



Lars Quentin

What every programmer should know about licenses

Create usable code while abiding by the law

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Learning Goals

- Why a license is important
- How to differentiate between
 - ▶ Public Domain Licenses
 - ▶ Permissive Licenses
 - ▶ Copyleft Licenses
- How to approach non-code licensing

Why you should care

What happens if you don't use a license? *No License*

- If a repository has no license, then **all rights are reserved!**
- This means that normal copyright laws apply.
- Therefore, nobody is allowed to:
 - ▶ Copy
 - ▶ Modify
 - ▶ Distribute
- If someone else contributes, this includes you!

If you want to share your code, you need a license!

Overview of Code Licenses

Licenses can be divided into three categories:

- Public Domain-like
 - ▶ The Unlicense
- Permissive
 - ▶ MIT
 - ▶ Apache 2.0
 - ▶ BSD-3-Clause
- Copyleft
 - ▶ GPL

Public Domain (Gemeinfreiheit)

- Releases code into the public domain
- Thus, everybody can
 - ▶ Use (commercially)
 - ▶ Modify
 - ▶ Distribute / Copy / Publish
 - ▶ Sell
- No attribution required
- Changes can be kept closed-source
- Example: The Unlicense *The Unlicense*

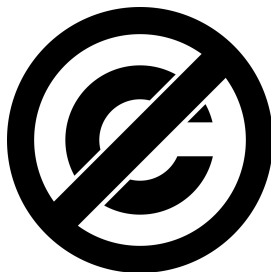


Figure: Unlicense logo *The Unlicense*

Permissive Licenses

- Sometimes also called BSD-like *Open Source Licensing Guide | New Media Rights*
- Also allow everybody to
 - ▶ Use (commercially)
 - ▶ Modify
 - ▶ Distribute / Copy / Publish
 - ▶ Sell
- Requires attribution, at least in the source code
- Example licenses:
 - ▶ MIT: Most commonly used
 - ▶ Apache 2.0 *Apache License, Version 2.0*: Like MIT, but with a patent clause *Top 10 Questions About the Apache License*
 - If you are a contributor with a relevant patent, you grant a license to the patent
 - ▶ BSD-3: Similar to MIT but adds a no-endorsement clause
 - If you use our tool, don't use us to endorse or promote your product

Copyleft Licenses

- Allow for any usage and modification
- Source has to be made available
- Modifications need to have same license
- Example: GPLv3

Four Freedoms *What is Free Software? - GNU Project - Free Software Foundation*

- 1 Run the program for any purpose
- 2 Be able to the source code
- 3 Distribute the program as you wish
- 4 Distribute your modified versions

Font Licenses

- Most open fonts can be found at Google Fonts
Google Fonts
 - ▶ All of those fonts are licensed permissively
- Most used License *Frequently Asked Questions | Google Fonts: SIL Open Font License SIL Open Font License (OFL)*
- Other common licenses:
 - ▶ Apache license *Apache License, Version 2.0*
 - ▶ Ubuntu Font License *Ubuntu font licence*



Figure: Google Fonts logo
Google Fonts

Creative Commons Licenses

- Standardized licenses for creative works
- Used for non-code
- Can be mapped to code licenses
 - ▶ Unlicense (Public Domain) ⇒ CC0
 - ▶ MIT (Permissive) ⇒ CC-BY
 - ▶ GPL (Copyleft) ⇒ CC-BY-SA

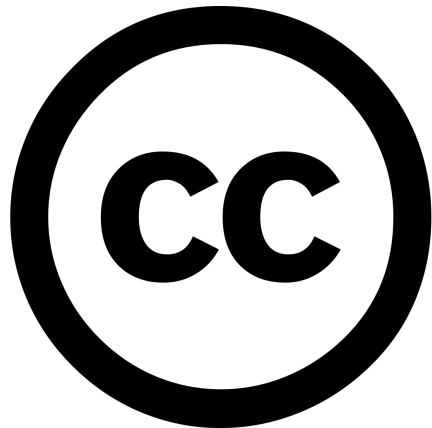


Figure: Creative Commons logo
Google Fonts

Conclusion

Summary

- Licenses are required so that people can use your work
- You can use the following code licenses:
 - ▶ Public Domain \Rightarrow Unlicense
 - ▶ Permissive \Rightarrow MIT
 - ▶ Copyleft \Rightarrow GPLv3
- Use Google Fonts for free fonts
- Creative Commons is used for non-code

If you need further help

- <https://choosealicense.com>
- <https://tldrlegal.com>
- <https://www.gnu.org/licenses/license-list.en.html>
- <https://opensource.org/licenses>
- <https://creativecommons.org/>

References

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