Slalib licensing in IRAF

19 messages

Ole Streicher <debian@liska.ath.cx>   Wed, Oct 17, 2012 at 9:00 AM
To: Patrick Wallace <patrick.wallace@stfc.ac.uk>
Cc: Mike Fitzpatrick <fitz@iraf.net>

   -----BEGIN PGP SIGNED MESSAGE-----
Hash: SHA1

Hi Patrick,
(Cc: Mike Fitzpatrick, IRAF)

a while ago, we had some discussion about the licensing of you "SLA"
library in the AST and DS9 packages.

As far as I remember, you stated during the discussion that the
Fortran version of the library is licensed as GPL, and this is also
what you still distribute or your home page.

Now I am investigating the IRAF package for the inclusion in Debian,
and I discovered that this package contains your slalib code under a
different license (directory math/slalib/). The files in this
directory do not contain the "GPL" license text anymore and are
therefore covered by the main IRAF license which is much more liberal.

Can you confirm that it is legal to distribute your files in this way?

Best regards

Ole Streicher
-----BEGIN PGP SIGNATURE-----
Version: GnuPG v1.4.11 (GNU/Linux)
Comment: Using GnuPG with Mozilla - http://www.enigmail.net/

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=Wv1a
-----END PGP SIGNATURE-----

Patrick Wallace <ptw@tpsoft.demon.co.uk>   Wed, Oct 17, 2012 at 9:37 AM
To: Ole Streicher <debian@liska.ath.cx>
Cc: Mike Fitzpatrick <fitz@iraf.net>

   Ole,

> As far as I remember, you stated during the discussion that the

> Fortran version of the library is licensed as GPL,

Yes, but distributed by the Starlink heirs and successors.

> and this is also what you still distribute or your home page.

I don't distribute anything from my home page (if I've understood your point). There is a commercial SLALIB/C library that I license to aerospace companies and space agencies. I also have an obfuscated form that I have been providing free of charge to academic research institutes under non-disclosure and non-profit terms.

This arrangement worked well until Debian came onto the scene. I have since then been discouraging new use of SLALIB, and intend to phase out the free SLALIB/C distribution. I have been pointing astronomers at alternatives, including the IAU SOFA software (all of which I wrote, in many cases based on SLALIB code, and am continuing to develop in retirement).

> Now I am investigating the IRAF package for the inclusion in
> Debian, and I discovered that this package contains your slalib
> code under a different license (directory math/slalib/).

I presume this is Fortran code...

> The files in this directory do not contain the "GPL" license
> text anymore and are therefore covered by the main IRAF license
> which is much more liberal.

...and predates the introduction of the Starlink GPLed version.

> Can you confirm that it is legal to distribute your files in
> this way?

No, but there is a simple solution. If the IRAF system adopts the GPLed versions this won't break anything and will then be legal.

Patrick Wallace

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Abingdon
Oxfordshire OX14 4HH
United Kingdom   www.tpsoft.demon.co.uk
_____

Ole Streicher <debian@liska.ath.cx>   Wed, Oct 17, 2012 at 10:41 AM
To: Patrick Wallace <ptw@tpsoft.demon.co.uk>
Cc: Mike Fitzpatrick <fitz@iraf.net>

Hi Patrick,

Thanks for your fast response!

Am 17.10.2012 18:37, schrieb Patrick Wallace:
>> As far as I remember, you stated during the discussion that the
>> Fortran version of the library is licensed as GPL,
> Yes, but distributed by the Starlink heirs and successors.
>> and this is also what you still distribute or your home page.
> I don't distribute anything from my home page (if I've understood
> your point).

Oh, sorry. I mixed that up with the starlink distribution.

>> Now I am investigating the IRAF package for the inclusion in
>> Debian, and I discovered that this package contains your slalib
>> code under a different license (directory math/slalib/).
>
> I presume this is Fortran code...

Yes.

>> The files in this directory do not contain the "GPL" license
>> text anymore and are therefore covered by the main IRAF license
>> which is much more liberal.
>
> ...and predates the introduction of the Starlink GPLed version.
>> Can you confirm that it is legal to distribute your files in
>> this way?
>
> No, but there is a simple solution. If the IRAF system adopts
> the GPLed versions this won't break anything and will then be
> legal.

