

Understanding what is ethical game development and a proposal of guidelines

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Noaman Khalil

SAE Institute Dubai

## Abstract

With video development being made simpler and more democratized by engines such as unity, new problems have also been created with in regard to the development of content wherein the content creators use assets without giving proper credit to their authors which is commonly referred to as plagiarism, this may be unintentional however it is still and may cause copyright infringement and this paper aims to explore a in-depth look at such problems along with proposing a guidelines in order to avoid such situations .

## Introduction

Again , game development has become much easier than it was in the 1990s or even early 2000s with engines becoming more accessible through for example ,Unity3D a popular game development engine widely used in the industry with some well-known titles including “Ori and the blind forest” , “Homeworld: Deserts” of Kharak , “Subnautica” & “Escape From Tarkov” to name a few.

## The problem

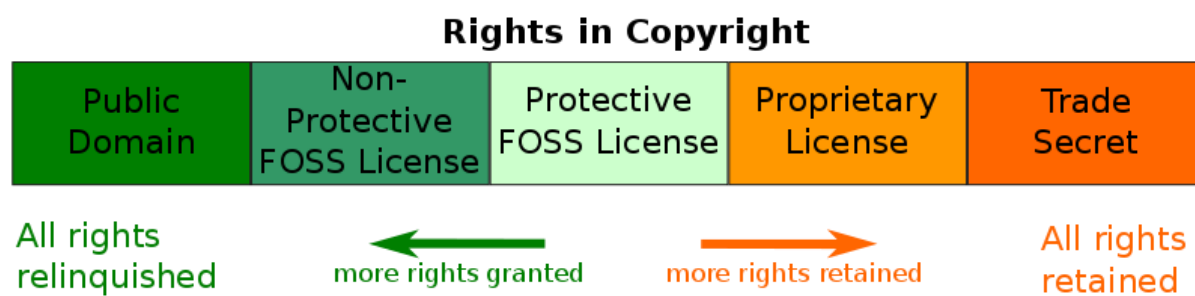
Easier development has created a new spew of problems, the main problem is associated with the assets store, this is a store front in unity which allows the developers to buy assets which can make the game visually appealing however the developer does not provide any form of credit to the author which can result in copyright or even Intellectual property infringement however this is a more commonly explored scenario , many users don’t realize that it’s not only visually appealing assets which are being stolen but also large amounts of code which are taken through the internet via means of public answers being answers and tutorials which are aimed at educating the developers but rather many of the developers using such sources

utilize code that they might not comprehend it or understand the ramifications of using such code without the authors permission or not understanding the licenses that they may be under.

The open source licenses would give developers some degree of freedom to utilize code found online and this the next section would cover some open-source licenses

## Licenses

Licenses are divided into two main categories, open-source and closed source wherein closed source are not for public use and usually means that the code or from a wider view technology is proprietary/ a trade secret which is illustrated below.



(, n.d.)

It is widely assumed that Open Source just means access to the sources code however this has a much broader definition according to the open source initiative wherein the project must follow a criteria in order for a project to be open source, which firstly pushes for free distribution wherein the permit should not limit any gathering from offering or giving without end the product as a segment of a total programming conveyance containing programs from a few unique sources. The permit should not require an eminence or other expense for such deal. The rationale provided by opensource.org is “By constraining the license to require free redistribution, we eliminate the temptation for licensors to throw away many long-term gains to make short-term gains. If we didn't do this, there would be lots of pressure for cooperators to defect.” ("Open Source Definition (Annotated) | Open Source Initiative," n.d.)

Secondly, the program must incorporate source code, and should permit dissemination in source code and in addition aggregated shape. Where some type of an item isn't conveyed with source code, there must be a very much pitched methods for getting the source code for close to a sensible proliferation cost, ideally downloading by means of the Internet without charge. The source code must be the favored shape in which a developer would alter the program. Intentionally muddled source code isn't permitted. Middle of the road structures, for example, the yield of a preprocessor or interpreter are not permitted. This is to ensure the continuous improvement of the program over time as improvement requires the original source program to be changed which again a rationale is provided by [opensource.org](https://opensource.org) .

("Open Source Definition (Annotated) | Open Source Initiative," n.d.)

Thirdly, the permit must permit changes and inferred works and should enable them to be circulated under indistinguishable terms from the permit of the first programming.

Fourthly, the permit may confine source-code from being circulated in altered frame just if the permit permits the appropriation of "fix documents" with the source code to modify the program at construct time. The permit should expressly allow dissemination of programming worked from altered source code. The permit may require determined attempts to convey an alternate name or form number from the first programming. The rationale provided by [opensource.org](https://opensource.org) is "Encouraging lots of improvement is a good thing, but users have a right to know who is responsible for the software they are using. Authors and maintainers have reciprocal right to know what they're being asked to support and protect their reputations." .

("Open Source Definition (Annotated) | Open Source Initiative," n.d.).

Fifthly, the open-source definition has many other attributes such as:

- No Discrimination Against Persons or Groups
- No Discrimination Against Fields of Endeavor
- Distribution of License
- License Must Not Be Specific to a Product
- License Must Not Restrict Other Software
- License Must Be Technology-Neutral

### Examples of licenses

Apache License, Version 2.0 is the most common license in the space of public domains, however it requires the user to distribute the copy of the license to each person the work is distributed to along with notices of any derivative work in a “Notice” file among many other requirements which can be found on [apache.org](http://apache.org). (Apache, 2004)

Another commonly used license is the MIT License which is published by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, The licensees known as a permissive license as it puts limited restriction reusability and thus has excellent license compatibility. It allows the reuse with regards to proprietary software as long as the copies of the software are provided with a copy of the MIT license along with its terms and copyright notice. ("MIT License," n.d.). One interesting thing to note about the MIT license is that it is compatible with Copy Left licenses which allow for the distribution of free copies along with modified versions of the original work. (Colton/opensource, 2016)

### Proposal

My proposal is to add a license to the work done on unity projects along with acknowledging the use of external assets within the confines of the project in the form of text/ word documents giving their authors credit, along with adding licenses which add a level of

credibility to the work of the developer. I would also like to propose a slandered to acknowledge code in the comments before a class is made along with its source as a method to give the codes authors credit as this is widely considered a gray area in most citation methodologies

### Conclusion

With technology moving forward at a rapid pace, the problems it creates will also be substantial however, the ability for the community to provide solutions and overcome them will prove to be the solution needed to overcome these set challenges with in regards to the ethical use of assets in game development.

## References

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