GUIDELINES FOR THE REVIEW OF THIRD PARTY DEPENDENCIES

BACKGROUND:

The key issue we need to address is the one where projects are essentially bypassing the IP due diligence process by prereq'ing third party software, which is to be downloaded and installed separately by the user, instead of redistributing such software in their projects. This is a concern for the Eclipse community because it is our goal to ship projects which contain adequately reviewed IP and are therefore ready for commercial adoption.

Recognizing that it is probably impossible to codify a process precisely, the recommendation is that we establish a policy framework for the PMCs and the EMO to use in classifying and judging each situation, and then leave the implementation and final decision to the PMCs and the EMO.

DEFINITIONS

Dependency: Any situation where Eclipse software is designed to call or otherwise invoke third party software - even through indirect means - creates a "dependency" on the third party software. Such dependencies may require approval by the EMO.

We can divide the dependencies into two types: a) "works with" and b) "pre-req".

   a) Works-with Dependencies:

       i.   The Eclipse software does not require the third party software to be present. If the third party software happens to be present, the Eclipse software may call or invoke it. Example: If a web browser is present, clicking on URL's in Eclipse will cause the user's configured web browser to open the URL.

             or

       ii.   The Eclipse software is designed to work with multiple third party software choices that provide similar functionality - the choice of which to use is up to the user. At least one of those must be a pre-req (see below) or approved by the EMO for distribution by the project. Example: If a project requires a persistence mechanism, it can allow the user to select from several different implementations.

   b) Pre-req Dependencies: The Eclipse software *requires* the third party software in order to work correctly or to provide full function. Example: Eclipse pre-req's Apache Ant.

POLICY

The Eclipse Foundation policy on the use of third party software is as follows:

   1. It will be the responsibility of each PMC to document all "works with" and "pre-req" dependencies between Eclipse Foundation code and non-Eclipse Foundation code. As part of this process, the PMCs will be expected to make a determination whether a dependency is a "works with" or a "pre-req".
       a. These discussions and decisions must occur transparently either via email on the public PMC mailing list, or in the minutes of meetings distributed to the public PMC mailing list.
       b. These decisions must be documented by the project in their IP log to ensure their visibility during release and other review checkpoints.
       c. All PMCs are expected to seek the advice of the EMO if they are uncertain with respect to a determination on whether a dependency is "works with" or "pre-req".

       d. As part of their determination, the PMC is expected to review any issues with respect to license compatibility. If the dependency is distributed under any license other than those documented by the EMO as compatible with the EPL, the PMC must request the guidance of the EMO.

2. "works-with" dependencies as determined by the PMC are approved for use by the projects without further EMO review.
3. All "pre-req" dependencies must be declared to and approved by the EMO.
4. "pre-req" dependencies fall into two cases: "exempt pre-req" and "non-exempt pre-req". This determination is made by the EMO with input from the relevant PMC and project leadership.

       a. A pre-req may be classified as "exempt" by the EMO if the software is pervasive in nature, expected to be already on the user's machine, and/or an IP review would be either impossible, impractical, or inadvisable. Exempt pre-req's can be approved for use by the EMO without IP review. Examples: Windows XP, Sun JRE. However, an exempt pre-req may be disallowed by the EMO at its discretion.

       b. If a pre-req is non-exempt, it must go through the IP review process and be approved or non-approved for use as a pre-req.