THE BRAND BOOK OF

system76

System76 is...

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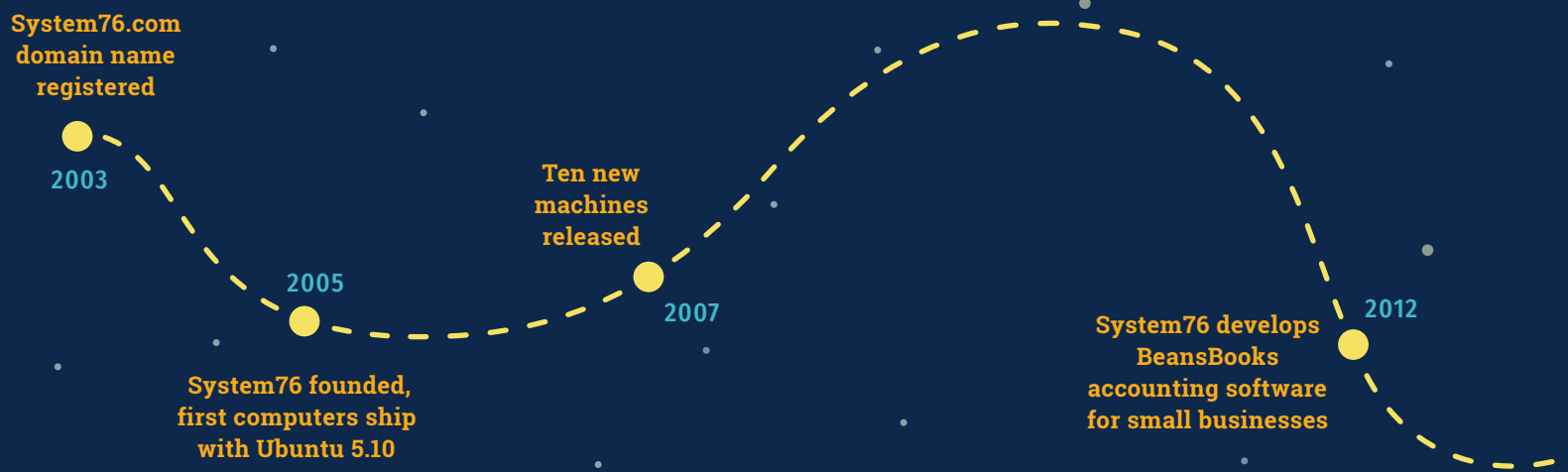
System76 is By Nerds, For Nerds _



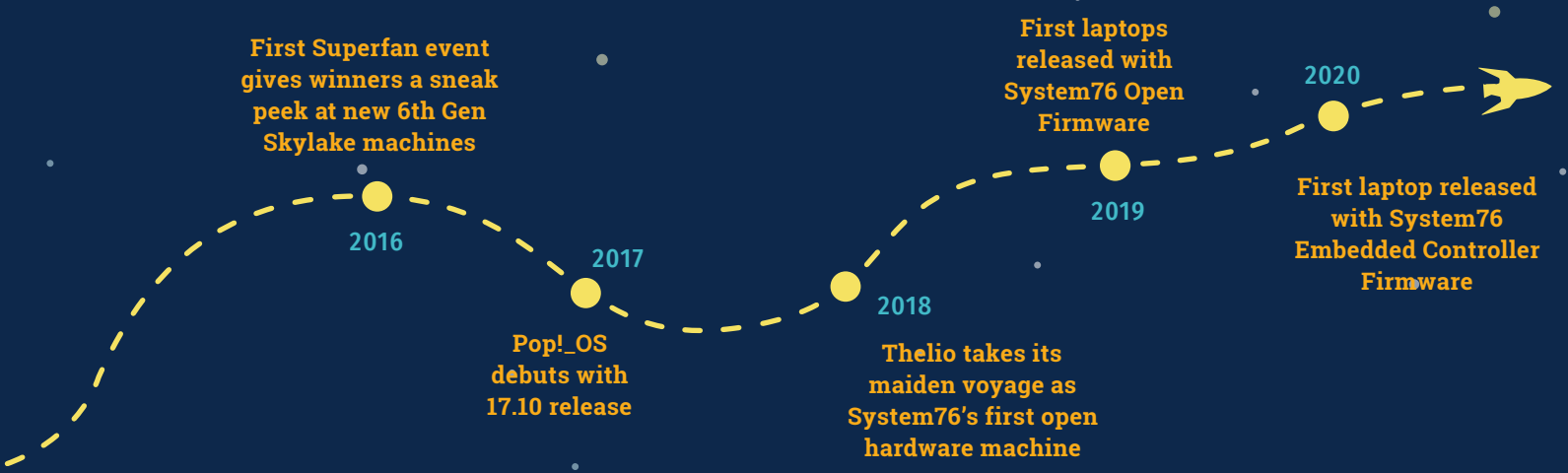
AN ORIGIN STORY

Disclaimer: Accounts may vary. Many discussions during the rather lengthy run-up to System76 were accompanied by a silent partner: beer.

System76 began with founder Carl Richell in the early 2000s. Growing up, Carl spent a lot of time in the computer lab toying around with software. His interest in technology grew, and he eventually found himself as a computer consultant working with GNU/Linux software. GNU is known for being free and open source (FOSS), meaning it's widely accessible and fully transparent. Every nook and cranny of your software is viewable for anyone, ensuring increased security, privacy, and swarms of squashed bugs. Linux, on the other hand, is the open source "kernel" which allocates hardware resources to the programs you're running. These days, the GNU/Linux combo is commonly referred to as the Linux operating system.

In 2003, Carl had restarted one of his old companies. His friend Erik Fetzer spoke with him about selling GNU/Linux machines, and the system76.com domain was registered. The two went to work right away, transforming this vision into—just kidding. Like most new domains, system76.com sat in idle existence for another couple of years.

In 2005, Carl and Erik were wrapping up projects and System76 came up once more. They agreed that GNU/Linux deserved a high-quality hardware manufacturer, and then set out to do just that. And thus, System76 was born in a tiny basement office in Colorado. Shortly after, they encountered their first



challenge: the distribution. Linux exists in the form of countless "distributions" or "distros", which package together open source software projects built atop GNU/Linux into a single operating system. The plan was to gauge the landscape of distros by downloading them all and converting them to a disk, then downloading each one onto a computer. This process proved tedious, as each distro was only being used for about a week or two. The pair quickly realized how much work it would be to maintain multiple distros, and shifted their focus towards finding The One.

Red Hat, Suse, and Yoper were all considered, but they didn't quite fit what Carl and Erik were looking for. And then there was this Ubuntu distro with its tantalizing wallpaper. This version was Ubuntu 5.04, also known as Hoary Hedgehog—the distro's second release. It came with the Ubuntu promise that the distro would remain free, and delivered a complete experience that didn't hide features behind price tiers. They loaded it up, and... they couldn't log in as a root user, which would've allowed them full access to their machine. Even the tantalizing wallpaper was nowhere to be found. Clearly Ubuntu wasn't the distro they were looking for.

Weeks went by. Their progress was stalled. Perhaps they rushed to judgment too quickly? For their second test, they ran through the Unofficial Ubuntu Starter Guide numerous times and quickly warmed up to it. Ubuntu became The One. Months later, the first System76 computer shipped with Ubuntu 5.10: Breezy Badger.

