

The Road Towards KF6 & SPDX License Identifiers

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Created *01/12/2019 - 12:49pm*

Submitted by Roy Schestowitz on Sunday 1st of December 2019 12:49:37 PM Filed under [KDE](#) [1] [Legal](#) [2]

With KF6, I want to see SPDX license identifiers being introduced into KDE frameworks in order to ease the framework re-use in other projects. This follows the same approach e.g. the Linux Kernel took over the last years.

The problem that the SPDX markers address is the following: When publishing source code under an open source license, each source code file shall explicitly state the license it is released with. The usual way this is done is that a developer copies a license header text from the KDE licensing policies wiki, from another source file, or from somewhere else from the internet and puts it at the top of their newly created source code file. Thus the result is that today we have many slightly different license headers all over our frameworks source files (even if they only differ in formatting). Yet, these small differences make it very hard to introduce automatic checks for the source code licenses in terms of static analysis. This problem becomes even more urgent when one wants to check that a library, which consists of several source files with different licenses, does only contain compatible licenses.

The SPDX headers solve this problem by introducing a standardized language that annotates every source code file with license information in the SPDX syntax. This syntax is rich enough to express all of our existing license information and it can also cover more complicated cases like e.g. dual-licensed source files.

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[KDE Legal](#)

Source URL: <http://www.tuxmachines.org/node/131154>

Links:

[1] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/taxonomy/term/108>

[2] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/taxonomy/term/106>

[3] <https://cordlandwehr.wordpress.com/2019/12/01/the-road-towards-kf6-spdx-license-identifiers/>