Publishing your research code

Much research in audio and music informatics involves the development of new computational methods implemented in software and the evaluation of new methods against earlier work also implemented in software. Publishing your research software—including the source code—is increasingly seen as good practice but not enough researchers get around to it.

Why should I publish my code?

Make it easier to build upon your work—thus increasing citations and research impact
Increase trust in your results—improving your academic reputation
Ensure your work remains available—contributing to your own future career
Help support the research community—providing visible results to funding bodies and public

Before publishing your research code: a quick checklist

✓ Create a file called readme.txt in your project’s root directory; put into it:
  ✓ the name of the software;
  ✓ the names of all copyright holders;
  ✓ a means to contact you;
  ✓ any publication references for work associated with it;
  ✓ basic instructions for how to build or install the software
✓ Pick a licence for your software, and ensure it is clearly shown in the readme.txt;
✓ Review all the libraries you are using to make sure their licences are compatible with yours, and make sure anyone who gets your code can see what licences (besides your own) they may have to comply with;
✓ Tag the version you want to release in version control;
✓ Package your release from version control, either by using the version control system to extract a clean copy (e.g. hg archive, svn export) or by cloning a fresh copy and archiving it without the version control repository subdirectory;
✓ Check the package: make sure it unpacks into a new directory named after the name and version of the software, make sure you can build it, and make sure it doesn’t include any extraneous build outputs or test files.

The software lifecycle does not end with publication: software that is to be used needs maintenance. The best way to ensure that your software is running is to have other users testing it and contributing to it.