

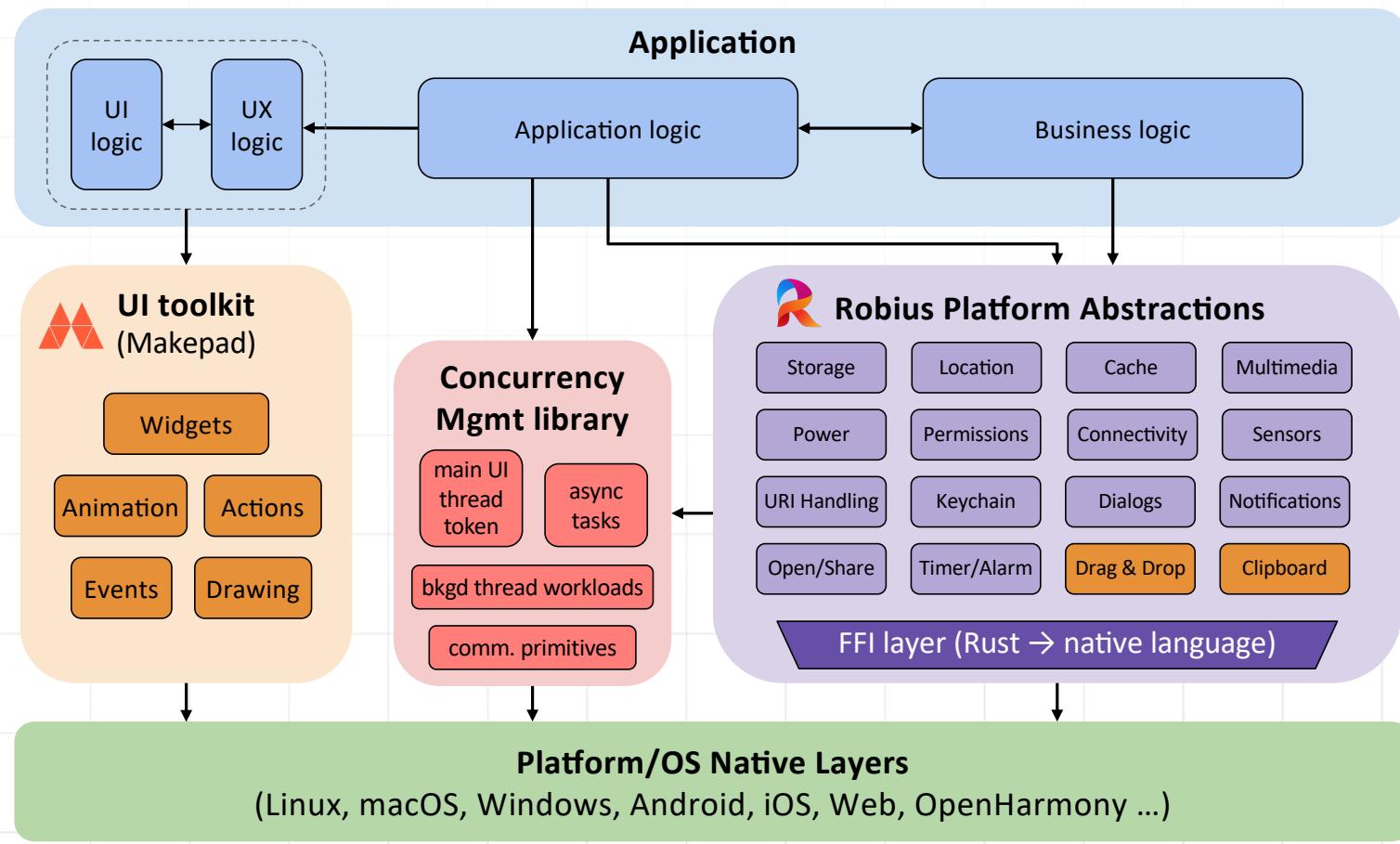
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Structure of a Robius app