WE HAVE OUR REASONS

Our Mission

We build open source computers and software, empowering creators, makers, and builders to unleash their potential.

Our Vision

To create revolutionary open source tools that help others transform the world as we know it.

Our Values

We're innovators. We're not here to reinvent the wheel. We're here to dismantle the wheel, see how it works, and remantle it into a warp drive. Take that, wheel.

We're open. Like one of those neon signs in the window, but for our minds. (And our code.)

We give a science. Everything we make is the result of user feedback. You want more battery life? Done. Manufacture computers in-house? Yep. Find a speeling error on our website? We'll fix that too.

We're nerds. And we're proud of it. We even have lasers.

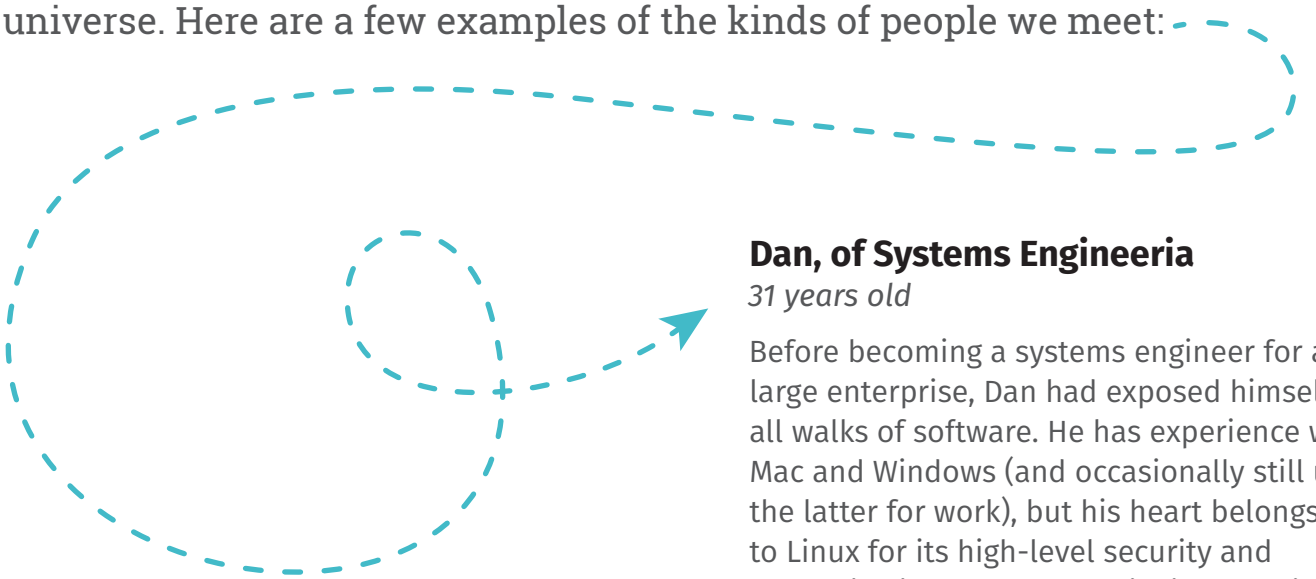
We're us. We believe in our work because we believe in yours. Whether you're building robots, sequencing DNA, developing firmware, or going to space, we want to help you get there.

OUR KINDS OF PEOPLE

Meet User

User has always been at the core of our development. Our research, features, and testing focus on her needs so we can make the most productive tool possible for her. There's a lot swirling around in her head, you see, so it's imperative we make it easy for her to translate those thoughts into real progress. When User has feedback for us, we're there to listen—even when it hurts.

People like User come to us from different worlds across our universe. Here are a few examples of the kinds of people we meet:



Dan, of Systems Engineeria

31 years old

Before becoming a systems engineer for a large enterprise, Dan had exposed himself to all walks of software. He has experience with Mac and Windows (and occasionally still uses the latter for work), but his heart belongs to Linux for its high-level security and customization. He spends his time reading Hacker News and eagerly awaiting the next generation of CPUs. He's excited about the prospect of a new computer, but also knows he doesn't really need one more... yet.

Kim, of the Front-End Web Developorium

31 years old

She had a short stint with Linux years ago before deciding on Mac for its hassle-free experience. But times have changed. More and more people have come out of the cyberwork to praise Linux, and Kim wants to see what all the hubbub is about. Now that she's working from home, she can finally retire her Mac setup and take a full dive into Linux.

Andy of Media Productiontown

35 years old // Videographer

Andy is a passionate videographer who dabbles in audio production and animation. He likes that open source tools allow people to be creative regardless of their income, and that they give him more control over his software. Nonetheless, he acknowledges that there is still some progress to be made on the quality of those programs.

Andy switched to Linux from Windows, and he's still surprised to see that his workflow is noticeably faster on Linux.

Andreas, of Algorithmia

43 years old // Machine Learning Engineer

Andreas is naturally curious and wildly ambitious. After leaving Academia with a PhD in software engineering, he set out to learn even more. He kept hearing about all these projects where people made computers do cool things—and then quickly decided to join in on the fun. He taught himself machine learning and took some online classes, and voila! Landed a job at a mid-size company (and some freelance gigs on the side). Andreas aims to never stop learning. Even if it means rescinding his faith in liquid cooling.

Tatum, of Gamerton-Hobbyistia

24 years old

Tatum's journey down the Linux rabbit hole begins when she talks with some friends about cybersecurity. Big Data has entered her personal bubble, and she wants them out.

A computer science student, she uses her sticker-covered laptop for both schoolwork and gaming. When she learns all her games work on Linux, there's no turning back.

Sam, of Scientistopia

26 years old // PhD student, Research Assistant

Sam strives to make a change in the world, and finds a home in research and experimentation. She loves getting fully immersed in her work alongside her advisor, who she learns a lot from. If only she didn't have to take time away from their projects to secure funding...

