

Daksh Shah

VLC macOS interface redesign

About Me

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Who am I?

I am a 19 year old freshman student at the Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology (IIIT) Delhi, India pursuing Computer Science and Engineering. I have been programming since my school days, and am comfortable with C, C++, Java, and Python. I have also worked with HTML, CSS, JavaScript, Django, Shell, LaTeX and Markdown. I am well-versed with working in Git.

Most of my skills I acquired through open source contributions that I made a couple of years ago, when I was in School and participated in [Google Code-In](#). I took part in Google Code-In for three consecutive years (2013, 2014, 2015). In the first year(2013), I got to learn about what open source was and was introduced to IRC, Git, GitHub to mention a few. In the [second year](#), and [third](#) I won the position of an international finalist. I learnt countless skills and got confidence in bonding with open source communities, working with large code bases, following community guidelines, and giving back to the society!

Why me?

I am a passionate UI, UX Design enthusiast, and attended a Winter School on User Experience Design (last year), where I learnt and participated in building useful and usable design. We also did design critiques on several applications. I am now well versed in design thinking approaches, and the multiple iterations which factor in the user needs and desires. I am an active researcher at [Precog](#), and HCI is one of the key areas that we look at while coming up with solutions.

I have been using VLC media player for as long as I can remember. While VLC is undoubtedly the best player to run almost any kind of file, I see multiple points where the interface can be improved. I am a go-getter with a decent technical background and a design thinking mindset. I am awestruck by the immense user outreach this project will have.

Motivated by the project idea, I went on to the setup instructions for the development environment. I got stuck in between, so I came on IRC #videolan. That is where I interacted with my mentor for the first time. He helped me quickly resolve the bug and I got motivated to pursue my quest to contribute to the codebase. I am yet to master AppToolkit, Cocoa, but confident that I would be able to match the required skills before the Coding Period (May 14, 2018)

I started off with a bug ([#19964](#)) and over the course of trying to solve it, I learnt the basic of Objective C and got to know that it is indeed similar to C and I am able to make sense out of the syntax. I further started looking closely at the Mac VLC interface, to improve upon it. I analyzed the nuances and opened a few tickets. Moreover, I also patched three bugs: two of the existing tickets (out of which one was merged), as listed below and one ticket which I had reported.

I am also starting to bond with the VideoLan community. I met Jean-Baptiste Kempf and François Cartegnie at the [FOSSASIA Summit](#) recently. It was great to listen to what Jean had to say, have a little chat with François and getting to know more about VLC and VideoLan. I plan to be a VLC Developer and contribute for at least the next three-four years and further, as time at job permits.



List of Bugs and Tickets

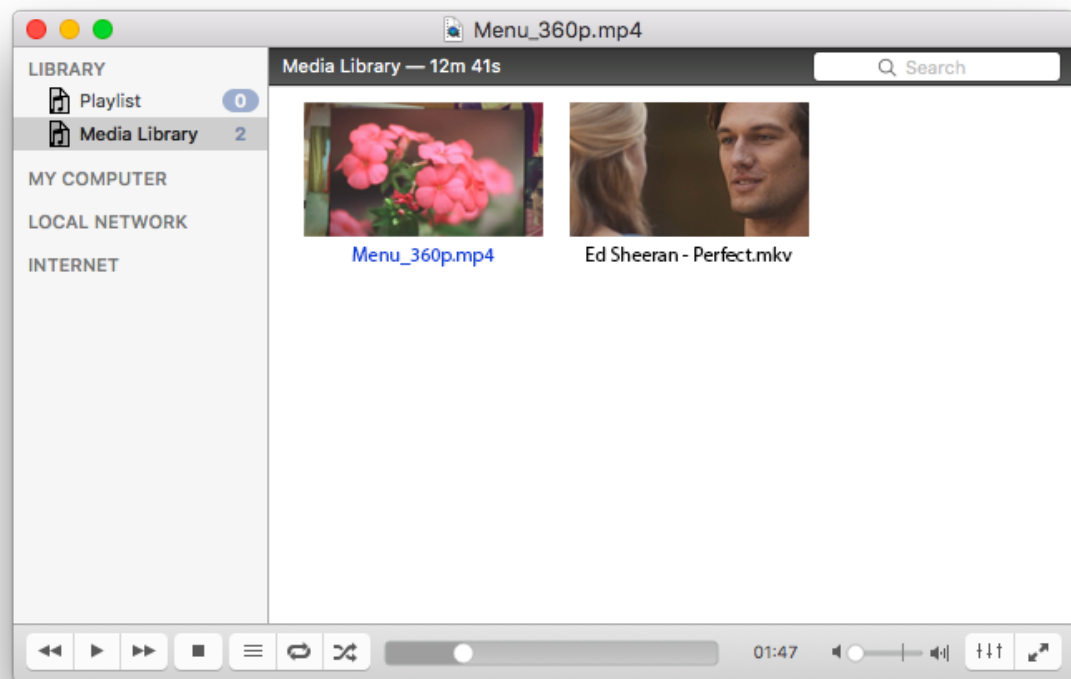
- **Patched and Merged** [#19964](#): “Swiping on time slider no longer moves playback position”
- **Reported, Patched** [#19993](#): “Inconsistency in toolTips shown in Full screen view v/s normal view”
- **Patched** [#9499](#): “Show the actual playback time at cursor position in tooltip when mouseover on seek bar.” Working on the feedback to update the patch
- **Reported**