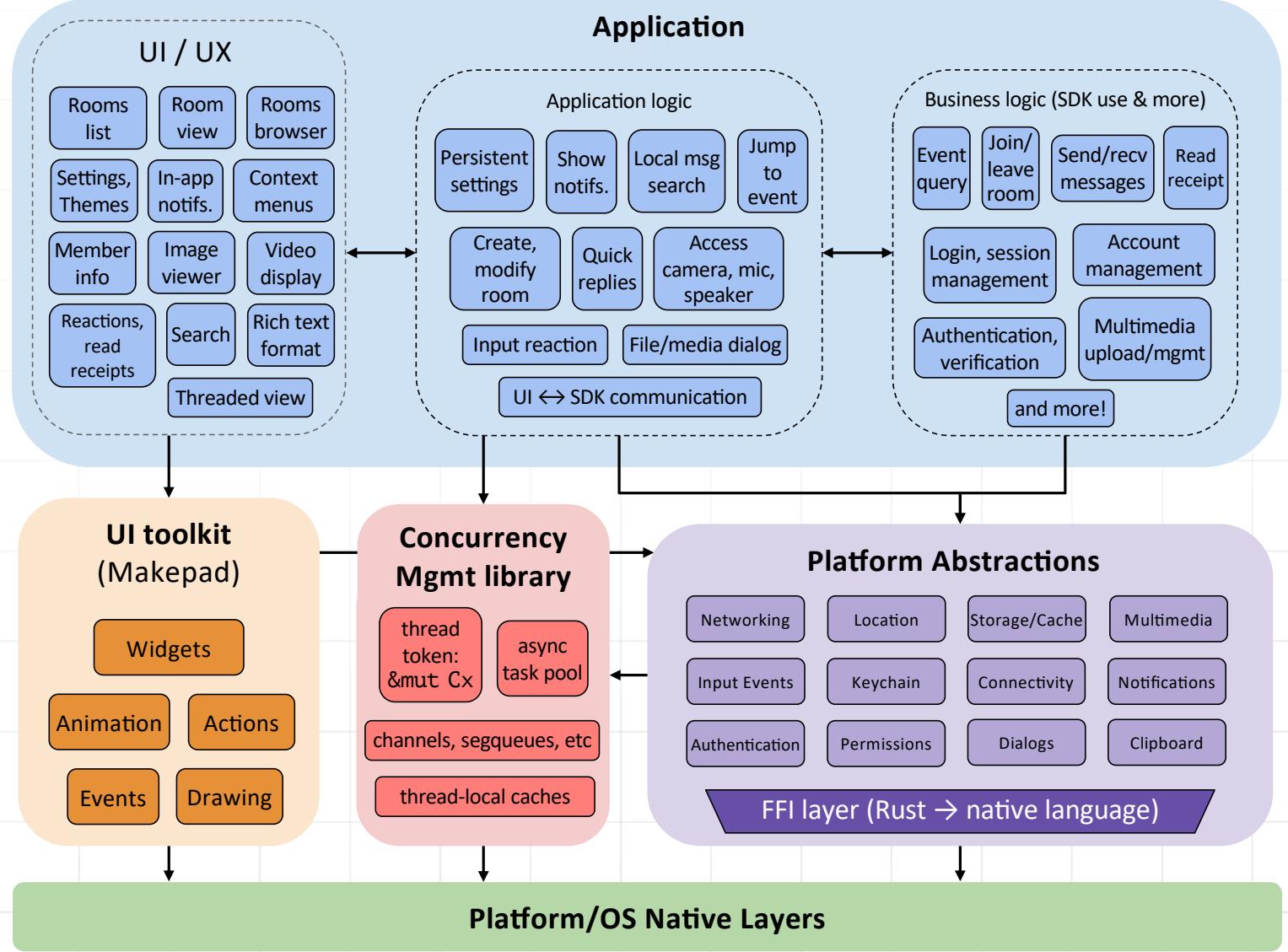
How do Makepad + Robius fit together?



Architecture of the Robrix App

a Matrix chat client

- Robrix's needs guide Robius development and implementation priority
- Writing & using Robrix forces us to **dogfood** Robius components
 - and Makepad, of course
 - Added many new features to Makepad over the past ~2 years to support Robrix





demo time!

for future/offline viewers:

the demo included an overview of Robrix's features
running on macOS & other platforms.

Check out our various apps to run them yourself:

<https://github.com/project-robius/robrix>

<https://github.com/moxin-org/moly>

<https://github.com/makepad/makepad>

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Code Examples & Implementation Details



A glimpse into Robrix's code



- What does a Makepad app look like?
 - Defining the UI via live DSL
 - Connecting the UI to Rust logic
- How do we leverage Rust for safe, high performance?
- Easily use Robius crates for deep platform integration

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```

live_design! {
    Message = {{Message}} {
        width: Fill, height: Fit, flow: Down,
        show_bg: true,
        draw_bg: { ... }

        animator: {
            on_highlight = { ... }
            on_hover = { ... }
        }

        // Preview of an earlier message that this message replied to.
        replied_to_message = <RepliedToMessage> {
            visible: false
            flow: Right
            margin: { bottom: 3, top: 10 }

            replied_to_message_content = { ... }
        }
    }

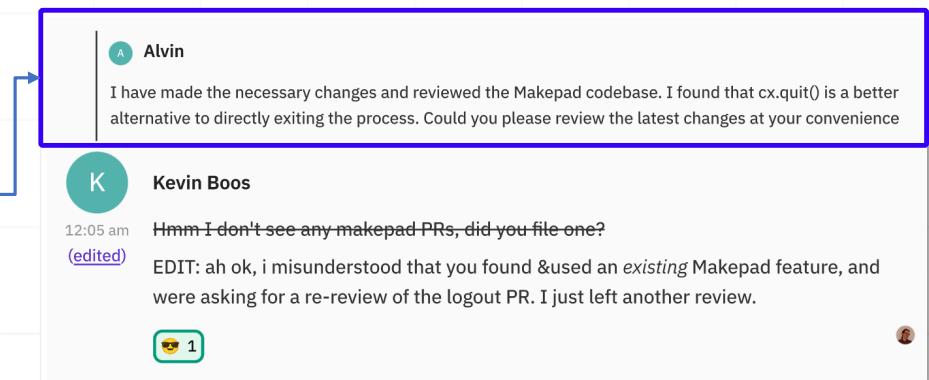
    body = <View> {
        width: Fill, height: Fit
        padding: {top: 0, bottom: 10, left: 10, right: 10},
        flow: Right,

