# Basic Principles of Free Software

Free Software Foundation Europe

NGI0 Webinar

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# What is "Free Software"?



"Free" as in "Free Speech"

Not as in "Free Beer"

# The Four Freedoms of Free Software

**USE**

The software can be used for any purpose without restrictions.

**STUDY**

The software and its code can be analysed by anyone

**SHARE**

The software can be shared without limitations. The price doesn't matter.

**IMPROVE**

The software can be modified by you or others to give back to the community.

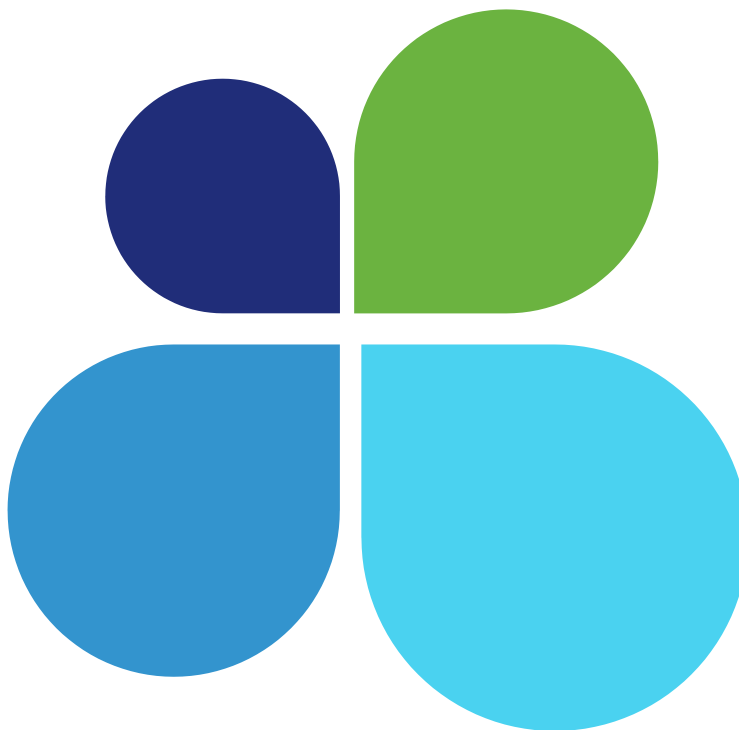# Proprietary software and Commercial Software

**Proprietary Software**

Conceptually opposite from Free Software.

Restricts enjoyment of any of the Four Freedoms

"Closed source" software

**Commercial Software**

Commercial Software is NOT a synonym of proprietary software

Free Software can be used commercially!

# Why is Free Software important?

**Autonomy and No Lock In**

Tailor making your software, less reliance on vendor

**Innovation and Competition**

Faster evolution of software, resistance to monopolization

**Collaboration**

Sharing and using software in a non-exclusive way, limitless number of installations, freedom to reuse code

**Security**

Independent security checking, non-reliance to close loopholes

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# What is a License?

## Copyright

Legal construct that grants someone exclusive rights over a piece of creative work, including software.

Copyright makes software unshareable by default.

## License

An agreement defining the terms under which the recipient of the license is allowed to use the software.

A FS License allows users to enjoy the Four Freedoms.

# Different types of software licenses

## Public Domain licenses

Licenses that act as waivers of copyright or grant public domain rights.

Used to make copyrighted works usable without conditions.

## Permissive licenses

Free Software licenses with minimal requirements for redistribution

## Copyleft licenses

Free Software licenses with strict requirements to distribute derivative works under the same license

## Proprietary licenses

Restricts one or more of the Four Freedoms of Free Software

# Making Your Own Code Free Software

**Step 1: Informing the public of your intended license**

State the license on front page.

**Step 2: Including the license in your software**

Copying or License file in source code.

Short notice at the top of each source file.

# Common Difficulties Faced

- Where to put information about my chosen license?

- What to do if I use multiple licenses in my project?

- How can I make sure that re-users are aware of my chosen license?

- Which license does an external resource have, and who has its copyright?

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# REUSE Initiative



https://reuse.software

- Solve the problem at the very source.

- Best practices for Free Software developers to make licensing easy and transparent.

- Licensing and copyright information stored in files.

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# Three Simple Steps

- Choose and provide licenses.
- Add copyright and licensing information.
- Confirm REUSE compliance.

REUSE
SOFTWARE

https://reuse.software

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# What would a notice in my source files look like?

```
/*
 * SPDX-License-Identifier: GPL-3.0-or-later
 *
 * SPDX-FileCopyrightText: © 2020 Jane Doe <jane@example.org>
 */
```

# How do I copy someone else's work?

**Check for copyright notice or license**

Always make sure you can find the copyright and licensing information somewhere.

**Incorporate their work into your project**

Add the proper tags in comment headers as recommended by REUSE

# Contact

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