



**DB Systel**  
Digital.  
Empowered.



# REUSE

Crystal-clear licensing declaration for all use-cases

DB Systel GmbH | Max Mehl | OpenChain and Friends | 08.04.2025

# Typical Use-Cases and Common Issues Where Open Source Licensing May Become Complicated for Companies



## Internal projects with Open Source components

- Repositories containing proprietary code and parts under Open Source licenses
- Fully or partly Inner Source

## Use of third-party Open Source projects

- Different sources
- Unknown authors
- Diverse adoption of best practices

## Common Issues

- Mix of licenses, OSS and proprietary
- Additional IP right, e.g. trademarks
- Problematic assets: e.g. logos, fonts
- Many copyright holders

## Publishing own Open Source projects

- Publicly hosted projects under Open Source licenses
- Can contain problematic assets

# We Need a Standardised Method for Declaring Licensing and Copyright



## Challenges

- Multiple licenses and copyright holders in one repository
- Granularity down to snippet level
- No separate silos for this information
- Readability for humans and machines
- 100% unambiguous information, e.g. regarding license versions and AND/OR license expressions

## Bonus Points for

- Being recognised as de facto standard
- Wide tooling support
- Covering most edge cases



# REUSE to the Rescue – Gold Standard for Annotating Source Code with Licensing and Copyright Information



**REUSE**  
S O F T W A R E

 [reuse.software](https://reuse.software)

## Principles

- For every single file in a repository, the license and copyright is defined
- Plain-text inside files (comment header) or adjacent files, even allowing wildcards
- All full license texts stored in a structured way
- Use existing standards and best practices where feasible
- Easy and fun for developers, high automation

## Short History

- Set up by Free Software Foundation Europe in 2017
- Sponsored by Siemens, Liferay, SAP and more
- Production ready since 2019: specification, helper tool, API, pipeline integrations

# Tooling and Services to Boost Productivity and Automated Compliance When Adopting REUSE Best Practices



**Helper Tool** – Lint, annotate, download license texts



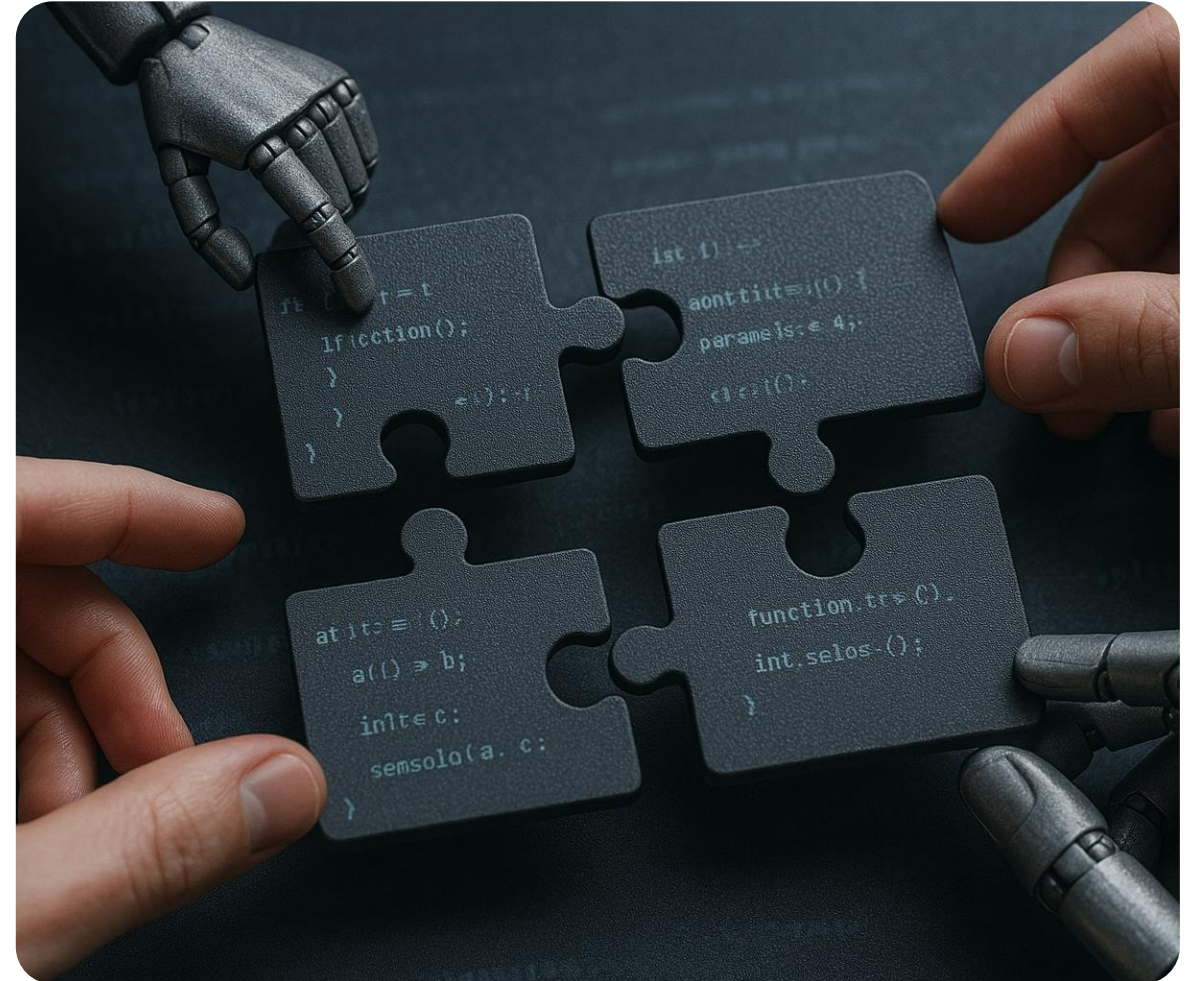
**CI / Workflow** – Lint, SBOM export



**API** – Lint, Compliance Badges REUSE compliant



**Documents** – Tutorial, FAQ, formal specification





# REUSE Reached Wide Adoption Across Communities and Industries



**YOU?**



# How REUSE Helps in Practice: Use-Cases in DB and OpenRail



- ✓ Assessing licensing of third-party code (Compliance)
- ✓ Internal transparency for mix of proprietary, Inner Source and Open Source code, on file and snippet level
- ✓ Clearly communicating different licensing and other IP for own Open Source projects.  
Examples: UX Design System, Websites
- ✓ Best Practice for all developers





# Thank you!

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## Contact


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