

SOFTWARE

Forked-off Xlibre tells Wayland display protocol to DEI in a fire

Project to modernize the X.org X11 server seems to actively court controversy

by [Liam Proven](#)

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UPDATED The recently released Xlibre server aims to modernize the X.org X11 server and improve both its security and performance.

The [XLibre Xserver](#) is a fork of the X.org X server, started by [Enrico Weigelt](#) - probably the most active contributor to the X.org server since 2024.* Weigelt has submitted hundreds of patches since early last year, including [new functionality](#) and a testing pipeline.

The new project aims to develop and improve the X.org display server, as an alternative to the newer and more fashionable Wayland display protocol.

We last mentioned Weigelt's work on [improving X.org multimonitor support](#) about a year ago. However, this was not his first appearance in the pages of *The Register* – back in 2021, [Linus Torvalds rebuked him](#) for spreading pseudo-scientific, anti-vaccination claims.

We suspect that such views will in fact appeal to some people, even if they are on the fringe of the FOSS world.

It is fair to say that Weigelt is no stranger to controversy, and this announcement is no different. *The Register* FOSS desk has witnessed some remarkable levels of anti-X11 sentiment from Wayland proponents since the announcement... especially given that the subject under discussion is something as superficially trivial as the protocols that handle displaying Unix computers' graphical user interfaces. But, as we [noted last month](#), ferociously passionate advocacy is a sad but inevitable aspect of software development.

We are confident this won't bother Weigelt a bit. In fact, the README file for X11Libre positively invites it, as it contains this:

It's explicitly free of any "DEI" [diversity, equity, and inclusion] or similar discriminatory policies.

Oh dear.

That statement, though, has received praise and approval in some places.

The same README states that the fork is a result of systematic attempts to suppress further development and improvement of the default FOSS X11 server:

That fork was necessary since toxic elements within Xorg projects, moles from BigTech, are boycotting any substantial work on Xorg, in order to destroy the project, to eliminate [sic] competition of their own products. Classic "embrace, extend, extinguish" tactics.

Right after first journalists began covering the planned fork Xlibre, on June 6th 2025, Redhat [sic] employees started a purge on the Xlibre founder's gitlab account on freedesktop.org: deleted the git repo, tickets, merge requests, etc, and so fired the shot that the whole world heared [sic].

Weigelt amplified these claims in an [email to the xorg-devel mailing list](#). As far as we are able to see, the statement that his GitLab accounts have been deleted is true – for instance, [this merge request](#) says: "The source project of this merge request has been removed." His [Freedesktop GitLab account](#) now just says "This user is blocked" and most of his [long list of merge requests](#) have been summarily marked "closed."

His direct code contributions have faced pushback before as well. For instance, some of the comments on [this change](#).

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This vulture is conflicted. We deplore anti-vaxxer and other anti-science disinformation. Vaccines don't cause autism; they cause adults. Climate change is real, social justice is a good thing, and we are enthusiastically in favor of [diversity, equity, and inclusion](#).

Thus we find it deeply ironic that at present, X11 is considerably better from an accessibility point of view than Wayland, which has a markedly poor track record here. As we have [said recently](#), accessibility matters. Even if you're not disabled yet, you will be one day. Today, the desktops and apps that are most controllable by stodgy old-fashioned keyboard-centric user interfaces are ones like MATE and Xfce – which also means that it is the less-cool, older-style desktops that are more accessible. The environments driving Wayland adoption, such as GNOME and KDE Plasma, are still relatively weak in this area.

Wayland and the environments that natively support it boast some snazzy features such as [adaptive sync](#) and [variable refresh rate support](#) and [High Dynamic Range displays](#), which we are sure are wonderful if you're a keen-eyed gamer in your 20s or 30s. This author is not, and despite 20:20 vision with glasses, is [physically unable to perceive this sort of thing](#). That is one reason why we strongly prefer older desktops such as Xfce and Ubuntu's Unity, which also respects and follows the [industry-standard user interface](#) shunned by recent versions of GNOME and KDE.

As we have said before, we suspect this disconnect between younger, keener developers who don't know or care about late 20th-century UI design and older users who do strongly want to junk what they perceive as old and irrelevant, which is very much the case here.

The X.org X11 server fork is a result of this disconnect, and it happened again.

Update to add context

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