

Open source and open access licenses: A comparative study

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the different categories of Open source and Open access Licencing and makes a comparative study of them. It also exposes four Open source and open access Licenses and make their comparative study.

Keywords: Open Content, Categorization of Licencing, and Comparative study of licencing.

INTRODUCTION

Within free and open source software communities today, licenses have proliferated at the time of writing; there were nearly sixty licenses approved by the Open Source Initiative as open source licenses. From Sun's perspective, the large number of licenses can be streamlined into three main categories based on the attributes of the licenses. Sun's categorization makes it possible to more easily describe the differences among license types. Sun is an active participant in the OSI License Proliferation Committee's work. In this paper, I try to find out the different features of the mentioned categories and make a comparative study of them.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this study are:

1. To define the three major categorizations of free and open source licencing today.

2. To describe some of the types of licenses that are included in these categories.
3. To detail the distinguishing attributes of these licenses and categories.
4. To find out the various features and facilities of selected Open Source and Open Access licenses.
5. To compare their facilities which are available among these licenses.

SCOPE

I think, this study would be good if I were compared all open Source and Open Access licences. But limited time does not permit me to do that. I compare only four Open source and Open access Licenses in details.

METHODOLOGY

For this study, I take some open source and open access licenses which are commonly available like BSD License, The GNU logo, Apache License, Creative Commons Licenses etc. The data are collected and gathered from searching Internet Web Site. Then I collect data for analyzing, compiling and for comparing various Licenses

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CATEGORIES OF FREE AND OPEN SOURCE LICENSING

1. The characteristics of category A licenses in terms of licensing requirements imposed on derivative works:
 - i. Unrestricted development of derivative works
 - ii. Wholly unrestricted scope of license use
 - iii. Any conditions of use are outside of any license mandate
2. The characteristics of category B licenses in terms of licensing requirements imposed on derivative works.
 - i. Unrestricted development of derivative works
 - ii. File-based licensing
 - iii. Files derived from category B-licensed commons must use the same license for source files
 - iv. Files not derived from category B-license commons may use any license
3. The characteristics of Category C licenses in terms of licensing requirements imposed on derivative works:
 - i. Unrestricted development of derivative works
 - ii. Project-based licensing
 - iii. Files derived from category C-licensed commons must use same category C license

- iv. Under certain circumstances even files not derived from **Types of Licenses Representing the Three Major Categories**

3. Category A: Non-Copy left Licenses

Category A licenses generally represents the academic style of licensing of which the archetype is the revised Berkeley Software Distribution (BSD) license. The original BSD license was developed by the University of California to distribute its software. Today, probably the best-known license within this category is the Apache License version.

Category B: Copy left Licenses

Category B licenses include the vast majority of the many free and open source licenses in existence today. These licenses have been created based on the Mozilla Public License (MPL) that emerged from the development of the original Mozilla browser in the late 1990s.

Category C: Strong Copy left Licenses

The best known of the Category C licenses, (GNU-style) licenses, is the GNU General Public License, or GPL. The GPL has been the basis for much freely available software in the world today, which has made it the object of praise and concern, depending on your perspective.

Comparative Study among three categories in details

Category A	Category B	Category C
Unrestricted, non-copy left	File-based copy left	Project-based copy left
Create any work	Files derived from commons must use same license	All files in project must use the same license as the commons if any one file from the commons is used in the project
No restriction on licensing	Files added may use any license	Code added to the project must also use the same license as the commons
Marketplace-creating	Community-fostering	Commons-protecting

Identity of selected open source and open access licenses

	GNU	BSD	CC	Apache License
Author	<u>Free Software Foundation</u>	<u>The University of California</u>	A group of cyber law and intellectual property experts	<u>Apache Software Foundation</u>
Version	3	<u>N/A</u>		2.0
Publisher	Free software Foundation	Public Domain	<u>Lawrence Lessig</u>	Apache Software Foundation
Published	<u>29 June 2007</u>	1990	2001	January 2004

Comparative study among licenses in details

	GNU	BSD	CC	Apache License
DFSG compatible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
GPL compatible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
OSI approved	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Free software	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes -
Copy left	Yes	No	Yes	No
Linking different license	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Proprietary Software linking	Not allowed	Allowed	Reasonable and flexible	Allowed
Distribution of "the Work"	Not allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed
Redistributing of the code with changes	Only if the derivative is GNU	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed

FINDINGS

From this study, I conclude these following results:

- GNU, BSD, CC, Apache Licenses are DFSG and GPL compatible
- GNU does not link different licenses and does not accept proprietary software linking
- GNU also doesn't allow distribution of the work
- GNU allows redistributing of the code with changes only if the derivative is GNU.
- BSD, CC, Apache Licenses allow Proprietary software linking, Distribution of the work and Redistributing of the code with changes.

CONCLUSIONS

Open content licensing is a way for the author

or rights holder of a copyright work to grant a wide range of permission for use and re-use of their work via a non-transactional copyright license, while retaining a relatively small set of rights. Open Content licensing frameworks are a significant development and have valuable potential application in fulfilling the need for wide and unobstructed access to electronic materials as well as a flexible and enabling approach to use and re-use of outputs and materials.

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