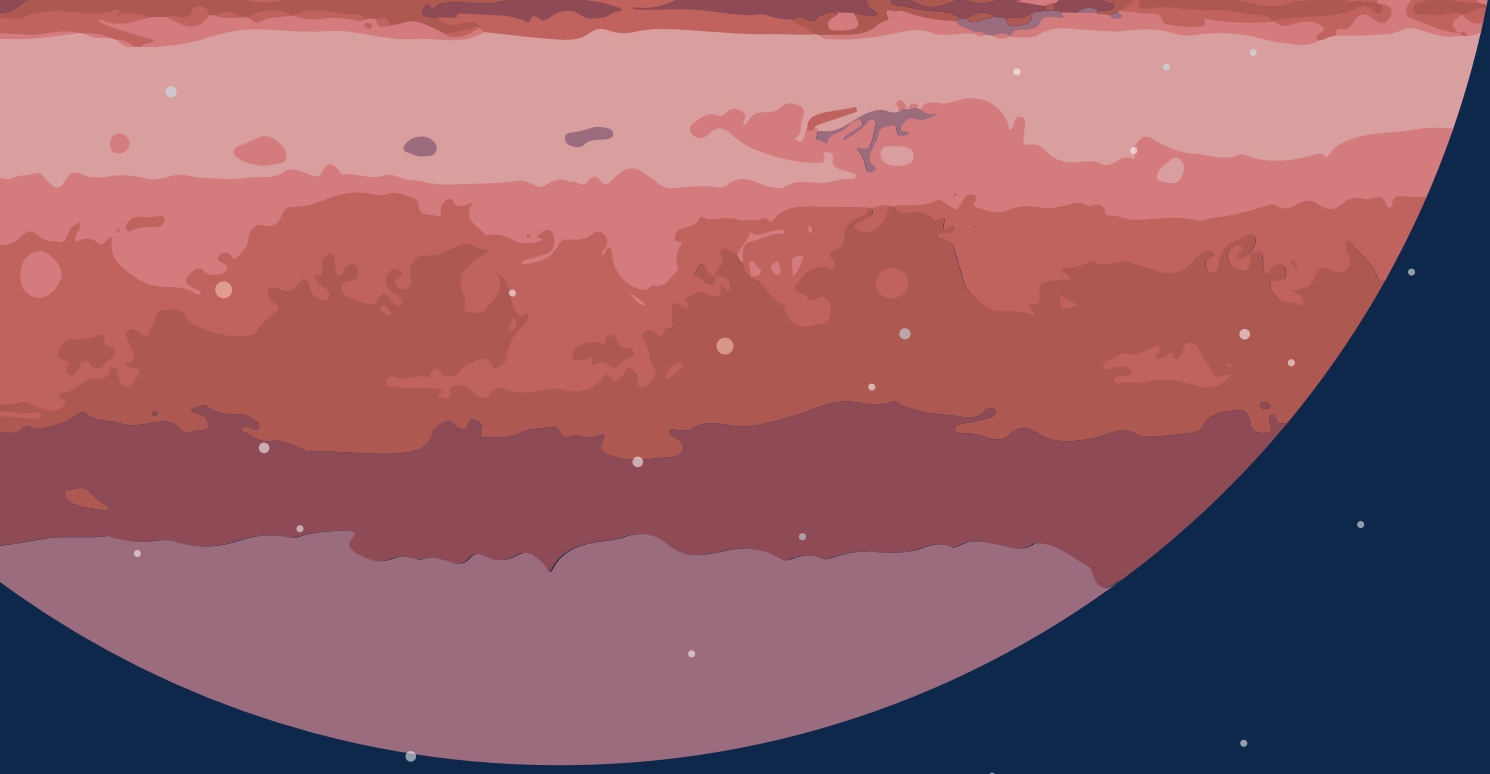
Her passion for experimenting doesn't translate over to her hardware. She's much more trusting of big names like Intel and their well-established reputations.

Monica, of The Corporate Star Cluster

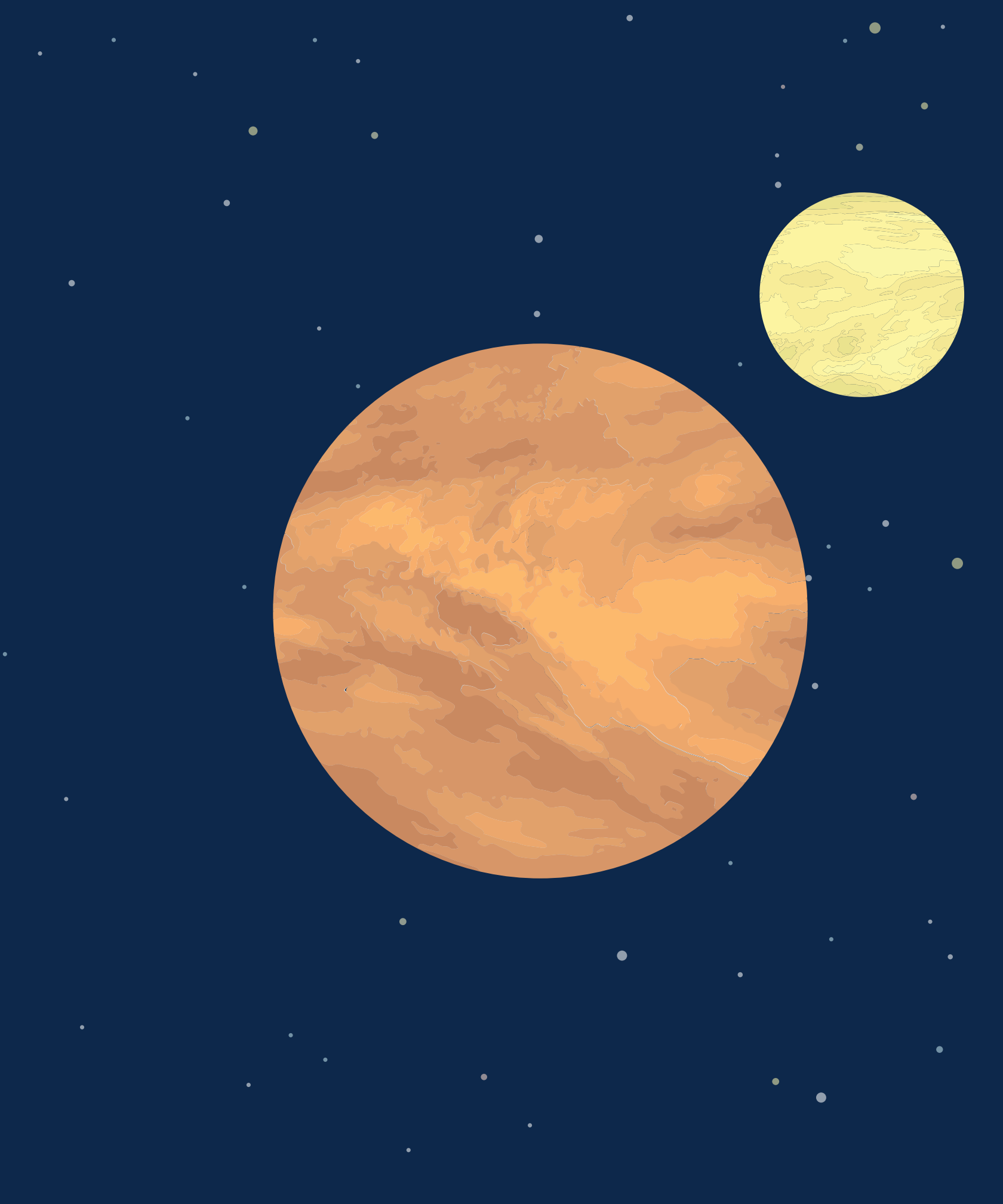
50 years old // Business Client Representative

Her research and development team knows what machines they need to get the job done. Her financial department knows the budget. Monica's role is to work within the requirements of all parties involved to find the Goldilocks hardware they're looking for. The work is close to home; her son, a high school senior, dreams of one day engineering AI. The information she discovers could come in handy for him one day.

This all can be overwhelming for even a superhero like Monica, but she has to be one for the people counting on her.



System76 is The Sci-Fi Brand



THE LOGO SYSTEM

Behind the Name

Ever since the company's origin, we've focused on technology freedom. The freedom to truly own a computer you purchased, and upgrade or repair it yourself. The freedom to use your software how you see fit, and alter it for your current project. The freedom to learn how your system works, as well as make improvements. And for us, the freedom to make the best product possible for our users.

In reference to the American Revolution, the 76 in our name declares our independence from proprietary empires through the freedom that open source technology provides. Will you join us?

