

Open Source Licenses

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What is Free / Open Source Software?

- **Free Software Definition**
 - By Free Software Foundation (FSF)
 - <http://www.gnu.org/philosophy/free-sw.html>
- **Open Source Definition**
 - By Open Source Initiative (OSI)
 - <http://www.opensource.org/docs/definition.php>
- **Contents of both definitions essentially the same**



Free Software Definition

- The freedom to run the program, for any purpose (freedom 0).
- The freedom to study how the program works, and adapt it to your needs (freedom 1). Access to the source code is a precondition for this.
- The freedom to redistribute copies so you can help your neighbor (freedom 2).
- The freedom to improve the program, and release your improvements to the public, so that the whole community benefits (freedom 3). Access to the source code is a precondition for this.



Notes about Open Source Definition

- **If the software cannot be used commercially, it does not qualify as open source**
 - OSD Condition 6, No Discrimination Against Fields of Endeavor: The license must not restrict anyone from making use of the program in a specific field of endeavor. For example, it may not restrict the program from being used in a business, or from being used for genetic research.
 - Rationale (from the annotated OSD): We want commercial users to join our community, not feel excluded from it.
 - Similarly, the Free Software Definition requires the freedom to run the program for any purpose, including commercial use
- **Allowing derived works is a requirement, read-only access to the source code doesn't qualify as open source**



License Families

- **Essentially two types of licenses: permissive and copyleft**
- **Permissive licenses**
 - Allow reuse of code under a different license
 - Popular licenses: BSD, MIT, Apache
- **Copyleft licenses**
 - Require that modified versions are released under the same license
 - Incompatible with each other
 - Popular licenses: GNU General Public License (GPL)



GPLv3

- **GNU GPL version 3 was released in June 2007**
- **Major changes in GPLv3 compared to GPLv2**
 - Compatible with Apache 2.0 and XFree 1.1 licenses
 - Incompatible with GPLv2 (and generally all other copyleft licenses)
 - Internationalized language
 - Terms such as "distribute", which have different meanings in different jurisdictions, have been replaced by terms such as "propagate" and "convey" and their definitions
 - Explicit patent grant
 - Prevention of "tivoization" and DRM style authorisation clauses
 - E.g. that only a version signed by the vendor can run on a device, or only authorized versions can be used to access copyrighted material



GNU Affero General Public License v3

- **New license, released November 19, 2007**
 - <http://www.fsf.org/licensing/licenses/agpl-3.0.html>
- **Based on and compatible with GNU GPLv3**
- **Additional requirement: allow users who interact with the software over a network to receive the source code for that program**
 - Essentially, a web page using AGPL code needs to have a "get source code" button which provides source code of the AGPL licenced program(s) used to create the page
- **Remains to be seen whether the Affero GPL will become popular or not**



Relevant Links

- **Free Software Definition:**
<http://www.gnu.org/philosophy/free-sw.html>
- **Open Source Definition:**
<http://www.opensource.org/docs/definition.php>
- **List of Free software licenses by the FSF:**
<http://www.fsf.org/licensing/licenses/>
- **List of Open Source Definition compliant licenses:**
<http://www.opensource.org/licenses/category>
- **Thank you! Questions?**

