

## 1. Summary of proposed change

Currently, there is a misalignment between the de facto Thunderbird governance model and the Module Ownership system. Formed in 2014, the elected Thunderbird council is the governing body of the Thunderbird project. It formally oversees the software development process and provides overall product strategy on behalf of the community and acting as arbitrator when necessary. However, the council is not the top level Thunderbird Module Owner (current owner: Magnus Melin) for Thunderbird, creating the potential that the council is not able to deliver on its responsibilities or exercise its authority. In order to clarify this situation, we are proposing that you appoint the Thunderbird council to serve as the top-level module owner for Thunderbird. The suggested change, explained in more detail below, is to formally acknowledge that fact.

## 2. Context and motivation for the change

The seven councilors, elected by the Thunderbird community's active contributors, and currently serving on the [1] [Thunderbird Council](#), currently listed as "Module" on the [2] [Thunderbird module owners page](#), would like to request your permission to change the Thunderbird Project module decision making hierarchy.

So far, the current module owner of the Thunderbird module claimed absolute authority over most Thunderbird code, including all sub-modules, and even parts that are outside the Thunderbird module as defined. Many reviews were done by that one person, often even overriding sub-module owners, and not always well-reasoned, which caused conflicts and frustration to them, up to the point where they felt they can no longer effectively do their job. This complicated the resolution of conflicts between said module owner and multiple other contributors.

The Council, thus passed a motion (see [3]) in late April 2022 to request the module owner system to formally acknowledge that the Council, which already is represented by a module, is hierarchically above all other Thunderbird modules and thus can act as top-level module owner for all matters within the Thunderbird project. Even before this change, the Thunderbird Council was understood to be hierarchically above the module owners, and everybody other than said module owner agreed on that, so this motion is mostly a clarification.

This modification request clarifies the authority of the Council over all Thunderbird modules, to make changes to the Thunderbird code module ownership, and to avoid that neither employed nor non-employed contributor(s) could hold the project hostage or block progress. It would allow the Thunderbird Council to manage and update the modules and module owners and peers to reflect realities and to replace, add or remove Thunderbird code module owners, especially if there were module ownership conflicts.

### 3. Existing description of the model and its scope

The current intended decision making model primarily reflects the Mozilla module ownership system. There is a Thunderbird module owner and submodule owners, and they are effectively the final decision makers for their modules. There is little or no accountability for the module owners to the community. While the Council has been treated as the decision making authority for Thunderbird in general, this is an informal process. There are no specified rules for how the Council can interact with the module owners. The only official authority above the Thunderbird module owner is the general Mozilla module ownership module.

This is problematic when there are conflicts due to the lack of accountability and the confusing, undefined relationship of the Council to the other modules.

### 4. Current modules and owners

In the current structure, no hierarchy is given but the Thunderbird module is the highest Module with the owner (Magnus Melin) claiming absolute authority over most Thunderbird code while other council members are in disagreement.

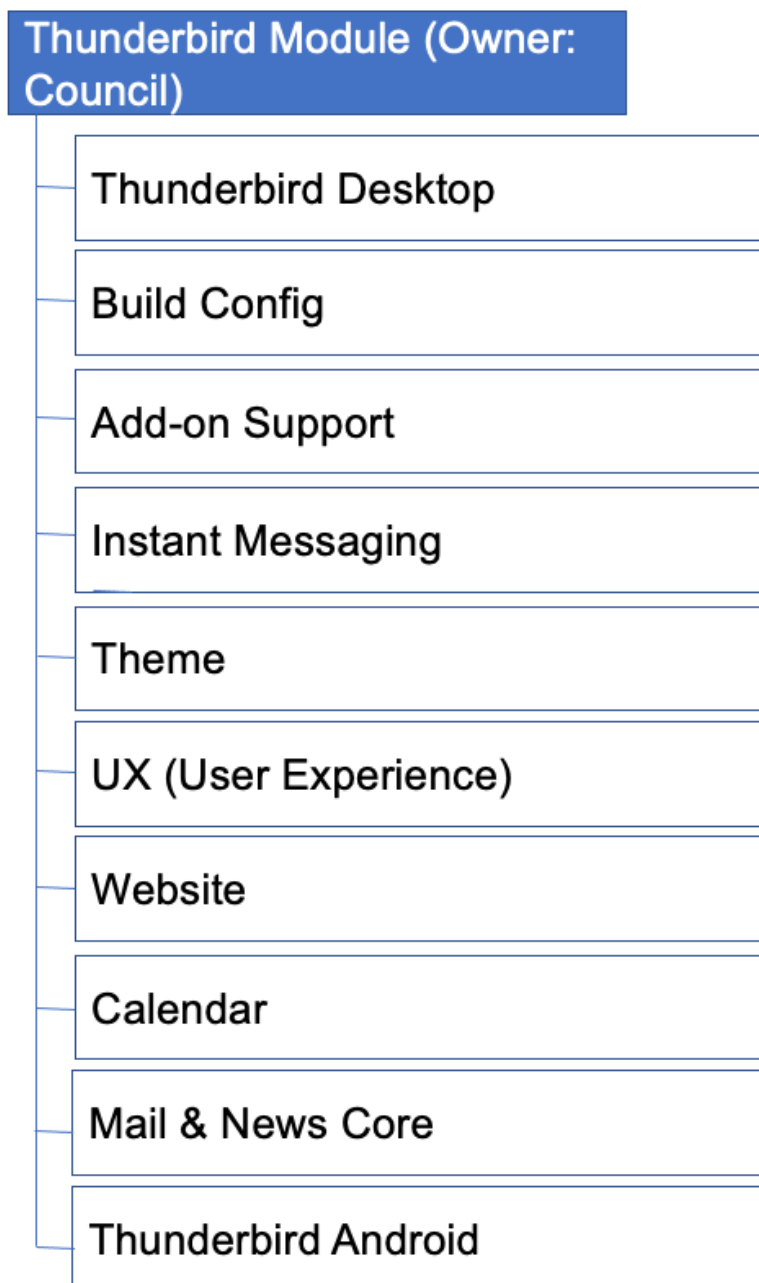
Here is a list of the current [Thunderbird Module Owners](#) (see [4]):