        profile = <View> {
            align: {x: 0.5, y: 0.0}
            width: 65.0, height: Fit,
            margin: {top: 5, right: 10}
            flow: Down,

            avatar = <Avatar> { width: 48, height: 48 }
            timestamp = <Timestamp> { }
            edited_indicator = <EditedIndicator> { }
        }
    }
}

```

Example: The UI code for a Message, using Makepad's *live DSL*



```
body = <View> {
    width: Fill, height: Fit
    padding: {top: 0, bottom: 10, left: 10, right: 10},
    flow: Right,
}

profile = <View> {
    align: {x: 0.5, y: 0.0}
    width: 65.0, height: Fit,
    margin: {top: 5, right: 10}
    flow: Down,
}

avatar = <Avatar> { width: 48, height: 48 }
timestamp = <Timestamp> { }
edited_indicator = <EditedIndicator> { }

}

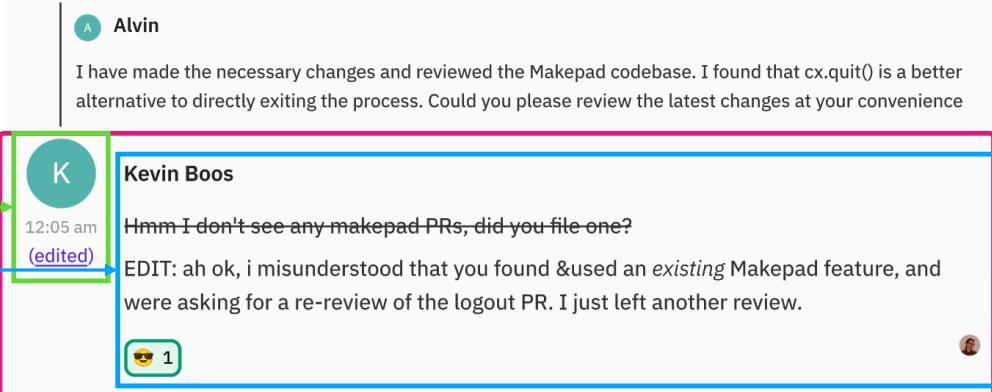
content = <View> {
    width: Fill, height: Fit
    flow: Down,
}

username = <Label> {
    draw_text: {
        text_style: <USERNAME_TEXT_STYLE> {},
        color: (USERNAME_TEXT_COLOR)
        wrap: Ellipsis,
    }
    text: "<Username here>"
}

message = <Html> { }

<View> {
    width: Fill, height: Fit, flow: Right,
    reaction_list = <ReactionList> {}
    avatar_row = <AvatarRow> {}
}
```

The UI code for a Message, using Makepad's *live DSL*



Views, custom Widgets, and composing them

- RoomScreen

- Timeline (PortalList)

- SmallStateEvent
 - DayDivider
 - CondensedImageMessage
 - Message
 - ReplyPreview
 - Avatar, Username, Timestamp
 - HTML or plaintext content
 - Reactions
 - Seen-by users (AvatarSet)

- RoomInputBar

- Location icon button
 - MentionableTextInput
 - Send button



The screenshot displays the Robrix application interface. On the left, a sidebar lists various rooms: All Rooms, Element Web/Desktop, Testing, Testing2, Robrix, Office of the Governing Board (GB), GB Fundraising & Finance Committee, GB Community Committee, Matrix Rust SDK, Makepad, and test. Each room entry shows the last message and the date it was posted. The main area shows a timeline of messages from different rooms. A specific message from Alan Poon in the Testing2 room is highlighted with a red border. Below the timeline is a room overview card for the General room, which includes a list of members (Alan Poon, nuttobeta2, opepo, oo) and a message from nuttobeta2 about connectivity issues. At the bottom, there is a message input field with placeholder text "Write a message (in Markdown) ...".

