

### Comparison of Software Licenses

In this document, a comparison of the GNU General Public License (GPL) and the Creative Commons Attribution ShareAlike International License (CC BY-SA) is discussed. It covers in detail each license's terms, and how they differ from one another.

The GPL's main mission is to ensure that software and its source code are made free to the general public. It places emphasis on the concept of copyleft. Copyleft is defined as requiring that content is free and that any derivative works be free as well. Users are free to modify and create derivative works from software under this license. Users are authorized to redistribute GPL software and associated source code under the condition that the said software is under the same license.

The CC BY-SA's primary focus is on a more general category of works such as audio, imagery, and other common types of work. This license grants content creators' rights, however, it also permits derivative works. The free sharing of the work is permissible so long as the creator is given credit.

The two licenses have similar core values. Their more open-ended designs reflect their aim of developing thriving communities around free works that benefit society as a whole. They abide by the concept of copyleft when dealing with the matter of derivative works. Portability is a main focus of both licenses as well, as they were designed to be usable in many different countries and their associated legal jurisdictions. Their emphasis on ethics over profits is another area where they are similar, in a philosophical sense. However, there are notable differences between them. One is that the GPL's scope is more limited, as it mainly covers just software. Because the CC BY-SA's focus on numerous different content types is broader, it is thus able to be used more widely. Giving credit is another area where the licenses differ notably. If a GPL license is used on a piece of software, a distributor is not required to attribute its creation to anyone. This is not the case with the CC BY-SA license, as it makes it mandatory that credit must be given to the original creator, including for any and all derivative works. A third difference is license compatibility. The GPL license can become a limiting factor in software development as it is incompatible with other license types. In contrast, CC BY-SA licenses are a safer option as they are often compatible with other Creative Commons license types.

The remaining question then, is which license is best suited to an individual project's needs? This depends on several factors. The first is the medium being covered by license. If it is software, the GPL license is usually the best option as the other license falls short in the area of source code handling. Another consideration is if the intent is to ensure that all works derived from the code remain free. If so, then the GPL is the preferred option. Otherwise in many cases, the CC BY-SA is better. Its wider application to more projects and its enabling of creators to use different but compatible licenses for derivatives makes it more realistic as a whole.