Thank you for the clarification. I am glad that this is no showstopper
for a Debian package. For the package, I would just do the replacement
you suggest. On a longer term, it would be better to switch to SOFA or
PAL, right?

Best regards

Ole

Patrick Wallace <ptw@tpsoft.demon.co.uk>   Wed, Oct 17, 2012 at 11:52 AM
To: Ole Streicher <debian@liska.ath.cx>
Cc: Mike Fitzpatrick <fitz@iraf.net>

Hi Ole,

> For the package, I would just do the replacement you suggest.

I presume you would do that with the maintainers of IRAF.

> On a longer term, it would be better to switch to SOFA or PAL,
> right?

I'm not sure what you're asking. If this is about IRAF, then
it's for the IRAF maintainers to decide whether to switch to
different libraries. My guess is they won't want to.

Bear in mind that I personally don't have any interest in seeing
SLALIB/F per se included in the Debian product. I agreed to its
being GPLed originally merely in order to support existing
applications (Starlink in particular). It was not intended to

have a standalone role.
[Quoted text hidden]

Mike Fitzpatrick <fitz@noao.edu>   Wed, Oct 17, 2012 at 12:06 PM
To: Patrick Wallace <ptw@tpsoft.demon.co.uk>
Cc: Ole Streicher <debian@liska.ath.cx>

Hi Pat,

   I think the relevant question is: If the pre-GPL v2.3.0 Fortran slalib included in IRAF now were to be distributed as a
consequence of there being an IRAF Debian package, would you object or else insist that at least the GPL code be used?
 If the latter, this could be put on the list for a future release but I don't know off-hand how much work would be involved
and thus make no promises. OTOH, if it is Debian (and not yourself) that insists on this change, I'm much less motivated.

Cheers,
-Mike
[Quoted text hidden]

Patrick Wallace <ptw@tpsoft.demon.co.uk>   Wed, Oct 17, 2012 at 12:17 PM
To: Mike Fitzpatrick <fitz@noao.edu>
Cc: Ole Streicher <debian@liska.ath.cx>

Hi Mike,

> If the pre-GPL v2.3.0 Fortran slalib included in IRAF now were
> to be distributed as a consequence of there being an IRAF
> Debian package, would you object or else insist that at least
> the GPL code be used?

Yes - sorry.

> If the latter, this could be put on the list for a future
> release but I don't know off-hand how much work would be
> involved and thus make no promises.

I can't see why it wouldn't be a straight module-for-module
replacement. The API has never changed, and in many cases the
only differences would be cosmetic - plus the GPL.

Perhaps a Debian acolyte could lend a hand.
[Quoted text hidden]

Ole Streicher <debian@liska.ath.cx>   Wed, Oct 17, 2012 at 12:22 PM
To: Mike Fitzpatrick <fitz@noao.edu>
Cc: Patrick Wallace <ptw@tpsoft.demon.co.uk>

 -----BEGIN PGP SIGNED MESSAGE-----
 Hash: SHA1

 Hi Mike,

 Am 17.10.2012 21:06, schrieb Mike Fitzpatrick:
 > I think the relevant question is: If the pre-GPL v2.3.0 Fortran
 > slalib included in IRAF now were to be distributed as a consequence
 > of there being an IRAF Debian package, would you object or else
 > insist that at least the GPL code be used? If the latter, this
 > could be put on the list for a future release but I don't know
 > off-hand how much work would be involved and thus make no promises.
 > OTOH, if it is Debian (and not yourself) that insists on this
 > change, I'm much less motivated.

It is not Debian at all. I am happy with either decision here: it does
not matter whether the slalib files are under the IRAF license or
under GPL.

The current situation is just the source code distribution even by
NOAO is currently illegal because of the slalib files. Please don't
blame me that I came up with this problem; it has just nothing to do
with Debian.

However, if there is no fast solution by Patrick, I would do this for
the Debian packaging (and give you the results, ofcourse). Since
$iraf/math/slalib/README states that this is a mainly automated
process I hope that it would not be too much work.

In any case you should mention GPL in your license list.