```

// A regular Message that shows an image, not text.
ImageMessage = <Message> {
  body = {
    // The `profile` view is inherited from `Message`,
    // so we don't need to change it here.

    content = {
      width: Fill, height: Fit
      padding: { left: 10.0 }
      message = <Image> {}

      v = <View> {
        width: Fill, height: Fit, flow: Right

        reaction_list = <ReactionList> {}
        avatar_row = <AvatarRow> {}
      }
    }
  }

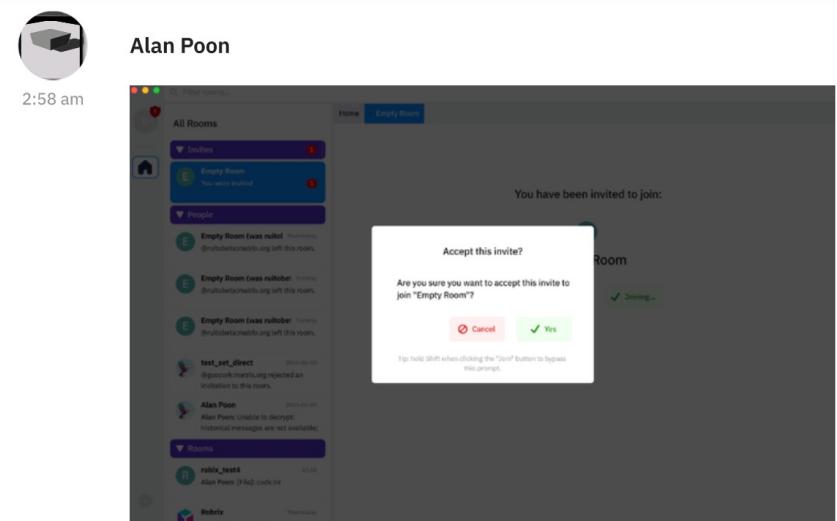
  // A condensed message comes right after another message
  // from the same sender, so it doesn't show their avatar/name.
CondensedMessage = <Message> {
  body = {
    profile = <View> {
      align: {x: 0.5, y: 0.0}
      width: 65.0, height: Fit, flow: Down,

      timestamp = <Timestamp> {}
      edited_indicator = <EditedIndicator> {}
      tsp_sign_indicator = <TspSignIndicator> {}
    }

    // The `content` view is inherited from `Message`,
    // so we don't need to change it here.
  }
}

```

DSL inheritance makes it easy to extend, customize, or re-style your widgets



3:02 am **Kevin Boos:** There seems to be an issue with our implementation of Makepad's Modal. By right clicking the gray out area should close the modal, but it is not. It closes well with the simple makepad example.

Connecting UI DSL code to Rust logic:

→ Event handling is simple via DSL *queries*

 Write a message (in Markdown) ...



```
pub RoomInputBar = {{RoomInputBar}} {  
    location_button = <RobrixIconButton> {  
        spacing: 0,  
        draw_icon: { svg_file: (ICON_LOCATION_PERSON) }  
        icon_walk: { width: Fit, height: 23 }  
    }  
  
    message_input = <TextInput> {  
        empty_text: "Write a message (in Markdown)..."  
    }  
  
    send_message_button = <RobrixIconButton> {  
        // Only enabled when text is inputted  
        enabled: false,  
        draw_icon: {  
            svg_file: (ICON_SEND),  
            color: (COLOR_FG_DISABLED),  
        }  
        draw_bg: { color: (COLOR_BG_DISABLED) }  
    }  
}
```

```
impl Widget for RoomInputBar {  
    fn handle_event(&mut self, cx: &mut Cx, event: &Event, ...) {  
        if let Event::Action(actions) = event {  
            // Handle the send message button click or Enter being pressed.  
            let msg_input = self.text_input(id!(message_input));  
            if self.button(id!(send_message_button)).clicked(actions)  
                || msg_input.returned(actions).is_some()  
            {  
                let text = msg_input.text().trim();  
                if !text.is_empty() {  
                    let message = create_message_with_mentions(&text);  
                    submit_async_request(MatrixRequest::SendMessage {  
                        room_id,  
                        message,  
                        replied_to: self.tl_state.as_mut()  
                            .and_then(|tl| tl.replying_to.take()),  
                    })  
  
                    self.clear_replies(cx);  
                    msg_input.set_text(cx, "");  
                    room_input_bar.enable_send_message_button(cx, false);  
                }  
            }  
        }  
    }  
}
```

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Leverage Rust for max performance: *safely* and easily offload I/O & computation off of the main UI thread

```
submit_async_request(MatrixRequest::SendMessage {  
    room_id,  
    message,  
    replied_to: self.tl_state.as_mut()  
        .and_then(|tl| tl.replying_to.take()),  
})
```

```
static REQUEST_SENDER:  
    OnceLock<UnboundedSender<MatrixRequest>> = ...;  
  
pub fn submit_async_request(req: MatrixRequest) {  
    REQUEST_SENDER.get().send(req)  
}
```