- [#19996](#): “My Music list - The strings in "Title" change as soon as any item is selected”
- [#20018](#): “Selected Entry's Icon from the left menu flickers when show/hide is pressed”
- [#20044](#): “Dark Interface: No Close, Maximize, Minimize Buttons”
- [#20045](#): “Dark Interface: Title has a drop shadow which makes it hard to read”
- ~~[#20046](#): “Some videos show up in the "My Pictures" section”~~
- [#20047](#): “"Window" menu item "Playlist..." should be changed“

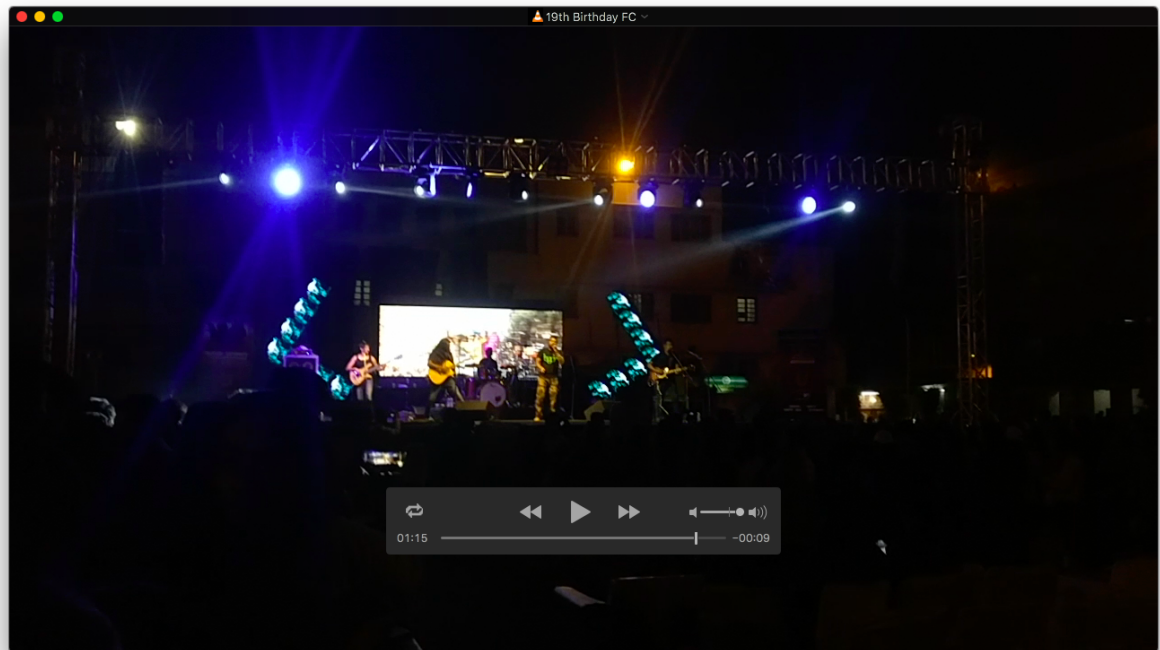
The Project

The overall goal of the project is to redesign the Mac interface of VLC, following are a few suggestions for the features to be improved. I will keep actively implementing more UI enhancements, in successive design reviews and suggestions from the community

- Changing the view style of Playlist and Media Library. Currently, it is in cell-based layout, where each item is as a row of the table. I propose to have a view based layout where each item would be represented by a thumbnail/album-art. To describe it visually:

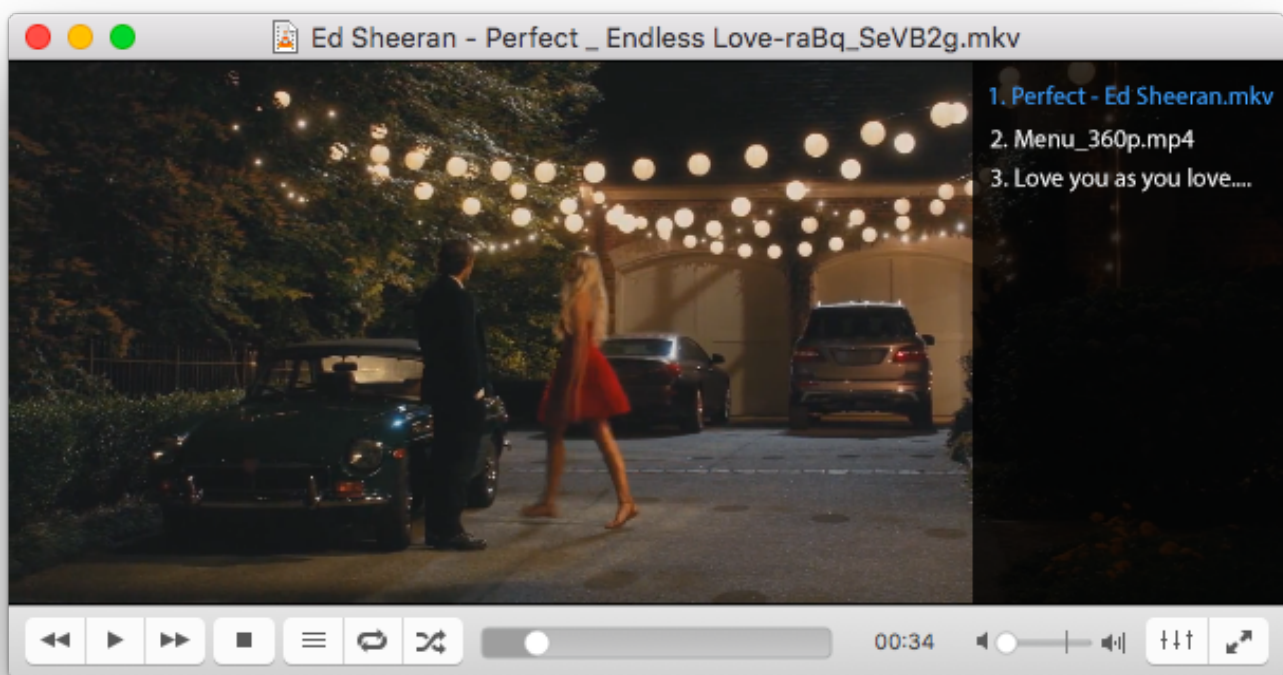


- b. Remove the white borders and have a seamless border like in QuickTime. Thereby, merging the fullscreen slider menu bar with the normal slider menu bar. In turn, making the customizations same for main and full screen.

