



Developers Say Open-Source Developing Is a Waste of Time. 100 Automations Community Says It Doesn't Have to Be That Way.

A group of developers and ideators are changing the open-source community for the better.

LOS ANGELES, MM, DD, YYYY — With COVID-19 lockdown and remote work in place, open-source organizations are seeing a record number of volunteers. GitHub's latest [State of the Octoverse](#) reports open-source contributions in the US Pacific Time Zone surged by 25% and have stayed consistent since last April.

Yet navigating the open-source landscape is a largely painstaking process. "Developers spend hours researching and testing, then resort to writing code from scratch because it can't be used," says Bonnie Wolfe, the Executive Director of Hack for LA (HfLA).

Development is just half the battle. A tweet quoted in the [Nature Journal](#) sums up the challenges of maintaining an open-source code post-release: "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Write a program to fish for him and you maintain it for a lifetime." Upkeep becomes so taxing that some developers charge to answer questions though it thwarts the "open" in open-source.

100 Automations recently launched a community to showcase code that reduces repetitive work in the open-source community with a transformative business model.

Publishing automations is only a part of its goals; the platform's high standards of code and robust support community tackle the frustrations of using and maintaining open-source code.

No longer are developers who make open-source code useable for other people supporting users in a one-to-many model. At 100 Automations, support can be shared or augmented by the HfLA community's 5000 members who provide peer guidance and distribute the support load.

Additionally, the 100 Automations community adheres to a higher standard of open-source code: quality tested, peer-reviewed and maintained. Each automation is provided with support files (i.e. health files) and is reviewed by staff and community before it is published so developers can ask necessary questions before users arrive.



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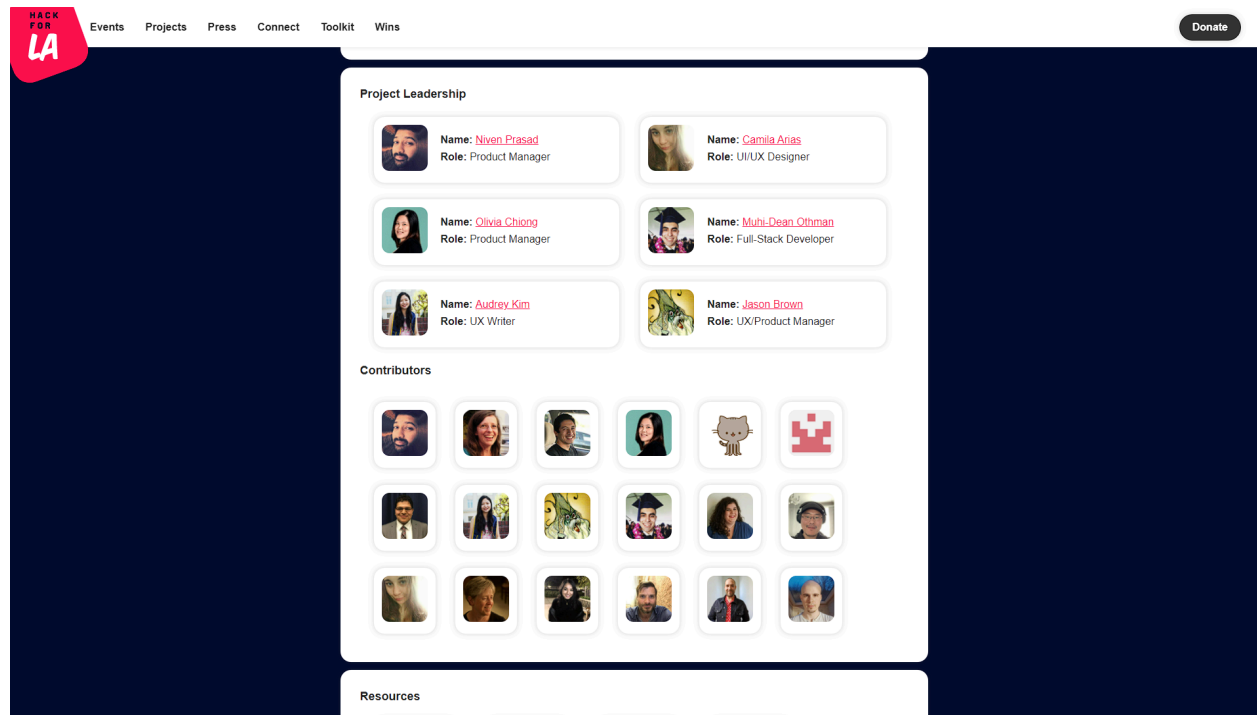
Some may think the rigorous standards of the community would drive developers away from the platform. On the contrary, the standards are what draws them to 100 Automations.