```
impl Widget for RoomInputBar {  
    fn handle_event(&mut self, event: &Event, ...) {  
        if let Event::Action(actions) = event {  
            match actions.cast() {  
                TimelineAction::SendMessage(res) => {  
                    // Update UI here with send result  
                }  
            }  
        }  
    }  
}
```

Main UI thread

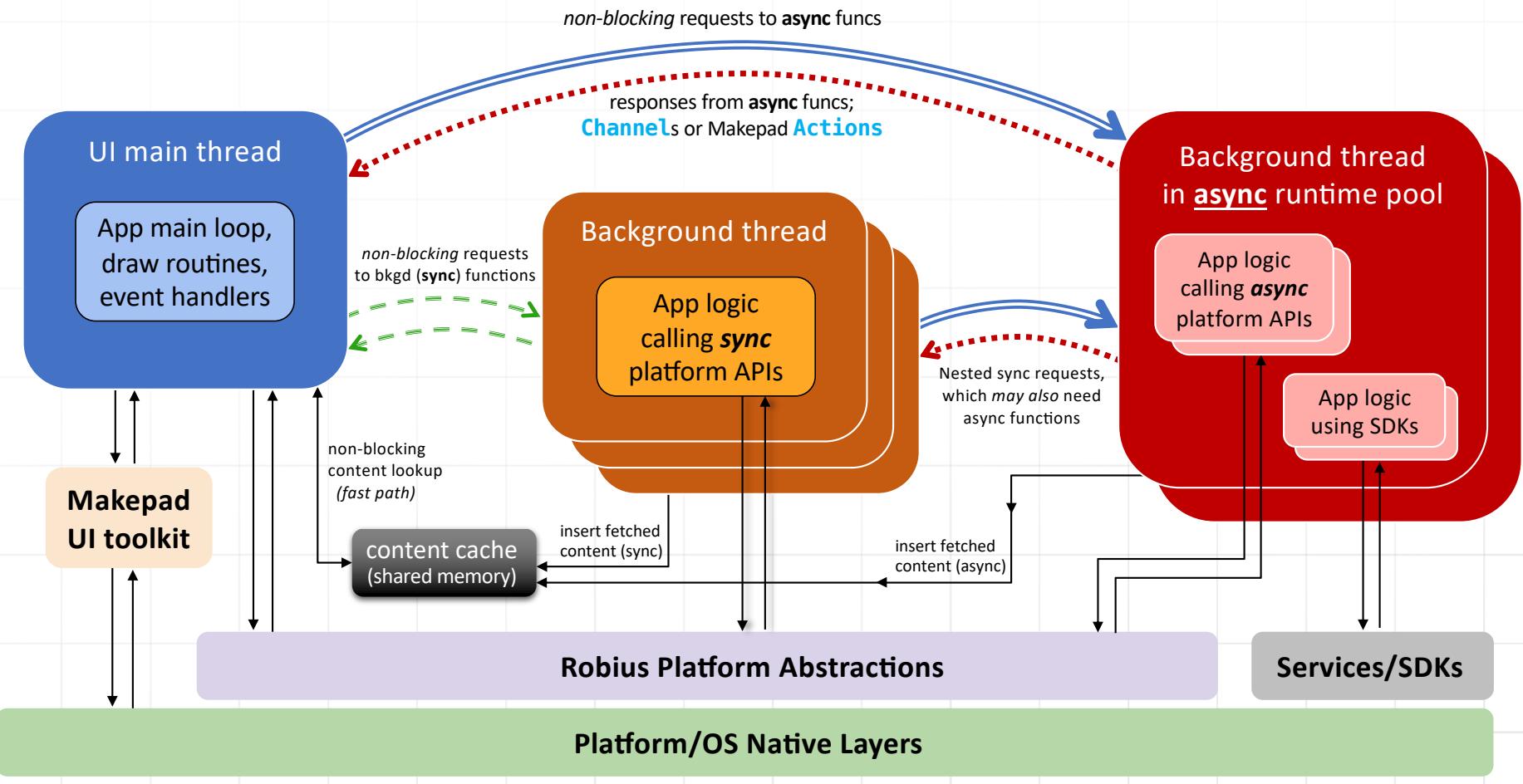
```
async fn async_matrix_worker(  
    mut request_receiver: UnboundedReceiver<MatrixRequest>,  
) -> Result<()> {  
    while let Some(request) = request_receiver.recv().await {  
        match request {  
            MatrixRequest::SendMessage { room_id, msg, replied_to } => {  
                let timeline = get_room_timeline(&room_id) else { ... };  
  
                // Spawn a new async task that will send the actual message.  
                Handle::current().spawn(async move {  
                    let result = if let Some(replied_to_info) = replied_to {  
                        timeline.send_reply(msg, replied_to_info).await  
                    } else {  
                        timeline.send(msg).await  
                    };  
                    Cx::post_action(TimelineUpdate::SentMessage(result));  
                });  
            }  
        }  
    }  
}
```

Background async task



Maintaining performance & responsiveness in the face of mixed concurrency contexts

→ direct function call
- - - → sync → sync channel
==> sync → async channel
- - -> async → sync channel



Robius crates offer easy access to native platform APIs

Easily query current location

