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[Ardour Review](#)

The Digital Audio Workstation

Ardour is a very capable digital audio software. There are many similar software packets to Ardour, but none of them runs on Linux and none of them is Open Source. Ardour does all these things while still benefiting from all the things Linux has to offer. If configured properly and if there is enough experience behind Ardour, it can definitely outsmart most of the expensive competitors from the Windows platform. I'll start with telling you that, at this point, Ardour is not an easy to use software. Working a little with it lets you understand why. There are many features available and making all of them in easy reach and intuitive seems a very complicated task. The software has great functionality but it is not user friendly. It is a tool for multi-channel, multi-track, non-linear and non-destructive audio editing and even more. It's almost a whole audio editing studio packet in a fairly small open source software. Anyway, I don't see it as a user's software but more as a software for professionals. A good news is that Ardour2 is close of being released and it will have a much improved interface that will use GTK2. Interesting features will be implemented and we'll have an even better digital audio workstation. The first thing you notice is that Jack is essential for Ardour. This is a very good thing because Jack provides a high performance, low latency audio server that routes audio data between an audio interface and audio applications. Many things in Ardour relate to Jack and I strongly suggest you read a little bit about it. Probably one of the most important things when running Ardour is the screen resolution. On a 1024x768, not even the main window fits entirely. This might be a problem for a lot of users with old monitors or with laptops because a higher resolution might not be supported. Most of the time, you'll work with a lot more than the editor window, perhaps with the mixer, jack, clocks, effects... The bigger your screen, the more productive you'll be with Ardour. If you have two monitors, you will really get the best out of them. The most important windows are **Editor** and **Mixer**. In general terms, the Editor represents the time based aspects of a session and the Mixer represents the signal flow. The Editor will be the most useful in the early stages of a session because that's when you add and arrange the material within the tracks along the time axis. There are many advanced features available for working with the samples and the tracks. Sometimes, organizing your samples has a critical importance and for each track, you can choose different visual options for allowing a better classification. The Mixer mimics a lot, in terms of functionality, a traditional hardware mixing console and even goes beyond one. In a mixer's window, there are several mixing strips that correspond to tracks and buses that you use. The mixer strips are designed to visually model the signal flow and after you work with them a little, you'll notice that they have many interesting features. Ardour supports many audio file formats for importing/exporting but unfortunately, OGG is not supported and because of the license and patents, Mp3 and WMA are unsupported too. A good news for the OSX people is that Ardour2 will have support for Mp3 on that platform because Apple has bought rights for the Mp3 technology. For the Linux people, I can only give you a suggestion. Use Mplayer to convert any format you like into wav. The process is fairly fast and the command for performing this task is the following: `mplayer -ao pcm:file=outputfilename.wav inputfilename.mp3` I really don't want to go into further detail because I'm expecting the new version every day and then, I'll really want to check out the new features and probably write a new review. Until then, I'll let you in the company of this one. In the end, I just want to say that I saw on the Internet a very interesting piece of hardware that's actually a custom crafted PC with some special addition that incorporates Ardour. **The GoodArdour** is a very versatile piece of software. It provides so many features that would be almost impossible to present them in a review. You can see that the interface

is engineered in a smart way, even though it's not very user friendly. Ardour reaches a professional level. **The Bad**The interface is definitely not user friendly. I classify as a user and I was in war with the interface (now we have reached truth :)) Support for the most common audio formats is not available. Plugins are not in easy reach for everyone. A good book will be very nice to have. **The Truth**At this moment, Ardour is the best software and probably the only one that classifies as a digital audio workstation in the Linux world. When Ardour2 will be available, I think that it will be the newest best Digital Audio Workstation :) It really isn't anything that can match this level. *Check out some screenshots of Ardour. The last one is done by professionals.*