{metæffekt}
Open Source Ethics
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Using open source software has various, diverse aspects. We don't want to discuss libertarian perspectives, nor follow the trail of the controversy on the term 'free' and the discussion of *Free Software* vs. *Open Source Software*. The question whether open source software is more ethical than using proprietary software (or whether proprietary software is unethical) is not of relevance.

We want to unleash and protect the benefits of the *Open Source Model* in an innovation-driven economic society; make it usable and useful as fundament for innovation, while being compliant, pragmatic, and responsible.

The Open Source Ethics is described from the perspective of three key roles:
- Commercial Consumer & Redistributor
- Open Source Provider
- Open Source Contributor

We focus on three core aspects that are required for the *Open Source Model* to function:
- Respect – One role is aware of the others; their expectations and needs.
- Moral – The central moral motivations are understood and accepted.
- Compliance – All required actions are taken to enable compliance.

The Commercial Consumer & Redistributor Perspective

As a commercial consumer and redistributor of software associated with licenses that qualify as open source licenses[1] our core interest is to combine these components with our own intellectual property. To realize economic success and to stabilize our offering and business model, we need the ability to redistribute, deploy and operate the composite software.

Respect

When consuming, using and redistributing an open source component we respect the providers' ideas, thoughts, individual rights, and intellectual property by adhering to the associated license terms and conditions. If the terms and conditions are unclear, we contact the provider for clarification. We explicitly do not trivialize aspects.

Moral

We regard the open source model as sharing model. The provider shares a creation in a greater community. It is anticipated that the community is giving back constructive feedback in order to improve and collaborate. Feedback can be anything from raising a question in a discussion forum or mailing list, filing a bug, change, or feature request in an issue tracker, submitting a patch or creating a pull request as a contributor. Communication is respectful, polite and constructive.

Compliance

We anticipate that the compliance boundary conditions of a software distribution as a whole must be given. This goes beyond to the fulfillment of the obligations of single licenses. Compliance to the terms and conditions of all included open source software components must be made plausible.

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[1] Open Source License as defined by the Open Source Initiative (OSI).

The Open Source Provider Perspective

Anticipating the perspective of the provider it is our responsibility to clearly express how we anticipate our creation – the open source software - is used.

Respect

By providing an open source software component it is our responsibility to enable consumers; to not embargo a possible use, due to undeliberate restrictions imposed by the chosen license or by failing to apply the license correctly. We enable contributions by providing a contributor agreement that describes the philosophy, visions and the current and planned licensing options.

Moral

By offering a component under an open source license the provider creates a long-lasting asset in the open source community. Once published it is impossible to withdraw. Therefore, the intentions must be real and fair-minded. Furthermore, as a provider we interact with the community in a respectful and polite manner.

Compliance

In order to enable the consumer of an open source software component it is of utter importance to apply the license correctly to the source code, the source distribution and to the binary distribution. Appropriate notices explaining the effective license are mandatory. Additional backgrounds on the evolution of the component can further resolve ambiguities that may otherwise render the component unusable for a consumer.

The Open Source Contributor Perspective

The contributor is the central figure in the open source model. The contributor scales the open source model; many can contribute to an idea initiated by a few.

Respect

The contributor needs to pay attention to the providers thoughts and intent. At the same time the contributor needs to anticipate the perspective of the consumer he or she represents. Often, the contributor is a consumer of the open source software component. The contributor is required to respect the rules of conduct defined in the contributor agreement.

Moral

The contributor is required to understand the model of the open source provider. The contributor must decide whether the setting in which the open source provider hosts the open source component meets his/her expectations and moral understanding; an ethical match of the provider and the contributor.

Compliance

The contributor acts in a compliant way and according to the rule of conduct when following and challenging the contributor agreement that is brought forward by the provider. The contributor should challenge the contributor agreement in the perspective of the consumer he or she represents. The contributor must ensure that the agreement does contain guarantees that his/her interests are not lost in the future by a change of the license conditions.