

State of the GNUion: FSF licensing policy challenges in 2013

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Free Software Foundation

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Nice to meet you

I've been the Executive Director just since March 2011, but I've been with the Free Software Foundation since 2003.

Thank you for having me!

The FSF was founded as a nonprofit organization in 1985 to fight for the freedoms of computer users, and to sponsor the GNU Project, which has a goal of making a fully free operating system.



Goals for this talk

- Explain *what* we do at the FSF in this area



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- Share *why* we do these things in these ways



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Who is the FSF licensing and compliance lab?

- Joshua Gay, Licensing and Compliance Lab Manager
- Donald Robertson, Copyright and Licensing Associate
- Me, Executive Director
- Richard Stallman, President
- Bradley Kuhn, FSF director
- Software Freedom Law Center, especially Eben Moglen and Aaron Williamson
- A team of volunteers
- licensing@fsf.org, license-violation@gnu.org



What does the FSF licensing and compliance lab do?

- Produce educational materials



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- Investigate reported license violations, involving code whose copyright has been entrusted to the FSF.



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- Certify products that use and require only free software.



Why we do licensing

- Law and licensing are only tools to achieve a free software world.
- We use licensing because we have to.
- The GPL – and copyleft in general – is one of the most important and best tools we have, but it is still only a tool.



What are we working on?

- GPL adoption
- Compliance and enforcement
- App Store licensing
- Secure Boot vs. Restricted Boot
- JavaScript licensing
- Hardware Certification



GPL adoption

Last year here, I said that 93 percent of packages in Debian's Squeeze release were under the GPL family of licenses.

I did this to prove a point, about the problems with the way people have been "measuring" license adoption.

We're doing interviews about licensing choices at <http://fsf.org/blogs/licensing>.



Compliance and enforcement

- Recent GNU discussion about FSF support for GNU.
- Why we do copyright assignment
- Working on improvements: Scanned assignments in more countries, digital signing process, permitting partial assignment.
- Hard to tell people about this work.

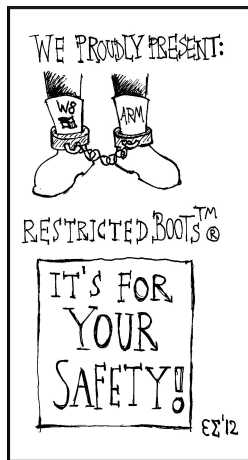


App Store licensing

- We enforced against Apple.
- Terms have changed since then, we are reassessing.
- Apple store remains a very problematic platform for free software.
- Free software use does not necessarily mean more caring about user freedom
- Better ways?



Secure Boot vs. Restricted Boot



<http://www.fsf.org/sb>



JavaScript licensing

- <http://www.gnu.org/philosophy/javascript-trap.html>
- <http://www.gnu.org/software/librejs>

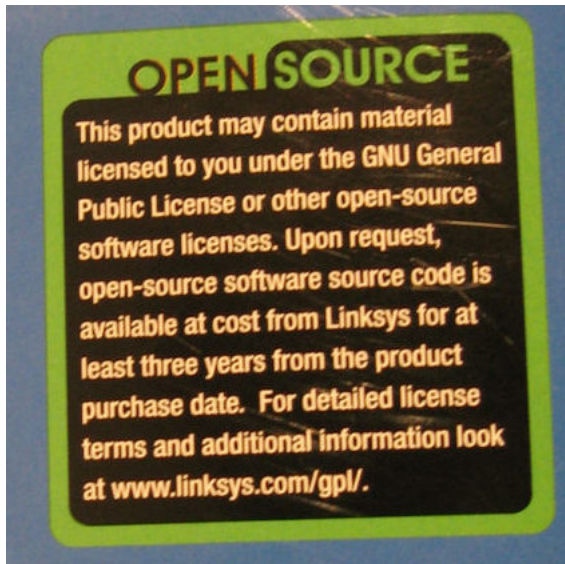


Why certification?

How do people know when something will respect their freedoms? This is a hard enough problem for us – we have to spend a lot of time looking at software licenses and code, to see if it is free.



Certification



Respects Your Freedom



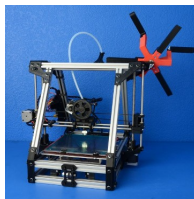
Respects Your Freedom

This label is for products – computers and computer accessories – that ship with only free software and are fully compatible with free software systems.

- Actual certification mark. You cannot display it unless we've evaluated the product. Companies commit via contract to fix any problems that are discovered.
- We announced the first version of the guidelines in 2010.
- Ultimate goal is to certify complete systems, especially laptops and mobile devices.
- You can read more about it and the guidelines at <http://www.fsf.org/ryf>. Also see <http://h-node.org>.



The first certified product



Yes, it's called the Lulzbot. But we were very serious about certifying it. The timing was very effective. The logo appeared in *MAKE* magazine's 3D printer issue. It was soon after Makerbot announced a shift in the proprietary direction, and on the same day that Intellectual Ventures received a patent on DRM for 3D printers.



Aleph Objects, Inc.

Aleph Objects, Inc. is honored to have the first hardware product with the FSF's Respects Your Freedom certification mark, and we're proud to sell a 3D printer that delivers freedom to each and every user. Aleph Objects, Inc. was founded with the idea that people should be free to use, learn from, and improve the machines they use, and to share their improvements and innovations with collaborative communities. The spirit and philosophy of the free software movement is embodied in our LulzBot 3D printer. All of our printers ship with hardware designs, software, and documentation all under free licenses. You get it all – source code, design documents, and specifications – everything needed to control, tinker, fix, and improve upon every aspect of the printer.

– Jeff Moe, Founder of Aleph Objects, Inc.



Last week we opened registration for our annual LibrePlanet conference. It will be on March 23rd-24th in Cambridge, MA, USA.

<http://libreplanet.org>



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And most importantly, hear from you about what we can do better.



Support Freedom

Our work is funded primarily by grassroots contributions from thousands of individual members.

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