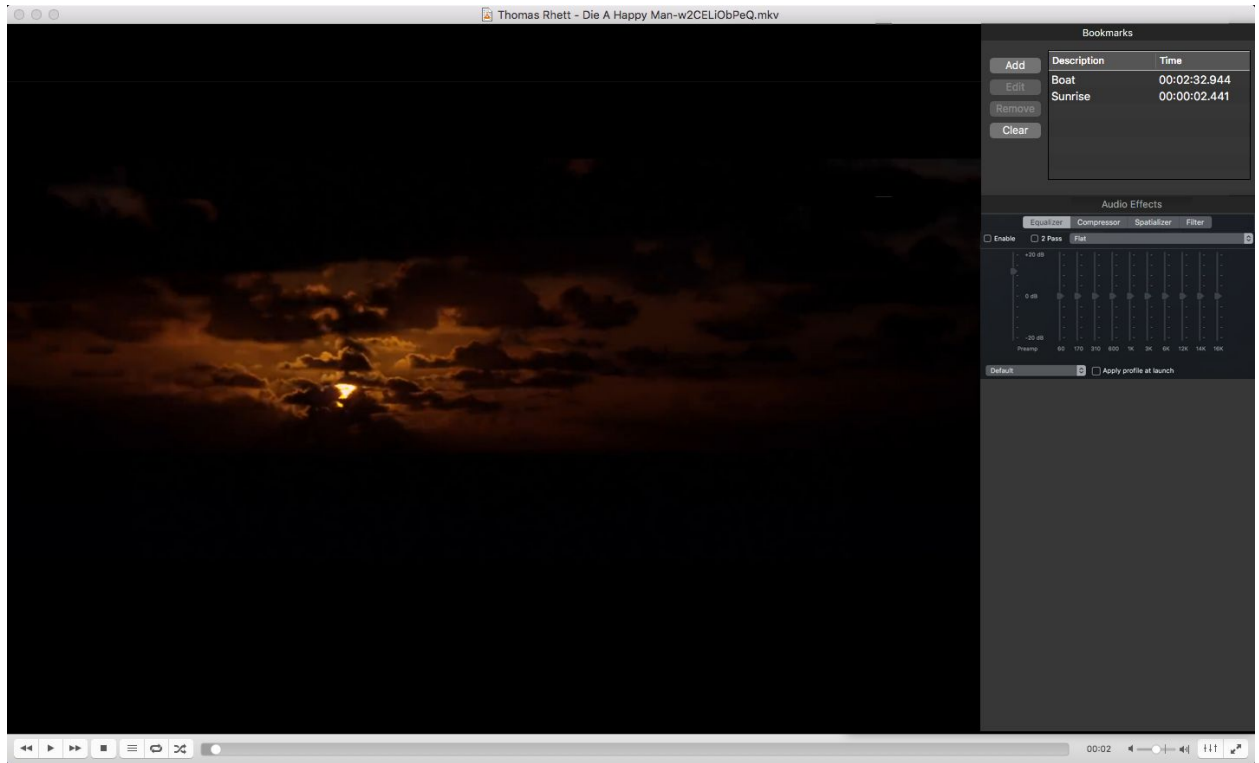


- c. To integrate some panels into the main window by redesigning them. Like for the playlist, we could have it as a sidebar in the main window, and hence not hide the video while the playlist is being viewed

(This would look better with the seamless, dark themed Title and Slider Bars. But showing it as an extension to the current layout for enhanced understanding)



- d. To have an “expert toolbar”. Which would come as a side menu in the main screen and you can customize which sections to show up there. Similar to how it is in photoshop



- e. Consistency in the pop-up windows shown. As of now some menus have a bright color scheme, and some dark color scheme. I think we should make the color scheme consistent for all pop-ups (in a given theme).

Timeline

Application Review Period (March 27 - April 23)

To get expertise in Objective-C and Cocoa framework.

Community Bonding Period (April 23, 2018 - May 14, 2018):

To understand the code base to a greater extent by solving more bugs and getting a basic structure of the layout updates discussed with the mentors so that in the coding period, I can dive deep into making the changes.

The following is my proposed timeline as of now. But during the Community Bonding Period, I will figure out what are the features that the vlc-devel and #videloan (irc) community feels that, are really needed and helpful. Then I would further update the timeline, add appropriate tickets in the Issue tracker to make the work modular. Also to get proper feedback on each of the ticket that I put forward. This will ensure to have an agreement on the tasks and the timeline.

Week 1 (May 14 - May 21)

If this enhancement is accepted; to work on making the slider menu seamless. That is, to integrate the full screen slider with the main screen slider and change the customizations of the same.

Else: I can work on any small, moderately difficult task to give the project a nice start with a small step towards the goal.

Week 2-4 (May 21 - June 11)

To start working on the media library and change the list view to thumbnail view. To get a basic prototype in place and get some feedback from the vlc-devel.

Week 5 -- Evaluations (June 11 - June 15)

Week 5-8 (June 11 - July 9)

To work on the suggestions made on the prototype in order to finalize the look and feel of the updated UI for Playlist and Media Library. Implement it and get a second round of feedback.



Week 9 -- Evaluations (July 9 - July 13)

Week 9-10 (July 9 - July 23)

To update the other corresponding parts of VLC, that is, the Toolbars, Pop-up windows, Sliders, Menus, to match with the look and feel of the newly updated UI of Playlist and Media Library.

Week 11-12 (July 23 - August 6)

Buffer Period + Implement the Split View feature + Try and make the title bar be more seamless. If time permits, then I can pick up the other bugs from tracker which are UI relevant and work on those/any improvements suggested by the mentors/community.

Week 13 (August 6 - August 14): Students Submit Code and Final Evaluations

To fix any minor issues, changes as per requirement.

Communication with mentors

A weekly sync, over the suitable communication platform and time, which is suitable for the mentors and the platform(Video Calling/Voice Calling/Text) to be decided later as per the needs.

Post GSoC

I would be proud to have completed GSoC under a prestigious and humongous organization like VideoLan. Definitely, by the end of my project, I would be a well-connected member of the community and would love to keep pursuing my contributions to VideoLan and to help other fellow members in the issues that they are facing :)

After all that the community would have taught me, I would definitely try my best to give as much back to the community as possible!

