The project

OTW Archive: https://github.com/otwcode/otwarchive

Link to my pull request: https://github.com/otwcode/otwarchive/pull/5210

Eligibility

License: GPL 2.0 https://opensource.org/license/gpl-2-0

Doesn't seem to be possible to use the GitHub API to check project size in lines of code, but according to this online tool: https://codetabs.com/count-loc/count-loc-online.html the project contains 244 KLOC. It is very large and complex.

The purpose of the software is not to violate student conduct policies and standards.

The project's original author is the Organization for Transformative Works (not me!).

Choosing a project

At the beginning of the term, my primary goal for this class was to gain hands-on experience with open source software and to make a contribution that could be a valuable addition to a resume. This in mind, I primarily sought out projects that were crucial parts of the cybersecurity and cloud networking industries.

I browsed several projects, many of which were similar in size and complexity to the one I ended up choosing, but I found myself struggling to navigate large code bases and run tests without an existing baseline familiarity with the software.

The primary reason that I ended up choosing this particular project was due to my existing familiarity with it, along with my passion for the OTW's mission. This project serves a community that I care about, and I use the Archive regularly, which gave me a strong head start when navigating the codebase and skimming existing issues. Many of my friends and family members use the Archive and are familiar with its features and its shortcomings, which means that any impact I make on the project is an impact on my own community.

In the end, the moment that I decided I wanted to contribute to this project happened by chance— a friend was talking to me about a gift exchange she was running through the

Archive and a persistent glitch that was affecting her users, and, though I'd always known that the Archive was an open source project, since I was taking this class and had OSS on the brain, it was then that I had the abrupt realization that there was nothing stopping me from trying to fix the glitch myself.

Having now made my first contribution to the project and gained a level of familiarity with the codebase, I've browsed the issue tracker and found several more problems that I hope to tackle in the coming weeks and months. I hope to become a regular and active contributor to this project, and I'm glad that this class has unlocked that opportunity for me.

Project Health and Guideline Discoverability

The project is very active, with many active contributors and several signs of life and welcome. Pull requests are reviewed within days, and information and guidelines for contributors are readily accessible. I found all of the information I needed easily with just a quick skim over the repository and the README. The project follows many of the standard practices that have been discussed in class.

The contributing guide, which explains the process for reporting issues and contributing to fix those issues, is very discoverable, as is the issue tracker. Both are easy to find upon first glancing over the repository, and the instructions for contributing are detailed enough that any new contributor can easily follow them.

The coding standards and internationalization standards are linked wherever applicable and exceptionally thorough.

Issue Selection

For this project, I found an existing issue to solve by browsing the Jira issue tracker for the project. I chose one that was medium priority, addressing a usability issue for which a user had requested a fix, and which was marked as a "good first issue," since I wanted to start with something limited in scope that I was sure I could tackle.

The issue is #6969 in the tracker, and lists the following as changes that need to be added:

- Add pagination links to the top of the History and Marked for Later pages, in addition to the pagination already at the bottom

- Remove the logged_in? checks (the page is only accessible to the logged in user who owns it, so these should be unnecessary)
- Remove the role="navigation" attribute from the ul
- Update the old hash rocket syntax to JSON style (e.g., :show => 'to-read' to show: "to-read")
- Change remaining single quotes to double quotes
- Internationalize text and add locale keys to en.yml

Addressing the issue

I implemented all of the changes laid out by the issue page. Several of these changes were syntax updates and cleaning up elements of the code that were no longer necessary, which was very simple and did not necessitate any testing.

The primary change was the addition of pagination to the top of the History and Marked for Later pages. This is a functionality that already exists within the project and simply needed to be added in an additional place, so the code I needed was already elsewhere in the project; fixing it was just a matter of making sure that it matched and understanding the files I was messing with to be sure that it was in the right place.

To update syntax and ensure that any code I added or changed met the standards for the project, I followed the project's coding standards, which can be found here:

https://github.com/otwcode/otwarchive/wiki/Coding-Standards

To internationalize the text on the pages relevant to my PR (which was the bulk of the work that went into this contribution, if not the main purpose of the PR), I followed the project's internationalization standards, which can be found here:

https://github.com/otwcode/otwarchive/wiki/Internationalization-(i18n)-Standards/

Response

Since opening my PR, I have received two updates: one from a maintainer thanking me for the contribution and inviting me to make a Jira account in order to make further contributions and have issues assigned to me, and one from another maintainer who has reviewed the code.

There are two issues which need to be fixed: I need to normalize the locale keys in the i18n file, which can be done by running a Docker function on my machine, and I need to make a change to the syntax in one line so that it passes the linter. However, my code is

otherwise functional, passes all other tests, and I'm told that it looks good aside from these changes!

Fulfillment of Goals

I met my most important goal, which was to gain hands-on experience with open source software in a way that prepares me better to enter the industry. During the course of the term, my goals shifted as I learned more and explored more projects and talked with more people; I've learned over the course of my degree that my goals will shift a lot between the conception of an idea and the first time I "get my hands dirty," and that that's just part of software development.

In the end, the defining reason I contributed to this particular project was due to my existing relationship with it. I picked a project I cared about. Because of this, I think I gained more from the course than I would have otherwise. Once I make the necessary changes to my contribution and become a contributor officially, I'll make a Jira account and be able to claim further issues and contribute in more and more involved ways. This is a project that I've been invested in for a very long time as a user, and I'm excited to be involved from the other side!

References

1. OTWArchive. Organization for Transformative Works. GitHub repository, 2025, https://github.com/otwcode/otwarchive.

2. “Internationalization (i18n) Standards.” Organization for Transformative Works. GitHub page, 2025, https://github.com/otwcode/otwarchive/wiki/Internationalization-(i18n)-Standards/.