```
struct LocationHandler;

impl robius_location::Handler for LocationHandler {
    fn handle_update(&self, location: Location<'_>) {
        match location.coordinates() {
            Ok(coordinates) => {
                Cx::post_action(LocationAction::Update {
                    coordinates,
                    time: location.time().ok(),
                });
            }
            Err(e) => Cx::post_action(LocationAction::Error(e)),
        }
    }
    ...
}

let mgr = Manager::new(LocationHandler)?;
mgr.request_auth(Access::Foreground, Accuracy::Precise)?;
mgr.update_once(); // or start_updates(), stop_updates()
```

Get & manage canonical directories for each platform, including mobile

```
let project_dirs = robius_directories::ProjectDirs::from(
    "org", "robius", "robrix",
);
let app_data_dir = project_dirs.data_dir();
let cache_dir = project_dirs.cache_dir();

// Easily access storage & cache
save_persistent_app_data_to(&app_data_dir);

clear_app_cache(&cache_dir);
```

and many more features...



Integrating TSP into Robrix

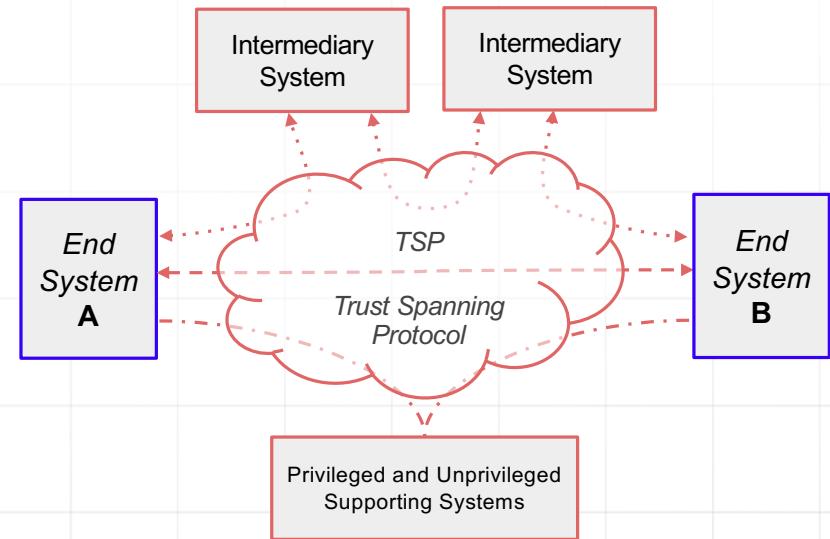
the Trust Spanning Protocol



Decentralized Identity Verification with TSP



- TSP facilitates effective trust relationships over an untrusted network (e.g., the internet)
 - Authenticity: sender is who they say they are; message contents are untampered
 - Confidentiality: Only the chosen receiver can read the message (if encrypted)
 - Metadata privacy, including protection through untrusted intermediaries
- No central authority required to act as the “trust provider”
- Persistent long-term identities are managed by wallets **local** to each endpoint system

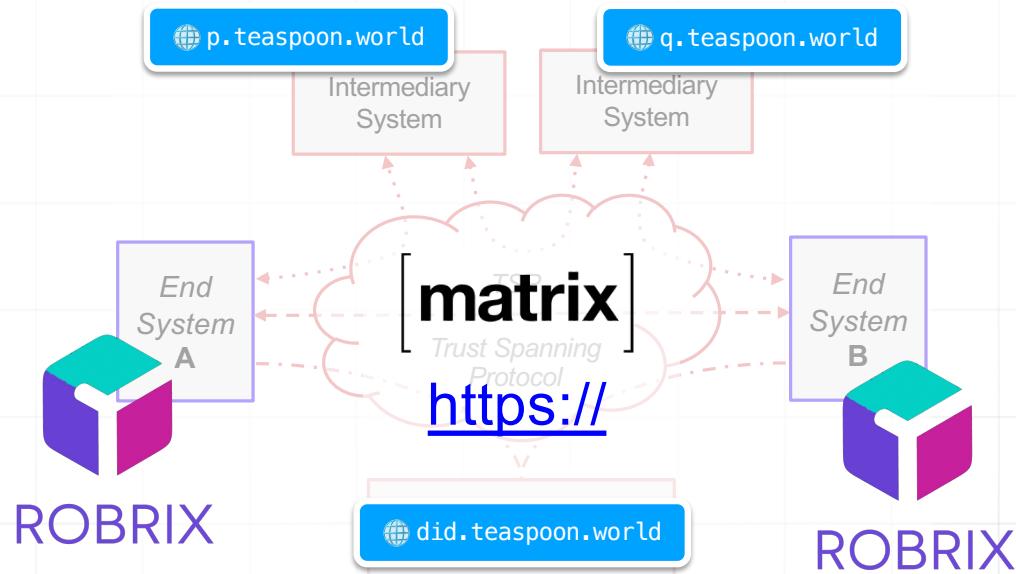


Diagrams courtesy of Wenjing Chu

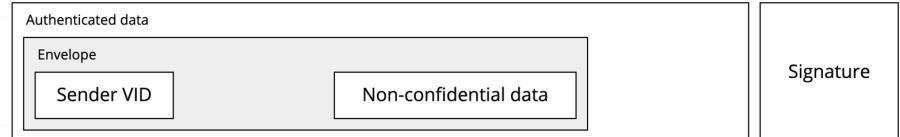
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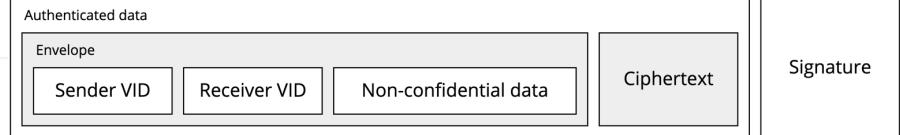
TSP as used in Robrix



We use non-confidential signed messages in public rooms:



We can use confidential encrypted messages in direct rooms:



- TSP Spec: <https://trustoverip.github.io/tswq-tsp-specification/>
- TSP SDK: <https://github.com/openwallet-foundation-labs/tsp>

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TSP features implemented by Robrix



- Create & manage wallets
 - Persist/recover wallets to/from secure storage
- Create and (re)publish Decentralized IDentities (DIDs)
- Verify other users' identities into your local wallet
- Associate a verified ID with a Matrix User ID
- Sign a Matrix message with your TSP ID when sending it out
- Send/receive direct TSP messages over TCP/HTTPS
 - As well as TSP data via Matrix as a transport

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Video demo of TSP atop Matrix



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The image displays two side-by-side screenshots of the Robrix application, which is a Matrix client. The left screenshot shows the main timeline view, while the right screenshot shows a list of rooms.

Left Screenshot (Timeline View):

- Header:** Filter rooms... Home > Robius Test > Robrix > Testing > Testing2
- Rooms Sidebar:** All Rooms (green checkmark), Invites (3 notifications), People, Rooms.
- Messages:**
