Open Source Licenses 101

AKA: How I learned to stop worrying and love Licenses

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About Me

- Apache Software Foundation
  - Co-founder, Director, Member and Developer
- Director
  - Outercurve, MARSEC-XL, OSSI, OSI (ex)...
- Developer
  - Mega FOSS projects
- IANAL
- Sr. Director: Tech Fellows: Capital One
What’s in your PROJECT?

Open Source Licenses
Governance/Community
Walled Garden
“Supreme executive power derives from a mandate from the masses, not from some farcical aquatic ceremony!”
Meritocracy

“Out of chaos comes order”
Licenses
Why?

- Copyright is the default
- Open Source is everywhere
- The license determines use, re-use and distribution
- Not understanding means risk
License Goals

- Ensure what parts remain open source
- Maintain control over code and direction
- Provide common implementation for standards
- Build community or commercial marketplace
- For most end-users, this is the sole touch-point
Free software

- “Free” as in “free speech” (not as in “free beer”, although free beer is good!)
- Software freedom is a moral imperative.
- Free Software Definition:
  - 4 basic freedoms must be maintained
- Free Software ~== Open Source
- F(L)OSS

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Open Source

- For software to be Open Source, it must be under an OSI approved Open Source License
- Open Source Definition: http://www.opensource.org/docs/osd
  - 10 criteria
- At last count, over 60 exist
- New Open Source licenses are very hard to get approved
- There are really 3 main types
Let’s pretend
Modify
Licenses

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Give me Credit

*Permissive:*
- ALv2
- MIT
- BSD

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Give me Fixes

Weak Copyleft:
- EPL
- LGPL
**Strong Copyleft**

GPLv2

GPLv3

AGPL
Take Aways

- A license is a tool. There is no “always right” license
- Take time to decide on the right license type
- Changing licenses can be very difficult
- Avoid “vanity” licenses
- **ALWAYS** specify a license!
Thanks!

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