Wk1 : DQ2

Professor Mauger and Class,

I suppose the short answer to this discussion question is that overall ownership is highly dependent on the setup for the open-source project. From my research, generally speaking, a contributor retains copyright to the code they contribute to a project, but they consent to license the use of that code under the project’s license (Haack, 2006).

The GitHub Terms of Service implicitly imposes an “inbound=outbound” license agreement, which assumes that the contributors to projects with a public license are implicitly agreeing to license their contribution under the same license. In this situation, the “community” essentially owns the software and may use it however they wish under the license.

Other projects require all contributors to assign the copyright to their contributions to a single entity or corporation, while still openly allowing free use, modification, and distribution of the software (Haack, 2006). This tactic preserves the source as belonging to the community still but reserves the right of the single copyright holder to create a “forked” proprietary version without needing to get consent from every single contributor. Even in that instance, the code would still be freely available up until the point where the entity closed the source, so it may still be forked and distributed under the original license.

- Daniel

Ref:

Haack, P. (2006, January 26). Who Owns the Copyright for An Open Source Project. Retrieved February 24, 2020, from https://haacked.com/archive/2006/01/26/WhoOwnstheCopyrightforAnOpenSourceProject.aspx/

The Legal Side of Open Source. (n.d.). Retrieved February 24, 2020, from <https://opensource.guide/legal/>