The height and width of the “e” in the logotype can be used to estimate sufficient spacing or padding around the logo to separate it from surrounding elements.

The Blip should never be removed from the logotype. The space between The Blip and the “6” should be equal to the height of The Blip.

The Blip

Technically speaking, the Blip represents a blinking cursor in a terminal. It’s sort of a “fill in the blank” for what comes next. But what comes next for our users is much more than the next command. It’s the next discovery: An invention. A cure. An historic moment. The Blip is a symbol of potential, and we’re here to unleash it.

The Logotype

The custom glyphs are based on Nexa Slab for its clean lines, friendly geometry, and unique serifs. There are no enclosed white spaces in the logo for two reasons: 1, to echo our values of freedom and openness; 2, so that the logo itself can be open space—say, for example, lasercut into a laptop for backlighting.

Primary Logo

The complete logotype is best arranged with the letterforms in Terra_Grey or white and the Blip in Curiosity_Orange. The Blip should never be any other color than Curiosity_Orange, but can be changed with the full logo to be black, white, or shades of grey. The letters can separately be in a shade of grey under specific circumstances.

Secondary Logo

The secondary logo is an icon consisting of the Blip and the 76, set within a circlular background of Terra_Grey and never any other color. However, a solid, "cutout" version of the secondary logo can be used; color options are grayscale, white, black, and Terra_Grey.

Logo Scale

The smallest the logotype should ever be is 16mm or about 45px wide in order to maintain legibility. The smallest the icon or badge logo should be is 8mm or about 20px wide. There is no maximum size for System76 logos. Logos can be scaled as needed.

DON'T...

stretch the logo.

warp the logo.

flip the logo.

recolor the logo.

modify points or spaces within the logo.

redraw or live trace the logo.

launch the logo into the sun.

dunk the logo in potassium nitrate.

send the logo back in time.

send the logo forward in time.

send the logo back in time again to fix what it broke.

divide the logo by zero.

teach the logo sentience.

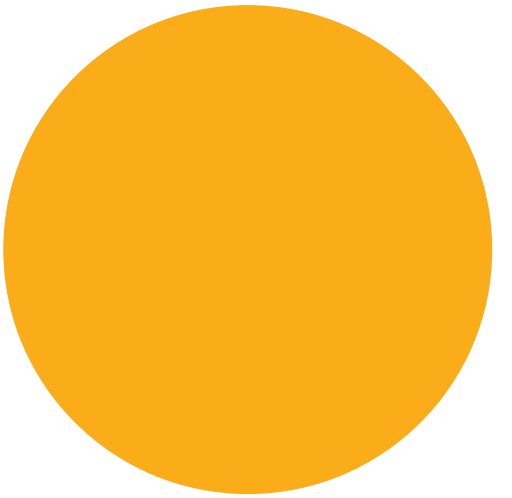
grant the logo access to nuclear launch codes.

question the logo's authority.

get the logo wet.

feed the logo after midnight.

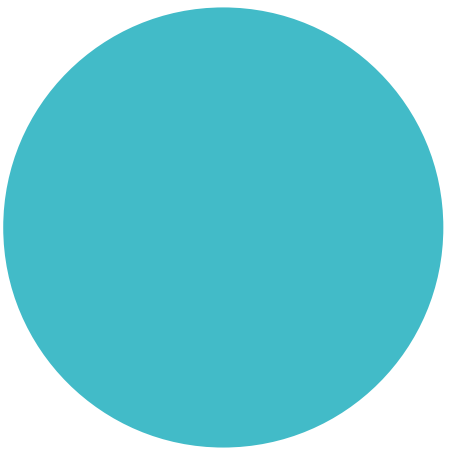
THE COLOR PALETTE_



Curiosity_Orange

System76 likes to explore new territory, and the name certainly reflects that. Curiosity is derived from the Mars Science Laboratory space probe mission, which collected data from Mars to prepare for a human mission. Warm, friendly, and assertive, Curiosity contradicts the cold-color norm for tech companies.

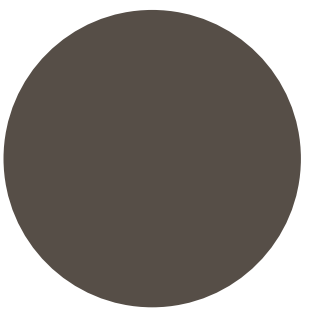
#ffad00 **0-32-100-0** **PMS 2010 C**



Pop!_Blue

This vibrant blue rivals our Curiosity_Orange. Like our hardware and software, the friendly competition between these colors sharpens both of their wits. Pop!_Blue represents vast possibilities, potential, and freedom.

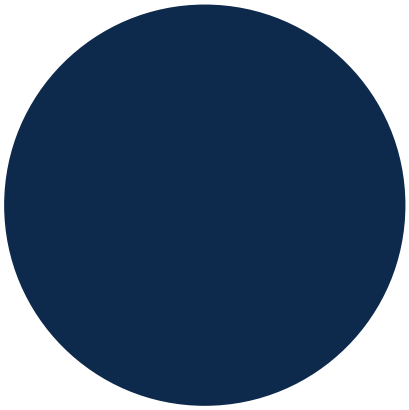
#48b9c7 **70-0-20-0** **PMS 3115 C**



Terra_Grey

A happy marriage between grey and brown, this warm neutral welcomes the curious and capable makers of tomorrow to Linux with open arms. Its earthy tone breathes reliability and longevity into our branding, establishing trust and loyalty with our users.

#574f4a **0-9-15-66** **PMS Warm Gray 11 C**



Discovery_Midnight

This navy blue symbolizes the deep mysteries of the Great Unknown we are constantly working to understand. STEM and creative work are about exploring areas of thought where no one has gone before. Discovery_Midnight promotes this existential journey into the mind while providing contrast to our brighter colors.

#102a4c **79-45-0-70** **PMS 282 C**

Lumen_Yellow

Our disposition is bright as the sun, so we chose a bright yellow to match. Lumen_Yellow provides a cheerful retro aesthetic—it makes us feel like a kid in a candy store or an astronaut on the bridge to a rocket. Nerdy aspirations begin with a childlike enthusiasm for all things science, as evidenced by our Star Trek lunch boxes; Lumen_Yellow instills that enthusiasm into our brand.

#f7e062 **0-9-60-3** **PMS 2003 C**

THE TYPOGRAPHY

Roboto Slab and Fira Sans are the primary brand typefaces, chosen for their approachability and accessibility. Both are free, open source typefaces that have support for multiple languages. As a pair, their versatility enhances our identity and helps communicate our brand effectively.

Roboto Slab

Roboto Slab lends modernity, stability, and openness to our brand. Its big, open geometry, rounded edges, and old-school slab serifs evoke reliability, softened by an air of friendliness.

Aa

Roboto Slab Light 300
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRDTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

Roboto Slab Regular 400
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRDTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

Roboto Slab Bold 700
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRDTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

Fira Sans

Adopted by the Mozilla Foundation for Firefox OS, Fira Sans has close ties with the open source community. Humanist in design, it aims to cover the legibility needs for a wide array of display qualities and capabilities, making it a perfect choice for our user-concerned brand. Plus, it beautifully captures our "Sci-Fi Movie Poster" aesthetic when used with expansive letter-spacing in all caps for header styles.

