Donation Page Design
Helping your customers help you

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Background

KiCad was first developed in 1991

Put under source control in 2007

KiCad Website circa 2005
KiCad was first developed in 1991.

Put under source control in 2007.

First donations in 2015.

KiCad Website circa 2015.
Background

1991
KiCad was first developed in 1991

2007
Put under source control in 2007

2015
First donations in 2015

2022
• Two full-time employees
• 8 core developers
• 100s of contributors
Early Donating was Painful

We had some serious donation pain points

- 8 separate, required fields
- Donations were in Swiss Francs
- Donations went to separate entity

Donation Click Path:

KiCad → CERN → Postfinance → Donate → Potential Lost Customers
Steps to fixing

1. **Identify your donors**
2. **Don’t interrupt your donors experience**
3. **Shorten the click path**
4. **Bring donations in-house**
5. **Test, test, test**
6. **Build the community (this happens at every step)**
Who is your customer?

KiCad’s customers are professional circuit designers and engineers

Your customer drives every other choice about design

Are your customers?

- Programmers (you work on an API library or an IDE)
- Writers (you work on LibreOffice/Abiword/etc)
- Teachers (MOOGs)
- Project Managers
- Graphic Designers
- etc...
Who is your customer?

KiCad’s customer base is located in:

- United States
- Germany
- France
- Japan
- United Kingdom

We should offer donations in USD, Euro, Yen and GBP, not Swiss Francs
Who is your customer?

In 2019, KiCad joined The Linux Foundation’s crowdfunding program

• Still multiple pages before donating
• Still lots of extra required data
• Still slow page loading
• BUT donations handled in USD

Donations increased from 10/month to 30/month
Steps to fixing

01. Identify your donors

02. Don’t interrupt your donors experience

03. Shorten the click path

04. Bring donations in-house

05. Test, test, test

06. Build the community (this happens at every step)
Don’t interrupt your donors’ experience

Github “Sponsor” is not enough

- One-way interaction
- Hard to find unless you are a developer
- Multiple clicks to donate

Most donors will never find it unless they are already looking for it
Customer clicks here to download the program.
Shows the donation option while downloading in the background

KiCad donations increased from 30/month to 80/month
Steps to fixing

01. Identify your donors

02. Don’t interrupt your donors experience

03. Shorten the click path

04. Bring donations in-house

05. Test, test, test

06. Build the community (this happens at every step)
**Shorten the click path**

- Every extra click means you’ve lost donors
- Every extra page loses even more donors

- Single page donation design
- Show everything at once
- One click payment where possible
Shorten the click path

We built our own donation page
https://donate.kicad.org

- Cached with cloudflare
- Loads in less than 50ms
Shorten the click path

We built our own donation page [https://donate.kicad.org](https://donate.kicad.org)

- Cached with cloudflare
- Loads in less than 50ms

Stripe payments
2 clicks

- Credit card, iDEAL, SEPA, SOFORT, AliPay
- Payments in local currencies (USD, Euro, Yen, GBP, Yuan)
Shorten the click path

We built our own donation page [https://donate.kicad.org](https://donate.kicad.org)

- Cached with cloudflare
- Loads in less than 50ms

**Stripe payments**

2 clicks

- Credit card, iDEAL, SEPA, SOFORT, AliPay
- Payments in local currencies (USD, Euro, Yen, GBP, Yuan)

**PayPal payments**

1 click

- Adding PayPal option increased number of successful donations from 80/month to 108/month
Steps to fixing

01 Identify your donors

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03 Shorten the click path

04 Bring donations in-house

05 Test, test, test

06 Build the community (this happens at every step)
Bring donations in-house

**External**
- GitHub sponsors
- Linux Foundation crowdfunding
- Ko-Fi

**Internal**
- OpenCollective
- Patreon
- PayPal
- etc...

External processors all require accounts. So “Know your Donors”
Where do your donors have accounts?

Internal processors allow you to handle processing locally.
Fewer clicks, faster response times
Bring donations in-house

Make your own donation page

- Donors know that their donation goes to support your project
- The branding should look/feel the same as your project’s homepage
Bring donations in-house

Use Content Delivery Network (CDN)

- Faster page loading = fewer lost donations
- Use CDN tools to customize your donation page
- Default donations in Euros for IPs from Europe/Yen for IPs from Japan
Bring donations in-house

Keep your own records

- Keep your own records
- Do not rely on an external processor to handle your donation records
- Make sure that you thank your donors!
Steps to fixing

01 Identify your donors

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Test, Test, Test

Never replace your donation page outright

Make a new page

Old – donate_41.html

New – donate_42.html

```javascript
61 /*
62 * Add Donate thank you page during download
63 */
64 $$".dl-link$).click(function() {
65 $$".initial-text$).hide();
66 $$".page-heading$).hide();
67 var donate_iframe = Math.random() < 0.5 ? "donate_41" : "donate_42";
68 $(donate_iframe).show();
69 $".backup-link$[0].href = this.href;
70 })
71 ```
Test, Test, Test

Number your revisions
Insert the number in your product
Test, Test, Test

Number your revisions
Insert the number in your product

Review your results regularly

Optimize for your goals
- Revenue to support your project
- Recurring support
- Donors joining your mailing list
- New donors

What you don’t test, you don’t know
Steps to fixing

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06 Build the community (this happens at every step)
Build the community

Every donation is an opportunity to build your community
Build the community

Donors are your most invested customer
Build the community

Make sure that every donor receives a “Thank You” email from the project
Build the community

Offer ways to deepen the connection

• Badges on user forums
• T-shirts/stickers/pins for donation levels
• Special conference calls for donation levels
Build the community

Offer directed donations

- Let your customers choose which features they most support
- They see direct results when the features are implemented
Build the community

Support your upstream

- Community goes both ways
- Connects your customers with a project they don’t directly use
Last few tips

Set a minimum donation amount (~USD 5) to prevent your processing fees (30¢ + 3-5%) from exceeding 10% of the donation and enforce with Javascript.

Allow donors the option of covering the 3-5% processing fees.
Last few tips

Always monitor for fraud!

Bad actors will use your donation page to test their stolen credit card credentials

You are responsible for refunding fraudulent charges and will get penalized if you do not!
Questions?

KiCad

Donation Page

https://www.kicad.org
https://donate.kicad.org

Sources

https://gitlab.com/kicad/services/kicad-website
https://gitlab.com/kicad/services/kicad-donate

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