

Open Source Licences

MIT License (Permissive)

Pros:

- Allows free use, modification, and code distribution with licence inclusion. [1]
- Excellent for wide adoption and minimal usage/contribution restrictions.
- Simple and well-documented.
- Ease of use and adoption.

Cons:

- No patent rights granted.
- Lack of copyleft allows proprietary use and modifications without sharing back to the community, potentially limiting open-source contributions. [2]

GNU General Public License (GPL) (Copyleft)

Pros:

- Requires derivative works to be distributed under the same licence terms, promoting free software principles and granting patent rights from contributors to users. [3]

Cons:

- Can be too restrictive, requiring source code disclosure and distribution under the same licence.
- May have compatibility issues with other licences, making integration with certain open-source licences difficult. [4]
- More complex terms and conditions, making compliance trickier.

BSD License (Permissive)

Pros:

- Highly permissive, allowing modification and distribution with minimal restrictions, attractive to developers and businesses.
- Short and easy to understand licence.
- Good for long-duration research projects, permitting commercialization with minimal legal issues. [5]

Cons:

- No explicit patent grants/protections, potential for patent infringement claims.
- Contributors are not obligated to share modifications/improvements, potentially leading to a lack of community collaboration and slower development.

- Poor choice for statically-linked implementations of multiple software standards due to precluding proprietary implementations. [6]

Apache License (Permissive)

Pros:

- Covers patent rights, requiring contributors to grant a licence to relevant patents they hold. [7]
- Includes clear guidelines for contributions and requires contributors to grant certain rights to downstream users, fostering collaboration and community development.

Cons:

- More complex and longer than the BSD licence, potentially deterring some developers from using or contributing to projects.
- Stricter, requiring the listing of all modifications made to the original software and inclusion of licence, copyright, and attribution notices in the source code and modifications. [7]

Chosen Licence

We chose the MIT licence for its permissive nature, which allows for widespread adoption and collaboration. Its simplicity and minimal legal restrictions make it an excellent choice for an open-source project seeking maximum adoption, collaboration, and innovation. The MIT licence grants users the freedom to use, modify, distribute, and sublicense the software with minimal restrictions, without copyleft requirements. This allows for unrestricted integration with proprietary software and commercial use. Since React, our chosen framework, uses the MIT licence, and considering the licence's global recognition and support for both non-commercial and commercial use, it aligns perfectly with our open and inclusive approach to software distribution.

References

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- [2] Collister, L. (n.d.). *Guides: Open Licenses: Creative Commons and other options for sharing your work: MIT License*. Pitt.libguides.com. [Online] Available: <https://pitt.libguides.com/openlicensing/MIT> [Accessed March 14, 2024]
- [3] GNU, “The GNU General Public License v3.0 - GNU Project - Free Software Foundation,” *Gnu.org*, 2016. [Online] Available: <https://www.gnu.org/licenses/gpl-3.0.en.html> [Accessed March 14, 2024]
- [4] “General Public License - an overview | ScienceDirect Topics,” *www.sciencedirect.com*. [Online] Available: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/computer-science/general-public-license> [Accessed March 14, 2024]
- [5] B. Montague, “Comparing the BSD and GPL Licenses,” *Open Source Business Resource*, no. October 2007, 2007, Accessed: Mar. 21, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://timreview.ca/article/67#:~:text=BSD%3A%20Advantages%20and%20Disadvantages> [Accessed March 14, 2024]
- [6] “Why you should use a BSD style license for your Open Source Project,” *FreeBSD Documentation Portal*. [Online]. Available: <https://docs.freebsd.org/en/articles/bsd-gpl/> [Accessed March 14, 2024]
- [7] “Top 10 Questions About the Apache License,” *Mend*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.mend.io/blog/top-10-apache-license-questions-answered/> [Accessed March 14, 2024]