Aa

Fira Sans Regular r00
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRDTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

Fira Sans Regular Italic 400
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRDTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

Fira Sans Bold 700
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRDTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

To help our primary typefaces in specific use cases that require better brand definition (or just greater whimsy), we have two supporting character sets: Fira Sans Condensed and Ed's Market Script—used sparingly and with intent.

Fira Sans Condensed

Part of the larger Fira Sans family, it is used almost solely for Thelio identity design; it aligns with the larger System76 brand but achieves a higher level of modernity to specifically evoke Thelio's neofuturistic sensibilities. Weights vary depending on size to maintain sleekness and legibility.

Aa

Fira Sans Condensed Light
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRDTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

Fira Sans Condensed Regular
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRDTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

Ed's Market

Fira Sans and Roboto Slab alone don't have the vibrance that sale campaign design necessitates. So to help us better create that "Sci-Fi Movie Poster" feel for promos and events, we go to the retro brush lettering-inspired display faces of Ed's Market, designed by Laura Worthington. (We primarily use Main Script, but reserve the right to be louder and bolder as we see fit.)

Aa

Ed's Market Main Script
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRDTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuwwxyz
1234567890

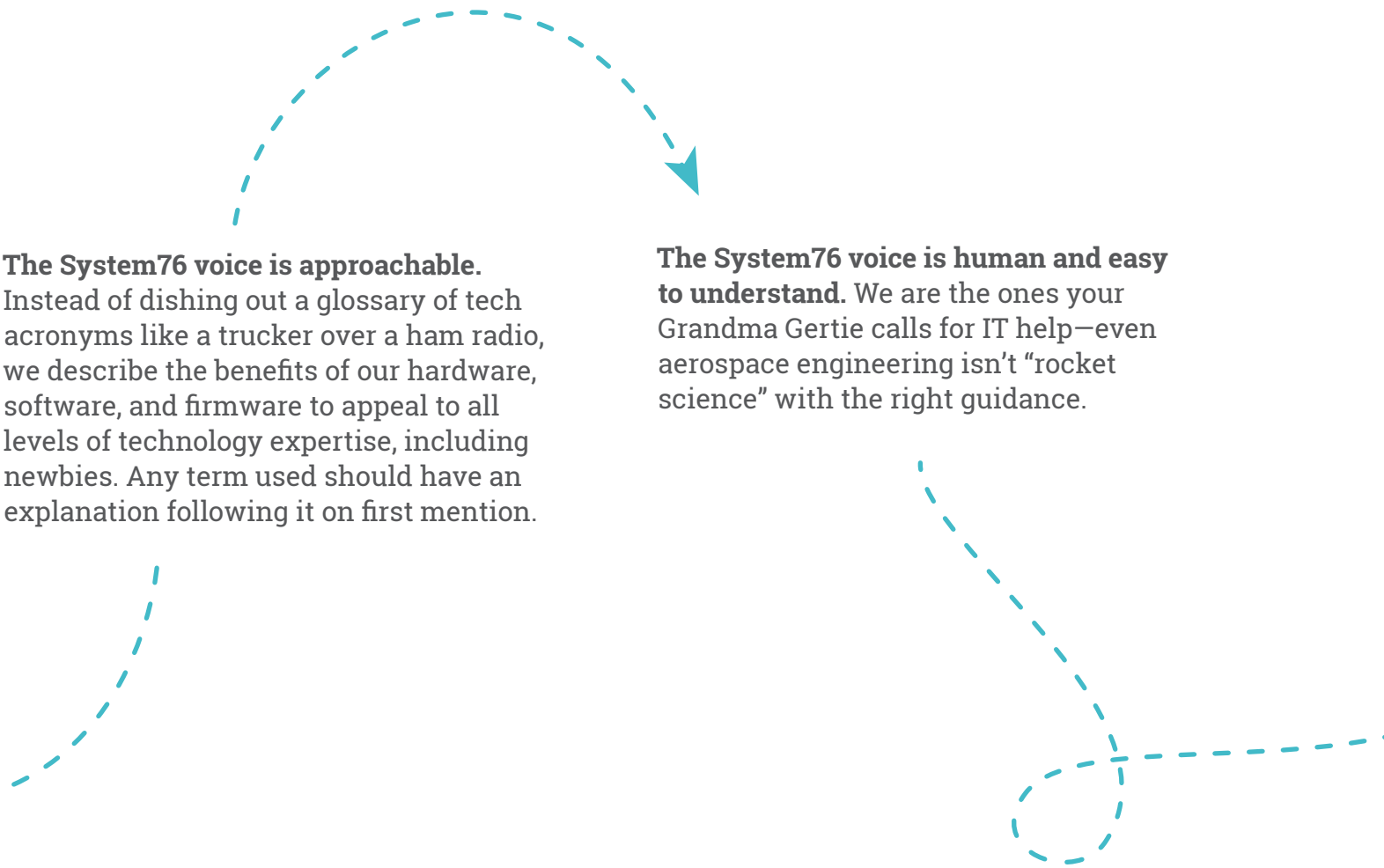
ED'S MARKET BOLD SLANT
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRDTUVWXYZ
1234567890

ED'S MARKET NARROW
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRDTUVWXYZ
1234567890

THE VOICE

The System76 voice is approachable. Instead of dishing out a glossary of tech acronyms like a trucker over a ham radio, we describe the benefits of our hardware, software, and firmware to appeal to all levels of technology expertise, including newbies. Any term used should have an explanation following it on first mention.

The System76 voice is human and easy to understand. We are the ones your Grandma Gertie calls for IT help—even aerospace engineering isn't "rocket science" with the right guidance.

