

The Joy of Bug Reporting

How users can become developers

- Users use software and developers make it
- Developers are often the software users
- Different ways to contribute to projects,
- Code, Artwork, Documentation, Translations, Music & Sound, Software Testing & Bug reporting, packaging
- We will focus on testing and bug reporting here.

Selecting a Project

- Not too large and not too small. (not really hard and fast rules more like general guidelines)
- Projects such as the Linux Kernel (probably too big.) If they already have a lot of bug reports/ etc.
- Dead projects (no one has committed for months and the project isn't in maintenance mode (ie not yet production))

Selecting a Project

- 1 to 20 active developers (committed within the last month or so)
- Software you use (or would if it was polished enough)
- Choose something that interests you.

Places to find Projects

- Free software priority projects on the fsf page
- Software you already use
- Read about projects on message forums.
- Search savanah, gitlab, sourceforge, github for software. (search is awful and we need a better way to find projects)

Downloading the Project

- Download the latest from the version control (ie git (or mercurial or subversion etc) rather than the package, tar.gz or release.
- Check the README to understand how to compile and install the project. (if not the readme, there should be instructions on the site, if not file a bug report.)
- Compile and run the project.
- Keep using the project until you find a bug.

Filing the bug report

- Check the bug tracker to make sure it is not a duplicate bug (or already fixed, but not merged in that version.)
- Add the bug to the bug tracker.
- Bug the developers about fixing it. (this step is not necessary, but might be useful, you can find them in email, project irc, project related forums, and if you are very lucky in person.)
- Be patient about the developers fixing the bug. It might take anywhere from a week to a month (or longer) to fix, but it shouldn't take years.

Questions? Comments?