

Copyleft Licensing: GPL Initiative, Free Software Directory, FSF Policy on 'Commons Clause' etc.

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- [GPL Initiative Expands with 16 Additional Companies Joining Campaign for Greater Predictability in Open Source Licensing](#) [2]

Red Hat, Inc. (NYSE: RHT), the world's leading provider of open source solutions, today announced that Adobe, Alibaba, Amadeus, Ant Financial, Atlassian, Atos, AT&T, Bandwidth, Etsy, GitHub, Hitachi, NVIDIA, Oath, Renesas, Tencent, and Twitter have joined an ongoing industry effort to combat harsh tactics in open source license enforcement by adopting the GPL Cooperation Commitment. By making this commitment, these 16 corporate leaders are strengthening long-standing community norms of fairness, pragmatism, and predictability in open source license compliance.

- [The completion of David's internship work on the Free Software Directory](#) [3]

One of the main projects of my internship has been importing information about free software extensions for Mozilla-based browsers on the Free Software Directory based on data from addons.mozilla.org. I call this project FreeAMO (AMO stands for addons.mozilla.org) and it exists as part of the directory package on Savannah. After many weeks of work, it generates usable directory entries. In the same project is a script to import entries from the Debian package repository. I also fixed bugs in that script, and got it to a usable state. However, before importing entries to the Directory, we want to solve one remaining issue: making it so we can import the data automatically on a regular basis, but also allow users to edit parts of the imported entry. I hope to complete this work sometime after my internship is done.

[...]

There are still packages with nonstandard license names that need to be evaluated one by one. One common issue is explained in the article [For Clarity's Sake, Please Don't Say "Licensed under GNU GPL 2"!](#) When people tell you a program is released "under GNU GPL version 2," they are leaving the licensing of the program unclear. Is it released under GPL-2.0-only, or GPL-2.0-or-later? Can you merge the code with packages released under GPL-3.0-or-later?

Unfortunately, Mozilla is contributing to this problem because when someone uploads an addon package to addons.mozilla.org, they are asked to specify which license the package is under by selecting from a drop-down list of licenses. Then that name is displayed on addons.mozilla.org. However, the GPL license options are ambiguous and don't specify "only" and "or-later." To accurately specify the license, uploaders should choose "Custom License" and then mention the correct license in the description field. We hope Mozilla will change this, but since the Directory only lists free addons, and anyone can improve the Directory, we encourage people to use it instead of addons.mozilla.org.

- [Recent licensing updates](#) [4]

We added the Commons Clause to our list of nonfree licenses. Not a stand-alone license in and of itself, it is meant to be added to an existing free license to prevent using the work commercially, rendering the work nonfree. It's particularly nasty given that the name, and the fact that it is attached to pre-existing free licenses, may make it seem as if the work is still free software.

If a previously existing project that was under a free license adds the Commons Clause, users should work to fork that program and continue using it under the free license. If it isn't worth forking, users should simply avoid the package. We are glad to see that in the case of Redis modules using the Commons Clause, people are stepping up to maintain free versions.

[GNU](#)

Source URL: <http://www.tuxmachines.org/node/117257>

Links:

[1] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/taxonomy/term/144>

[2] <https://www.redhat.com/en/about/press-releases/gpl-initiative-expands-16-additional-companies-joining-campaign-greater-predictability-open-source-licensing>

[3] <https://www.fsf.org/blogs/sysadmin/the-completion-of-davids-internship-work-on-the-free-software-directory>

[4] <https://www.fsf.org/blogs/licensing/recent-licensing-updates>