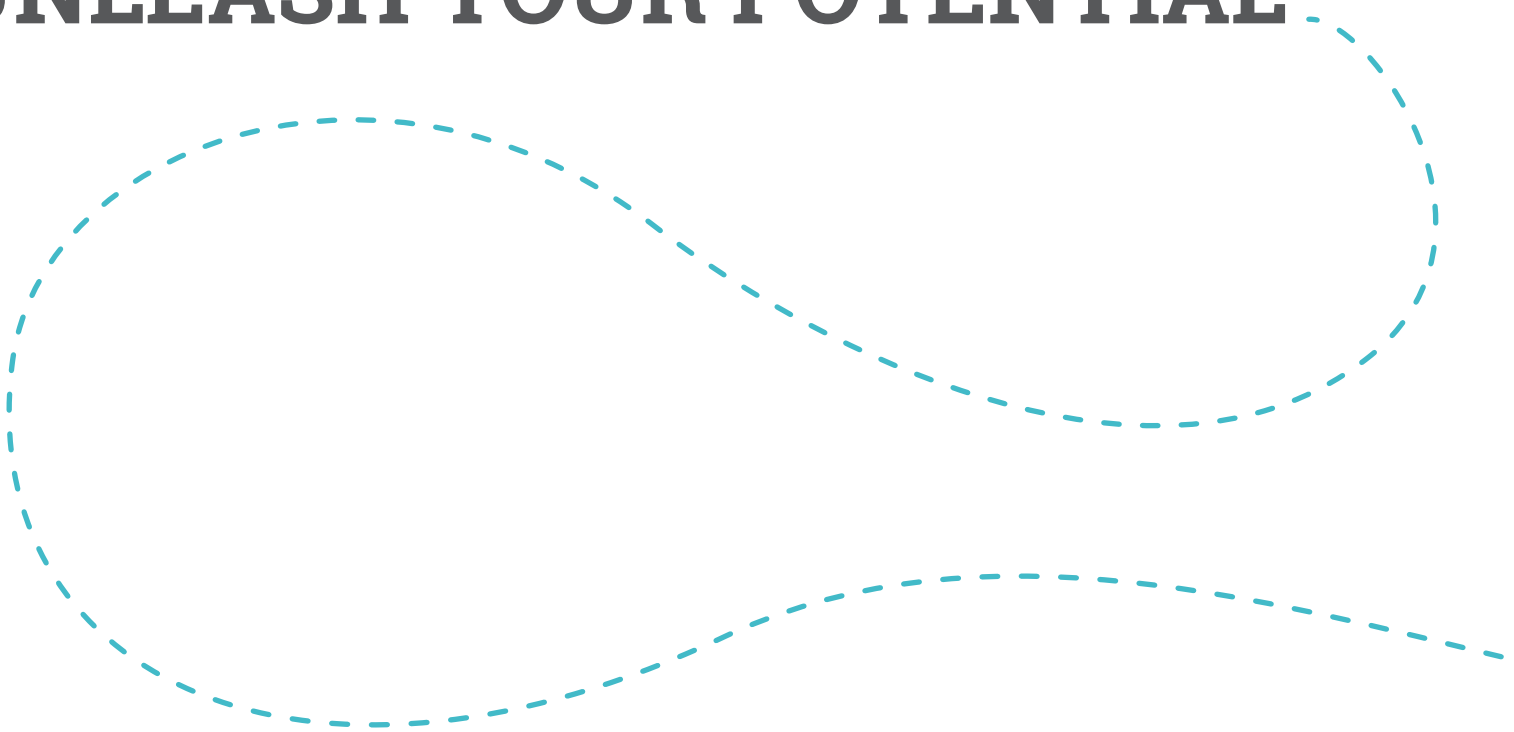


The System76 voice is nerdy. Whether it's the latest tech or the oldest sci-fi, we unapologetically love being nerds. What other workplace has Viking weapons? Don't be afraid to make up words, either. Pseudoverbalism keeps messaging feeling fresh and lively, like a juisacious orange plucked straight from the tree.

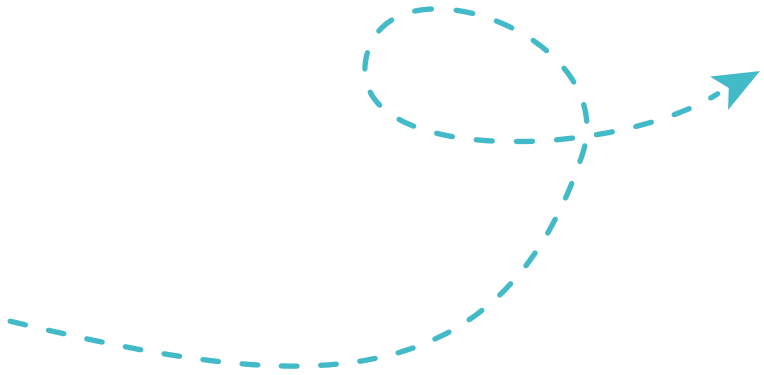
The System76 voice is always positive. We're an open-minded company creating open source tools, meaning we encourage people to try new things and have differing opinions. People can only discover by thinking for themselves. And by using our products. Make them use our products.

THE TAGLINE

UNLEASH YOUR POTENTIAL



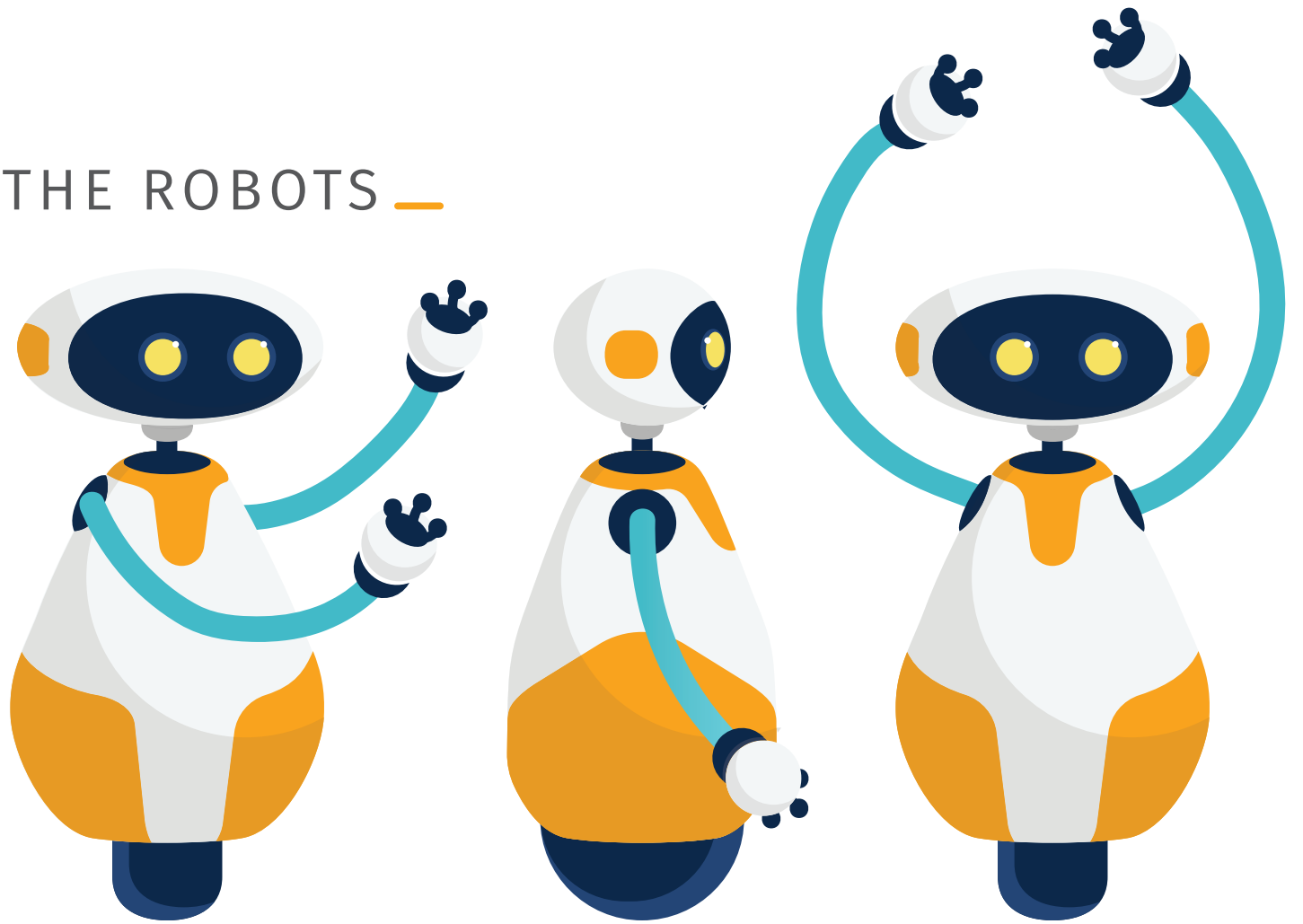
We make open source tools for the curious and capable makers of tomorrow who use their computers to discover and create. Our tools are designed to put them on a path of least resistance towards making their ideas a reality. We forge hammers for builders. Make maps for adventurers. Construct rockets for space pioneers.