Best regards

Ole

-----BEGIN PGP SIGNATURE-----
Version: GnuPG v1.4.11 (GNU/Linux)
Comment: Using GnuPG with Mozilla - http://www.enigmail.net/

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-----END PGP SIGNATURE-----

Mike Fitzpatrick <fitz@noao.edu>   Wed, Oct 17, 2012 at 1:08 PM
To: Patrick Wallace <ptw@tpsoft.demon.co.uk>
Cc: Ole Streicher <debian@liska.ath.cx>

If it's simply the name change then we can probably easily change it for the next release. It seems ironic that the other
complaint about the GPL not being available comes about because it is not part of the readline source code that requires
it.

-Mike
[Quoted text hidden]

Patrick Wallace <ptw@tpsoft.demon.co.uk>   Wed, Oct 17, 2012 at 1:20 PM
To: Mike Fitzpatrick <fitz@noao.edu>
Cc: Ole Streicher <debian@liska.ath.cx>

> If it's simply the name change then we can probably easily
> change it for the next release.

I'm not sure what name change you're referring to. Just to
clarify, the SLALIB Fortran code currently in IRAF and the GPLed
version differs only in detail. The subroutine names are
identical, and it is quite possible the file names are as well.
[Quoted text hidden]

Mike Fitzpatrick <fitz@noao.edu>   Wed, Oct 17, 2012 at 1:24 PM
To: Patrick Wallace <ptw@tpsoft.demon.co.uk>
Cc: Ole Streicher <debian@liska.ath.cx>

From the README file for IRAF slalib:

"In order to complete the port to iraf the following name changes were
made to the package routines. The package prefix was changed from "sla_"
to "sl". Routines with root names that were longer than four characters
have been renamed so that all the package routines have unique six
character names. ....."

I think Doug or Lindsey did this originally. What I meant was that using the Starlink GPLd code is not strictly a drop-in
replacement, these name changes, replacements for machine-specific functions, etc would have to be made as well.

-Mike
[Quoted text hidden]

Patrick Wallace <ptw@tpsoft.demon.co.uk>   Wed, Oct 17, 2012 at 1:42 PM
To: Mike Fitzpatrick <fitz@noao.edu>
Cc: Ole Streicher <debian@liska.ath.cx>

Mike,

OK - I didn't know about these edits. This is presumably to
get the code to compile as SPP.

How much of SLALIB was used? Is there a list of routines?

If you decide to start again with the GPLed SLALIB, it sounds
like a global edit will do it. The kind of thing a Perl script
would do. All the names shrink, so no problems with the F77
72 characters limit.

An acceptable alternative would be to inject the GPL into each
subprogram so that it becomes an independently GPLed SLALIB
equivalent to the Starlink one.
[Quoted text hidden]

Mike Fitzpatrick <fitz@noao.edu>   Wed, Oct 17, 2012 at 2:35 PM
To: Patrick Wallace <ptw@tpsoft.demon.co.uk>
Cc: Ole Streicher <debian@liska.ath.cx>

Yes, changes were for SPP and to use IRAF versions of machine-dependent routines like random(). There is a global sed
script for the name changes and the rest shouldn't take long to do. I'd be happy to send you the updated version when it
is done if you'd like to check it (I'm travelling at the moment and it would be a next-release issue anyway).

Thanks,
-Mike
[Quoted text hidden]

Patrick Wallace <ptw@tpsoft.demon.co.uk>   Wed, Oct 17, 2012 at 11:50 PM
To: Mike Fitzpatrick <fitz@noao.edu>
Cc: Ole Streicher <debian@liska.ath.cx>

> There is a global sed script for the name changes

Excellent.

> I'd be happy to send you the updated version when it is done if
> you'd like to check it

I trust you!

[Quoted text hidden]

Ole Streicher <debian@liska.ath.cx>   Thu, Oct 18, 2012 at 12:19 AM
To: Mike Fitzpatrick <fitz@noao.edu>
Cc: Patrick Wallace <ptw@tpsoft.demon.co.uk>

Hello Mike, Patrick,

On 17.10.2012 23:35, Mike Fitzpatrick wrote:
> Yes, changes were for SPP and to use IRAF versions of machine-dependent
> routines like random(). There is a global sed script for the name
> changes and the rest shouldn't take long to do. I'd be happy to send
> you the updated version when it is done if you'd like to check it (I'm
> travelling at the moment and it would be a next-release issue anyway).

This problem seems to be solved now :-) Thank you very much for your
cooperation.

This also solves an issue with leap seconds: the version currently in
$iraf/math/slalib/dat.f goes only until 1999, while the version on
starlink ends in 2012. BTW, are you going to maintain this table in future?

