

Helmut Cespedes

Professor O'Neill

Survey of Scripting Languages

2/13/2024

The Ethics of Copying Code

Copyright is a protected law that is preserved for all creative materials. This includes work within the field of computing. The laws apply the second code created, giving creators exclusive rights to their creations. However, there are certain criteria that a program must meet to qualify for this protection. For example, the program must demonstrate a required level of originality. Despite copyright firm protection, there are limitations, such as the fair use doctrine. This doctrine allows the use of jurisdictional material without obtaining permission from the rights holder in certain circumstances. This is just one of many workarounds in today's world. I believe that sometime in the future, copyright will become obsolete. The internet grows at a remarkable pace, and I just don't believe that copyright laws can compete with it. There will be mass code copying that will exponentially grow every year, especially with the new A. I am coming into play. Our legal system will not be able to keep up. Now, this is not to say that it is just because there are workarounds doesn't mean that copying code is right. As of now, we can still crack down on violations and enforce copyright laws. Copying code can offer short-term benefits to oneself but violates the rights of others who worked hard and rightfully to make their software.

The most appealing license agreement that I found was the BSD 3. I believe this one to be fair because it requires written permission from the owner of the code. This is mainly because I think you should at least know what your code is being used for when your name is on it. This does limit the effectiveness of large corporations, though. I would imagine that written consent in a worldwide scenario wouldn't work very well. Apart from that, this license agreement allows for commercial use and modification permissions, so it still enables profit and allows anyone to modify it as they please. This license seemed fair to me because it encourages reuse and sharing as well, and it has very simple but effective restrictions. If I had to choose another license to use with BSD 3, I'd choose Apache 2.0. From what I read, these two seem very compatible as they are very permissible but clearly outline their restrictions. Combining the two would add more protective rights, such as patent grants, trademark protection, and community governance. This, combined with BSD 3's requirement of notice, looks to be a very strong combination. I am very open-minded when it comes to code. I believe code should be free to use, but just because I believe that doesn't mean others will. Because of this, I'd license my code with these two because it gives me some protection, but most importantly, gives the community a way to protect themselves.

Obligations to uphold the law by the copyright code are the same regardless of where you are. First and foremost, it is our job not just as engineers but as humans to follow ethical rules. Rules are in place for a reason. Some of us lack the common sense to treat others right, so we must write out these rules. An example of this is the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers' code of ethics. These are a very broad set of rules that anyone can live by, not just engineers. For us computer scientists, ACM is a similar but more specific ruleset that we can live

by. ACM focuses on more unique challenges that computer professionals must deal with every day. As mentioned earlier, a big problem that arises in this profession is copying code. Copying code, whether on purpose or not, violates just about every rule set by ACM, “respect privacy” (ACM 1.6). Copying code not only damages your ability to improve, but it also hurts the community. As a developer, it is our job to create and improve code for us to advance. We are the worker ants of our ever-growing colony,” Avoid Harm” (ACM 1.2). If someone were to use my code for something wrong, there is a lot I can do about it. My first step would be to assess the situation. Is this something that’s violating ethical and legal laws? If so, then I would check my licensing. In this scenario, I’m using a combination of BSD 3 and Apache 2.0. With these two licenses, I can act on this, because this person has violated the BSD 3 rule of needing written permission to use my name. As I mentioned earlier, I have an open-minded perspective and believe that code can be freely utilized with few limitations. However, while I prefer to avoid restrictive protections, it does not mean that individuals using my software should not have the ability to protect themselves.

Works Cited

“Apache License 2.0.” *Choose a License*, 14 Feb. 2024, choosealicense.com/licenses/apache-2.0/.

“BSD 3-Clause ‘New’ or ‘Revised’ License.” *Choose a License*, 14 Feb. 2024, choosealicense.com/licenses/bsd-3-clause/.

Code of Ethics, www.acm.org/code-of-ethics. Accessed 13 Feb. 2024.

“IEEE Code of Ethics.” *A Level Computer Science*, 21 Apr. 2021, learnlearn.uk/alevelcs/ieee-code-ethics/#:~:text=To%20hold%20paramount%20the%20safety,the%20public%20or%20the%20environment.

“Licensing a Repository.” *GitHub Docs*, docs.github.com/en/repositories/managing-your-repositorys-settings-and-features/customizing-your-repository/licensing-a-repository#choosing-the-right-license. Accessed 13 Feb. 2024.