CPR101NAA- Week 7 Activity - Open-Source Project (100%)

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For this open-source research assignment, I have chosen a software called Audacity. Audacity is a free and open-source digital audio editor and recording application software. It is available for Windows, macOS, Linux, and other Unix-like operating systems.

The project was started in the fall of 1999 by Dominic Mazzoni and Roger Dannenberg, at Carnegie Mellon University, initially under the name CMU Visual Audio. Audacity was officially released as Audacity 0.8 to the public on May 28, 2000.

In April 2021, it was announced that Muse Group (owners of MuseScore and Ultimate Guitar) would acquire the Audacity trademark and continue to develop the application, which remains free and open source.

As of December 6, 2022, Audacity is the most popular download at FossHub, with over 114.2 million downloads since March 2015. It was previously served from Google Code and SourceForge, where it was downloaded over 200 million times. It is licensed under GPL-2.0-or-later. Executables with VST3 support are licensed GPL-3-only to maintain license compatibility.

The reason I am choosing Audacity is because I personally use it to quickly edit audio clips for both personal and professional use. The interface is simple to use and follows many of the established standards used by other name brand audio programs.

The software is very popular, especially in education. Due to this, its developers have made the user interface easier for students and teachers to use but this has left some users critical of its UX design and unsightly GUI. Due to this, my expectations of involvement in this project would be to help improve the UX and GUI so that it can appeal to a wider audience. Trying to find a more appealing way to lay out the interface, while not disturbing the already established workflow the program has attained over the last couple of decades.

Although the program is already very feature heavy, it does lack some features that other audio recording software come with. Features like an auto-save option, additional VST plug-in support (especially for VST instruments), more non-destructive editing options, and multi-track recording have all been requested by the community. Another change that has been proposed would be to change to an HTML5 interface rather than its current wxWidgets interface. Doing so would have several advantages but would require a complete overhaul of the source code. This change will probably happen eventually as both internet and computer technologies keep advancing.

Overall, the future looks bright for Audacity. As an open-source software that has been around since the 1990’s, it has grown into somewhat of an industry standard, especially in educational fields. The program is the most popular it's ever been and has more people contributing than ever before. I look forward to contributing once I have the resources to do so and can’t wait to see the community’s response.

Sources:

Audacity (audio editor). (2024, January 17). In Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Audacity_(audio_editor)>