 - (edited) editing an older msg
3:37 pm Kevin Boos deleted their own message.
3:38 pm Kevin Boos deleted their own message.
 - Tue Jun 10, 2025
 - K Kevin Boos
9:26 am hello there
(edited)
 - Sun Jun 22, 2025
 - A Alex
12:37 am 张浩翔 @Tyrese Luo @Tyrese Luo Robius Test hello chaosbotz
(edited)
cass
 - Fri Jul 4, 2025
 - Eugene joined this room.
 - Tue Jul 8, 2025
 - K Kevin Boos
1:04 pm testing mention again of Robius Test
1 emoji
 - Fri Jul 11, 2025
 - R 张浩翔
8:28 pm @room
3 emojis
 - Thu Sep 4, 2025
 - K Kevin Boos deleted their own message.
 - Sun Sep 7, 2025
 - K Kevin Boos
1:56 pm sending TSP message with Base64-encoded signature
TSP ?
 - Write a message (in Markdown) ...

Right Screenshot (Rooms View):

- Header:** Filter rooms... Robrix
- Rooms Sidebar:** All Rooms (green checkmark), Invites (3 notifications), People, Rooms.
- Rooms List:**
 - Element Web/Desktop 18:06 @noiginvonharis309:matrix.org left this room.
 - Matrix Rust SDK 08:25 @lulli25:matrix.org left this room.
 - Governing Board (GB) 01:36 GB Discourse Bot: @ HarHarLinks (Kim Brose)
 - Element X Android 18:44 Hong Huang joined this room.
 - Testing2 Sunday Kevin Boos: sending TSP message with Base64-encoded signature
 - Makepadad Wednesday Kevin Boos: oh nice, Matrix.org is back up, haha. It depends on
 - Matrix.org (Official Account) 2025-03-02 Matrix.org (Official Account): This is an Official
 - Robius General Monday Gavin changed their display name to "Gi Are".
 - Kevin Boos 2025-04-04 Kevin Boos: Unable to decrypt: historical messages are not available;
 - Room removed 14:24 @mojica:matrix.org left this room.
 - Room removed 12:02 @scannertron:matrix.org left this room.
 - Testing 2025-07-04 Eugene joined this room.
 - Matrix HQ 10 mins ago じめんし joined this room.
- Bottom Status:** Loaded 14 of 14 total rooms.
- Bottom Input:** Write a message (in Markdown) ...

⚠️ Warnings when TSP signatures *don't* match! ⚠️

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The image displays two side-by-side screenshots of the Robrix application interface, which is a tool for managing and searching through Matrix rooms.

Left Screenshot: This screenshot shows the main interface with a sidebar on the left containing a search bar, a 'Rooms' section with a green checkmark icon, and a list of rooms. The main area shows a timeline of messages from various rooms. A specific room named 'Testing2' is selected, showing a history of messages between 'Robius Test' and 'Kevin Boos'. The interface includes a date navigation bar at the bottom.

Right Screenshot: This screenshot shows the search results for 'Robrix'. It lists 14 total rooms. The results include 'All Rooms' (with a green checkmark), 'Invites' (with a red notification badge), 'People' (with a blue notification badge), and a list of rooms. Each room entry shows the room name, last message, and timestamp. The interface includes a date navigation bar at the bottom.

TSP signature is injected into Matrix message

- Compliant with Matrix Spec ✓
 - Doesn't affect other clients; can be freely ignored
- Currently includes the full message (Base64-encoded)
 - Will add TSP SDK support for extracting message payload out of signed byte array

Original event source

