

# Licensing discussion session

**Disclaimer: I'm not a lawyer. Neither is anyone else here (as far as I'm aware). This isn't legal advice.**

Under the Berne Convention, you (or possibly your employer) hold copyright on the code (or whatever else) you produce.

No registration is needed.  
(Patents are a completely different matter).

You get to say how the code can be copied.

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# Some common licensing options

(extremely roughly paraphrased)

- **Public Domain:** you expressly waive copyright.
  - Everyone can do whatever they like.
- “Permissive”, e.g. **BSD or MIT licences.**
  - As above, as long as you keep a credit.
- “Weak copyleft”, e.g. **GNU LGPL**
  - Derivative works must be similarly licensed, but linking against a library doesn't count as creating a derivative work.
- “Strong copyleft”, e.g. **GNU GPL**
  - As above, but linking also counts as creating a derivative work.

# GPL mythbuster

- “You can’t sell GPL software” - false
  - Selling is considered one of the basic freedoms. However, you have to share the source code and the same freedoms, so the market value will converge to zero quite quickly.
- “You have to release your changes” - false
  - You can keep them secret. You just have to pass source code and freedoms forward **if and when** you distribute it (outside your company).
- “GPL code is useless to industry”
  - Closed-source code is even more useless to open source projects (and anyone who wants to learn or develop code further).

**See <https://www.gnu.org/licenses/gpl-faq.html> for much more information.**

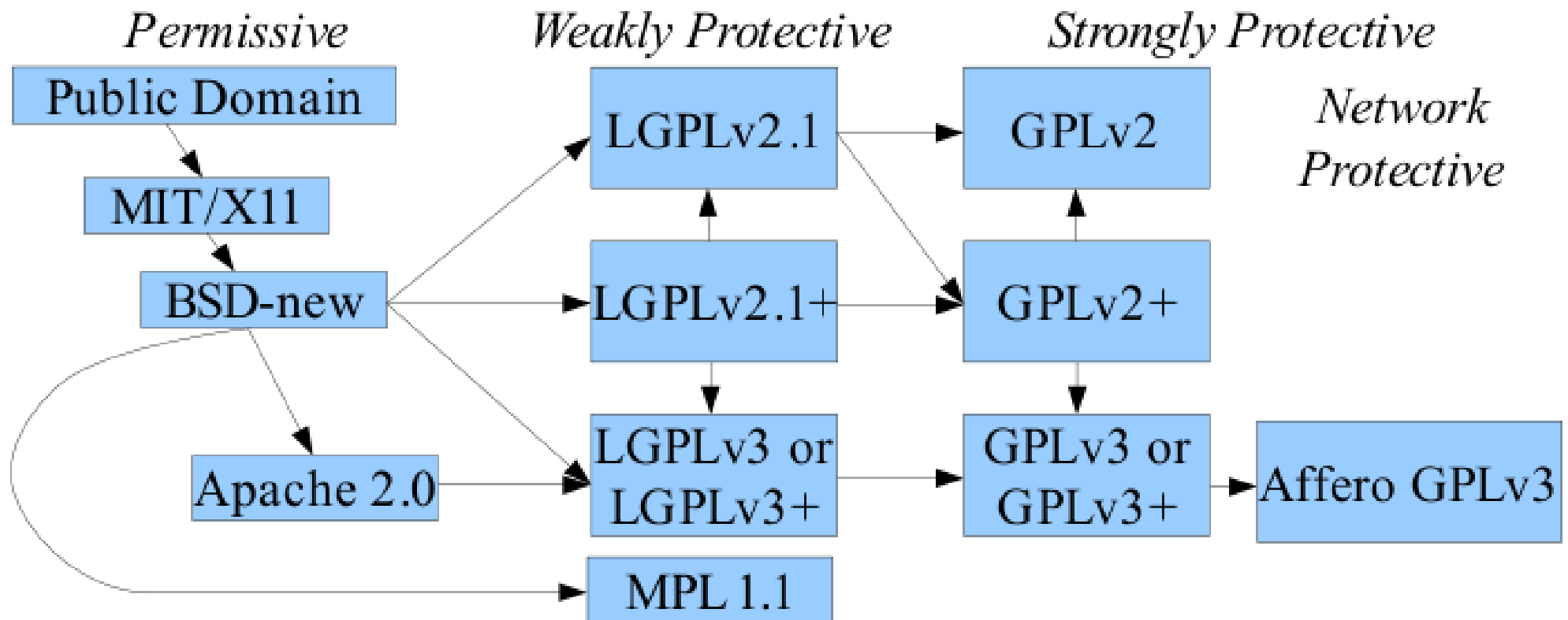


Figure: David Wheeler, <http://www.dwheeler.com/essays/floss-license-slide.html>  
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## Licence compatibility