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Version 2, June 1991

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[This is the first released version of the library GPL. It is
numbered 2 because it goes with version 2 of the ordinary GPL.]

Preamble

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Most GNU software, including some libraries, is covered by the ordinary GNU General Public License, which was designed for utility programs. This

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The reason we have a separate public license for some libraries is that they blur the distinction we usually make between modifying or adding to a program and simply using it. Linking a program with a library, without changing the library, is in some sense simply using the library, and is analogous to running a utility program or application program. However, in a textual and legal sense, the linked executable is a combined work, a derivative of the original library, and the ordinary General Public License treats it as such.

Because of this blurred distinction, using the ordinary General Public License for libraries did not effectively promote software sharing, because most developers did not use the libraries. We concluded that weaker conditions might promote sharing better.

However, unrestricted linking of non-free programs would deprive the users of those programs of all benefit from the free status of the libraries themselves. This Library General Public License is intended to permit developers of non-free programs to use free libraries, while preserving your freedom as a user of such programs to change the free libraries that are incorporated in them. (We have not seen how to achieve this as regards changes in header files, but we have achieved it as regards changes in the actual functions of the Library.) The hope is that this will lead to faster development of free libraries.

The precise terms and conditions for copying, distribution and modification follow. Pay close attention to the difference between a "work based on the library" and a "work that uses the library". The former contains code derived from the library, while the latter only works together with the library.

Note that it is possible for a library to be covered by the ordinary General Public License rather than by this special one.

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"Source code" for a work means the preferred form of the work for making modifications to it. For a library, complete source code means all the source code for all modules it contains, plus any associated interface definition files, plus the scripts used to control compilation

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d) If a facility in the modified Library refers to a function or a table of data to be supplied by an application program that uses the facility, other than as an argument passed when the facility is invoked, then you must make a good faith effort to ensure that, in the event an application does not supply such function or table, the facility still operates, and performs whatever part of its purpose remains meaningful.

(For example, a function in a library to compute square roots has a purpose that is entirely well-defined independent of the application. Therefore, Subsection 2d requires that any application-supplied function or table used by this function must be optional: if the application does not supply it, the square root function must still compute square roots.)

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the Library into a program that is not a library.

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medium customarily used for software interchange.

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from a designated place, then offering equivalent access to copy the
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work, in isolation, is not a derivative work of the Library, and
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  However, linking a "work that uses the Library" with the Library
creates an executable that is a derivative of the Library (because it
contains portions of the Library), rather than a "work that uses the
library". The executable is therefore covered by this License.
Section 6 states terms for distribution of such executables.

  When a "work that uses the Library" uses material from a header file
that is part of the Library, the object code for the work may be a
derivative work of the Library even though the source code is not.
Whether this is true is especially significant if the work can be
linked without the Library, or if the work is itself a library. The
threshold for this to be true is not precisely defined by law.
DAMAGES.

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