But even the slightest disruption can knock a rocket off-course. Our duty as craftsnerds is to create the fastest, most efficient, up-to-date free and open tool—to empower progress, rather than obstruct it. When it comes time for the digital artisans, gods of concept, and explorers of the physical realm to demolish the boundaries of thought, we give them the means to go forth and triumph.

This is how we Unleash Your Potential.

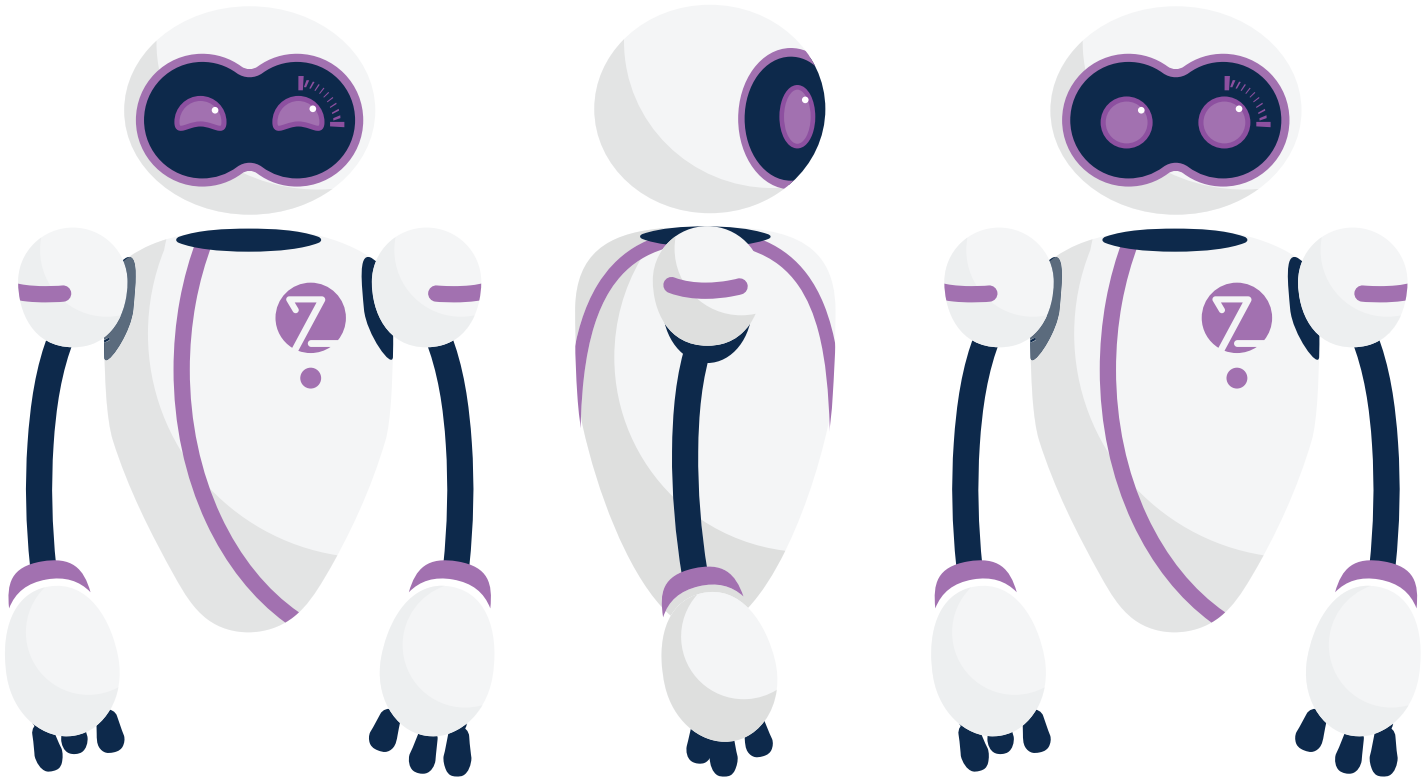
THE ROBOTS



5iMON

Can he fix it? He'll certainly try, using all components of his prototype heart. 5iMON (Simon) is System76's 5_Series robot, designed for maintenance, support, and wholesome hugs.

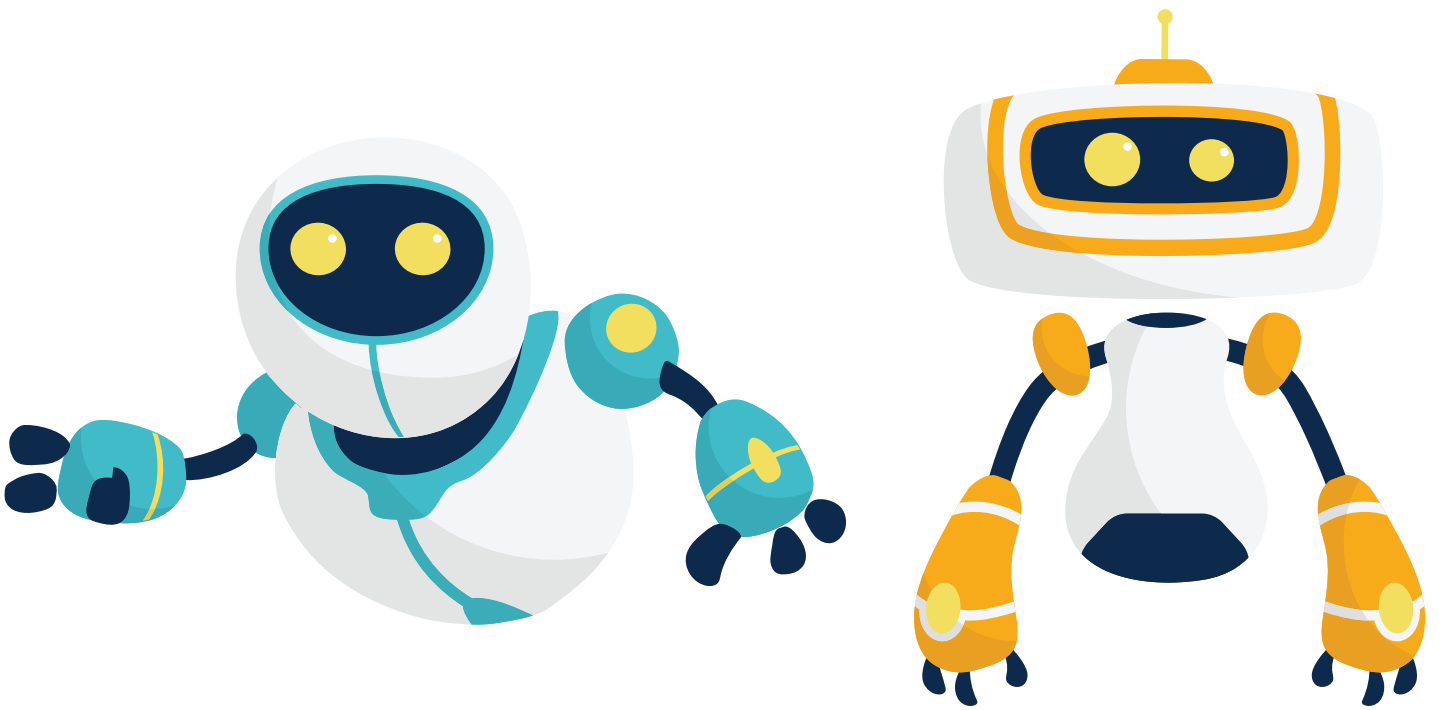
5iMON accompanies all things helpful. He presents tech tips, support instructions, website error messages, and anything else that involves helping people. When we need a robot to help someone out, 5iMON's our guy/robot.