```
{  
  "content": {  
    "body": "sending TSP message with Base64-encoded signature",  
    "m.mentions": {},  
    "msgtype": "m.text",  
    "org.robius.tsp_signature":  
      "+SABXAAAXAAB9VIDAAARAABkaWQ6d2Vi0mRpZC50ZWfzcG9vbi53b3JsZDplbmRwb2ludDprZXpbmFib29  
      zX21l5BAgAHsibXNndHlwZSI6Im0udGV4dCIIsImJvZHkiOijzZW5kaW5nIFRTUCbtZXNzYWdlIHdpdGggQmF  
      zzTY0LWVuY29kZWQgc2lnbmF0dXJlIiwibS5tZW50aW9ucyI6e3190BBmEa2Nk9ket8+Z9LIII1nj+paEcgI  
      GyPsUJq/TETpRwMMepd8orKQoblhr7BOSU5gcN5EJ3rRoYJmCwS9rxfgI"  
  },  
  "origin_server_ts": 1757278579091,  
  "sender": "@kevinaboos:matrix.org",  
  "type": "m.room.message",  
  "unsigned": {  
    "membership": "join",  
    "age": 188275837  
  },  
  "event_id": "$CwJHtN3ZTmGh0DZ41_r570aEUDPQBXBECDaGiticAtHY",  
  "room_id": "!nCULugmcNjxWftdWKg:matrix.org"  
}
```



Use cases & benefits of TSP atop Matrix



- ✓ An additional layer of ID verification beyond Matrix
 - Autonomously prove an identity (“I am who I say I am”) and the message’s *authenticity*
- ✓ Show a smoke signal warning if someone’s signature changes
 - Prevents false identity scams like “pig butchering”/杀猪盘
- 🚧 Double encryption for direct (1-on-1) messages
 - Decryption requires locally-available state in secure TSP wallet;
attacker can't read messages even if they compromise your Matrix account
 - Identities are **portable**, not tied to or limited to Matrix
 - Can take your verified relationships with you to a new Matrix account, or port them over to a new service entirely (e.g., Mastodon, Bluesky)
 - Relationships (creditable endorsements) can be *referred*:
 - “Your trusted contact Bob verifies that a new user Alice is *actually* Alice”

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Concluding Remarks



Wrapping up, but looking forward



- You can now use Rust to build complex, real-world apps! 
 - Makepad + Robius enable high performance UI/UX amidst very demanding use cases
 - Offers consistent, deep system integration across multiple platforms
- Many challenges still remain
 - Simplifying UI design, more platform features, better build tooling
 - Deeper TSP integration: referrals, nested relationships, double encryption
- For more, check out our blog: robius.rs/blog/
 - Looking forward to continued collaboration with other Rust UI/App project organizations, and the Rust lang/libs/tools teams

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Roadmap (in no particular order)



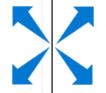
- Expand Makepad's UI **widget collection** and **input event support**
- Ensure consistent coverage for app lifecycle events



- Continue developing key **platform feature abstraction** crates
- Focus on mobile platform APIs, for truly *immersive* apps
 - Backfill OpenHarmony support into existing Robius (and other) crates



- Better, more automated **build tooling**
- Auto-detection + generation of required app permissions/entitlements



- Publish flagship apps** to app stores & package managers
- Under the stewardship of the GOSIM organization



- More docs and guided tutorials** for Makepad + Robius app dev





Acknowledgments

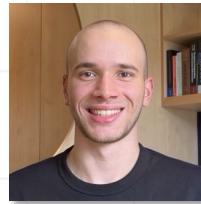
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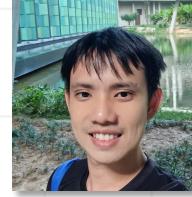
Edward Tan



Klim Tsoutsman



Alex Zhang



Poon Yong
Quan (Alan)



Sebastian
Michailidis



Julian
Montes de Oca



Alvin



Tyrese Luo



Eddy Bruël



Jorge Bejar



Cassaundra
Smith



Yiming
(Aarav) Lu



Guo KeZhen
(Cork)



X



Thanks!



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Interested? Please reach out:

@project-robius

[m] #robius@matrix.org

@kevinaboos

<https://makepad.nl>

<https://robius.rs>