“Most developers are looking for functional standards that help them understand what makes good code,” Wolfe adds. “The 100 Automations community brings together people committed to making code reusable in open-source and avoiding pitfalls that independent developers might not have encountered yet.”

True GitHub Contributors: Code that Provides Parity to Non-Coders

Last November, HfLA’s Lead Developer Kian Badie and Wolfe kicked off the initiative by publishing the “[True GitHub Contributors](#)” (TGC) package on [npm](#). The two were seeking to display a hierarchy of all contributors to the HfLA’s website when they ran into an issue: GitHub’s contributors API only showed programmers who had committed code.

“A lot of the time, GitHub is very developer-centric,” says Jonathan Shin, a development mentor for HfLA, who joined Badie and Wolfe to improve TGC. “A lot of people are involved in bringing a project to launch and beyond. The goal of TGC is to make sure all the project contributors — Designers, UX, Product Management, and Marketing, and everyone else who is involved — receives credit.”



TGC on HfLA website.

TGC is currently implemented on HfLA's website. “The package is, in a simplified sense, just an extension of the GitHub API client to help fetch all the contributors data (not just developers),” explains Badie. “The website uses that package in an automated daily script to update the list of contributors on its projects.”

Scaling 100 Automation's Impact

After creating TGC for HfLA, Badie and Wolfe were inspired to make it available for others and began building a supportive community for automation developers through 100 Automations.

“It's a good place for seasoned developers and even new developers to come in and collaborate on ideas to build out tools,” says Shin.

But 100 Automations isn't only open to developers. Part of the platform is dedicated to Ideators, people who wish to share valuable ideas to help the open-source community. Ideators don't have to be developers — they can be anyone who has an idea for an automation, even if they don't have the means to build them.

"There isn't really a good place to go ask someone to make the tool that fits your needs. 100 Automations is a unique resource where developers actually *want* you to," says Jason Brown, a UX and Product Manager of 100 Automations.

The platform's potential impact is exponential. The TGC package has already been downloaded [331 times](#) in its first month of release, and 100 Automations is just getting started. The community aims to publish 100 projects in the first year of launch.

100 Automations's mission is to uncover and share valuable contributions in civic tech projects. The [Civic Tech Index](#), a searchable registry of civic tech open-source projects, indicates there are at least 255 organizations around the world and counting.

"For those who know what to do, and want to add actual valuable, validated work, there's a community of peers ready to review the work you've done," says Wolfe. "It's a platform where you can increase the common good."

If interested in viewing other automations or sharing your idea, visit 100 Automations.

About 100 Automations

100 Automations is an open-source project showcasing automations and microservices that reduce repetitive work in open-source development. It is a project where anyone can create, collaborate on, and get credit for automations that assist the wider Civic Tech community. 100 Automation seeks ideas in all stages, from the half-baked to the fully researched, as well as anything in between. 100 Automations is part of [Hack for LA](#), a non-profit civic tech community, and a branch of Code for America.

Media Contacts

If you have any questions or would like to interview us, please leave a note at 100Automations@hackforla.org.

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