- Thunderbird – Owner: [Magnus Melin](#) (:mkmelin)
- Thunderbird Council – Owner: Chair 2021: [Berna Alp](#) (:ba)
- Build Config – Owner: [Rob Lemley](#) (:rjl)
- Add-on Support – Owner: [Geoff Lankow](#) (:darktrojan)
- Instant Messaging – Owner: [Patrick Cloke](#) (:clokep)
- Theme – Owner: [Richard Marti](#) (:paenglab)
- UX (User Experience) – Owner: [Alessandro Castellani](#) (:aleca)
- Website – Owner: [Andrei Hajdukewycz](#) (:sancus)
- Calendar – Owner: [Philipp Kewisch](#) (:Fallen)
  - (Specific Module) User Interface (UI) – Owner: [Richard Marti](#) (:paenglab)
- Mail & News Core – Owner: Joshua Cranmer (:jcranmer)
  - Addressbook – Owner: Geoff Lankow (:darktrojan)
  - Feeds
  - IMAP handling code – Owner: Gene Smith
  - SMTP – Owner: Ping Chen (:rnons)
  - Gloda
  - Message Database
  - MIME Parser
  - News – Owner: Joshua Cranmer (:jcranmer)
  - Unit Testing Infrastructure – Owner: Geoff Lankow (:darktrojan)
  - Import
  - Localization
  - S/MIME – Owner: Kai Engert (:kaie)

With the proposed change, the Module Ownership structure (hierarchy) will change to clearly identify the Thunderbird module now owned by the Thunderbird Council as the highest level module of the Thunderbird project. The first module underneath owned by Magnus Melin will be renamed to Thunderbird Desktop and a new module Thunderbird Android (not yet officially created) shall be created at the same level in the future by the council.

The future may lead to the creation of further modules based on Thunderbird Project's business strategy and priorities, such as a Thunderbird Mobile or a Thunderbird iOS module.

The new structure (sub modules are not displayed below) will be as follows:



## 5. List of decision making methods used by Council as module owner

With the proposed change, the Council would step in under the following circumstances:

WHEN:

- If a conflict is raised with the Council by a contributor or a community member
- If the Council determines issue/conflict with its strategic priorities
- If the Council decides to reorganize module structure & domain to better reflect strategic direction
- To ensure that there is effective and competent ownership of all code sections.
- If the Council notices a new active and competent developer and would like to assign responsibility in the respective area of code.
- If code sections are effectively unowned, either because the existing module owner became inactive, or a code section does not have a corresponding module yet.

ON THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS:

- Structure of the modules & domains (Thunderbird for Desktop, Thunderbird for mobile, ...)
- Identity of the module owners (Who is module owner)
- Strategic priorities for module owners
- Specific resolutions on conflicts brought to Council's attention

HOW:

- By Council Motion (Majority vote)

The council would not be involved in the day-to-day activities or regular development work, like reviewing or approving patches, managing bug reports / feature requests, uplift requests or similar things.

## 6. Council election process and current electoral roll

Council Election Process:

The existing Council establishes a list of all persons eligible to vote (the "electors") whose names are made public. The list of electors are then entered into a private topicbox group created for the purpose of managing the Thunderbird Council election. Persons on the electorate list who desire to stand for election send their self-announcement to the list. In the case there are more than two people nominated from the same

organization/association/unit, a pre-election takes place first, and the two winners continue to the real election. The 'Mozilla Corporation', the 'Mozilla Foundation', and 'MZLA Technologies' are (considered) separate companies for purposes of "professional affiliation". Electors vote for Council members from the list of those standing for election. Voting occurs on an external, secure voting-as-a-service platform. If more than seven people stand for election, voting is done using "ranked choice", with conversion of the individual choices into an elected council done using the [5] [Scottish STV method](#). If seven or fewer persons stand for election, then the voting consists of a simple yes or no to accept or decline the entire slate as the elected Council. The voting process selects a Council of seven members, each with a one-year term.

Last election process was concluded on October 29, 2021, having used the outline at [https://wiki.mozilla.org/Thunderbird/Council\\_Election](https://wiki.mozilla.org/Thunderbird/Council_Election). The number of voters was 70 (out of 134, see [6]) and the following individuals have been elected:

- Andrei Hajdukewycz
- Ben Bucksch
- Berna Alp
- Dirk Steinmetz
- Magnus Melin
- Patrick Cloke
- Philipp Kewisch

Links:

[1] <https://www.thunderbird.net/en-US/about/>

[2] [https://wiki.mozilla.org/Modules/Thunderbird#Thunderbird\\_Council](https://wiki.mozilla.org/Modules/Thunderbird#Thunderbird_Council)

[3] Motion: "The Thunderbird Council module is hierarchically above Thunderbird desktop and Thunderbird mobile, and the Thunderbird Council is the highest org. [...]"

[4] <https://wiki.mozilla.org/Modules/Thunderbird>

[5] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Single\\_transferable\\_vote](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Single_transferable_vote)

[6] [https://wiki.mozilla.org/Thunderbird/Council\\_Elections\\_2021](https://wiki.mozilla.org/Thunderbird/Council_Elections_2021)