

Understanding Copyleft

By *Roy Schestowitz*

Created *06/07/2020 - 11:18am*

Submitted by Roy Schestowitz on Monday 6th of July 2020 11:18:45 AM Filed under [GNU](#) [1] [Legal](#) [2]

The concept of copyleft means making a software program or other work free to use and additionally requiring all modified and extended versions of that program to be free as well. It's important to note that 'free' in this sense refers to freedom ? not cost ? and you may hear the commonly used phrases 'free as in speech' and 'free as in beer' used to make this distinction.

According to the LINFO website, 'the origin of the term copyleft is not certain. It may have first appeared in a message contained in Tiny BASIC, a free version of the Basic programming language that was written by Dr. Li Chen Wang in the late 1970s.'

[...]

As Joe Casad states in a Linux Magazine article, 'The GNU General Public License was born of the simple idea that freedom matters. Yet this simple tool for protecting freedom has another important feature that makes it even more

powerful, and that is the ability to build communities. The amazing growth of projects and communities that make up the open source ecosystem stems in part from this ability to modify and extend tools to meet changing needs.

[3]

[GNU Legal](#)

Source URL: <http://www.tuxmachines.org/node/139557>

Links:

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

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

[3] <https://www.fosslife.org/understanding-copyleft>