Best regards

Ole

Patrick Wallace <ptw@tpsoft.demon.co.uk>   Thu, Oct 18, 2012 at 12:57 AM
To: Ole Streicher <debian@liska.ath.cx>
Cc: Mike Fitzpatrick <fitz@noao.edu>

Ole,

> BTW, are you going to maintain this table in future?

I will maintain leap seconds in my versions of SLALIB and also,
pro tem, do the same for SOFA. I assume the post-Starlink
support people will be looking after the GPLed sla_DAT. IRAF
will need to accept updates of that, or maintain its own slDAT as
a special case.

(This would all go away if the World agreed to use the precision
time distribution system to provide TAI+offset while in parallel
distributing UT1 for civil use, using a second population of NTP
servers. But I always say that.)

[Quoted text hidden]

Ole Streicher <debian@liska.ath.cx>   Thu, Oct 18, 2012 at 1:13 AM
To: Patrick Wallace <ptw@tpsoft.demon.co.uk>
Cc: Mike Fitzpatrick <fitz@noao.edu>

Hi Patrick,

On 18.10.2012 09:57, Patrick Wallace wrote:
>> BTW, are you going to maintain this table in future?

Sorry, this question was meant for Mike. The problem I see is that your
changes should be incorporated in IRAF as well and I am curious how this
will be managed. Since IRAF didn't update this in the last 10 years, I

am afraid that it will be outdated in IRAF already with the next leap
second.

> (This would all go away if the World agreed to use the precision
> time distribution system to provide TAI+offset while in parallel
> distributing UT1 for civil use, using a second population of NTP
> servers. But I always say that.)

Another way would be not just to copy your slalib code, but instead
depend on the SOFA library as an external package. Especially on systems
with many other astronomical packages installed (DS9, AST, ...) it would
be much easier for the sysadmin to keep this one library up-to-date as
the central reference instead of doing this for all the packages. And I
have no doubt that SOFA will survive for quite a long time. I really
like the approach that is taken by starlink-pal here, and I would
probably use this as a template for the change.

Best regards

Ole

Patrick Wallace <ptw@tpsoft.demon.co.uk>   Thu, Oct 18, 2012 at 2:07 AM
To: Ole Streicher <debian@liska.ath.cx>
Cc: Mike Fitzpatrick <fitz@noao.edu>

> The problem I see is that your changes should be incorporated
> in IRAF as well and I am curious how this will be managed.

I should perhaps have stressed that the changes each time there
is a leap second announcement are completely mechanical and don't
need to be carried out by me personally. Indeed, there is fair
chance that if Dave Berry, say, and I both update sla_DAT, the
results will be character-identical. So having IRAF support
updating their own subroutine is perfectly OK.

> Since IRAF didn't update this in the last 10 years, I am afraid
> that it will be outdated in IRAF already with the next leap
> second.

It's just something that slipped through the cracks I guess.
NOAO have one of the UTC/UT1 gurus in their midst, so it's just a
matter of remembering that something needs to be done.

> Another way would be not just to copy your slalib code, but
> instead depend on the SOFA library as an external package.

Yes, I agree.

However, if leap seconds continue (though I suspect the coming
availability of chip-level atomic clocks may be the last nail in
the coffin), I would hope that applications eschew the iau_DAT
approach in favour of a web services connection to the IERS. In
other words an application should call a subroutine in Paris to
find out when the next leap second will be, with about six months
for at least one such call to succeed. Someone should write a
library that does this and also serves up different times, using
the SOFA functions as the canonical basis.
[Quoted text hidden]

Mike Fitzpatrick <fitz@noao.edu>   Fri, Nov 2, 2012 at 1:08 PM
To: Patrick Wallace <ptw@tpsoft.demon.co.uk>

Cc: Ole Streicher <debian@liska.ath.cx>

Just wanted to let you know the SLALIB routines in IRAF v2.16 were updated to the GPL'd version and will be distributed in the next update.

Cheers,
-Mike
[Quoted text hidden]

Patrick Wallace <ptw@tpsoft.demon.co.uk>   Fri, Nov 2, 2012 at 1:34 PM
To: Mike Fitzpatrick <fitz@noao.edu>

Thanks for letting me know.

Regards

PTW

[Quoted text hidden]