Zoe

She's an adventurous robot and the pristine result of endless iteration. Zoe (aka 7_oe) is the unparalleled leader of the ZetaBots, System76's 7_Series robots. Zoe travels the cosmos with her 7 sisters in search of new discoveries. She and her squad then share these discoveries with people in need.

In branding, Zoe is depicted alongside discovery and innovation. She accompanies users at the beginning of their Pop!_OS journey, as well as for major features and products manufactured in-house.



OLIviA + IRviNG

These spastic 6_Series siblings were born from our first foray into manufacturing. There were... a few minor complications. (There was a fire. It's not important.) Ever since, we decided it was best to keep these RogueBots under close watch in Denver, so we put them in charge of pricing. The results have been wildly successful, though we'll occasionally stumble into a flash sale to cover for their erratic behavior. When that happens, they'll be responsible for making sure it goes smoothly.

System76 is All About Software

WHAT + WHY IS POP!_OS?

Pop!_OS is a joy to use, so it should also be a joy to listen to. To evoke this feeling of joyness, Pop!_ OS leans into the whimsical nature of System76. Examples of whimsical nature: A seal balancing a ball on its nose. A parrot that only quotes old western movies. A blind seahorse who's also an oracle. (Also known as the "foreseahorse".)

When explaining something about the OS, be as clear and simple as possible. Put as much love into your words as the engineers put into their work. We're doing something special here, and we believe in it unconditionally.

If Pop!_OS were to encourage you to do something, it would say, "You've got this. (sunglasses emoji)". It may or may not literally say the words "sunglasses emoji" aloud, accompanied with jazz hands.

BRANDING AN OPERATING SYSTEM _

How Pop!_OS Came to Be

First, there was nothing. Then, there was a knock on the door. It's Carl. "We're making an operating system!" Thus, Pop!_OS was born. Like the Big Bang, System76's new operating system just popped into existence.

Pop!.....OS.

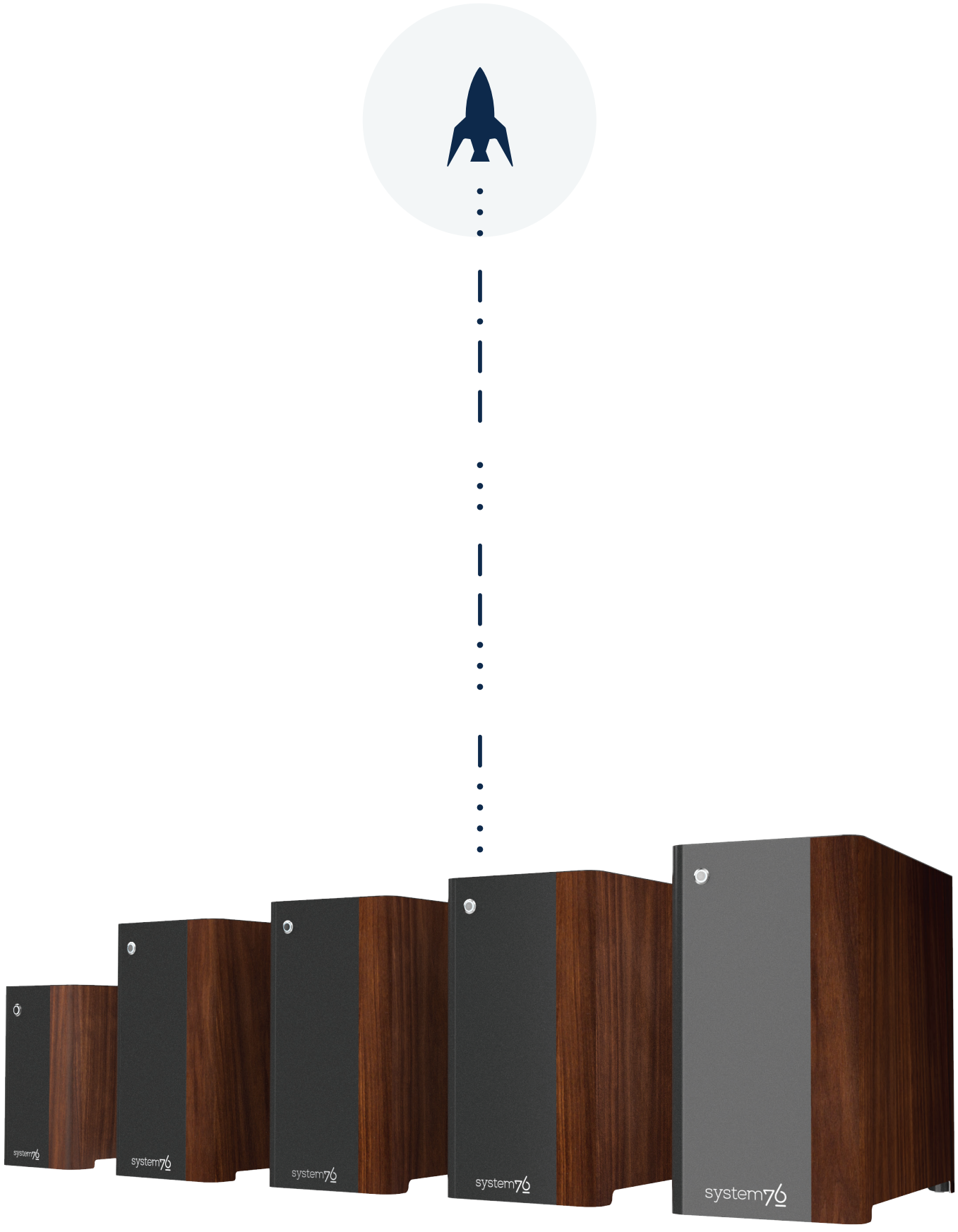
Pop!_OS.

System76 is All About Hardware

HOW WE LANDED ON THELIO

Our first in-house desktops came from the heart, so it was only fitting the name originated there as well. As proud nerds, we abandoned our terrestrial ways and searched for a name among the stars. A days-long cosmic spirit quest led us high into the Rocky Mountains. We were closer to the stars than we'd ever been before, but we simply couldn't reach them. We journeyed through the Solar System, delved into black holes, traveled to galaxies far, far away—but it seemed nothing in existence would provide the right name.

Nothing in existence...but what about not in existence? If we couldn't find the right etymology, we'd just have to invent our own. We pulled together several concepts—τέλος, meaning "purpose," Ηλιος, meaning "sun," a nod to input/output and binary—combining them into an identity for our imaginary corner of the universe: Thelio. It embodies the ethos that our products are tools to help you achieve your goals. To prove the sky is not nearly the limit. To go above and beyond your lofty goals until you reach the stars.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GENERATING THE **FUTURE** FROM DENVER, COLORADO