

GOVERNMENT OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE DISTRIBUTION



Hope O’Keeffe
Associate General Counsel
Library of Congress

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Types of Open Source Distribution

- Repository
 - Public repository (e.g. SourceForge)
 - Government public website (e.g. NASA)
 - Government nonpublic repository (e.g. Forge.mil)
- Individual open source projects (e.g., Drupal)



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Repository

- Used when you have a standalone segment of software
 - May be an extension to other software
- Others may further develop your software
- Look at repository's terms of service
 - SourceForge has fed-friendly terms on apps.gov



Project

Agency participates in a project to create a particular piece of software



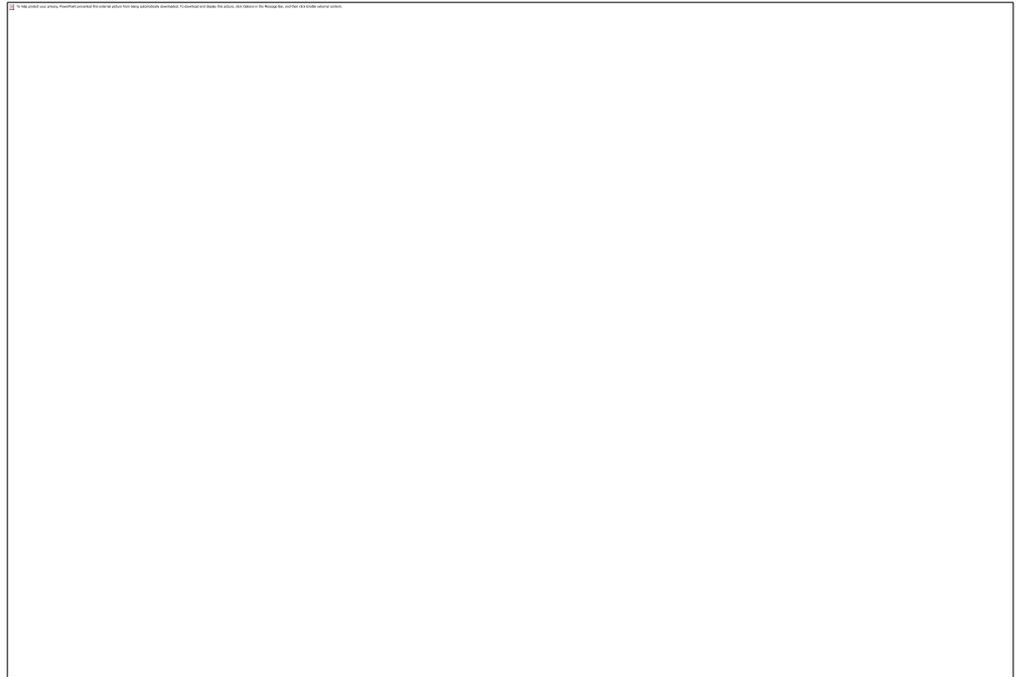
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- Work as part of overall open source team
- Look at project TOS for fed-friendliness
 - Indemnity
 - Jurisdiction/choice of law
 - License compatibility with USGW

Agency Open Source Distribution

Before distributing open source code ask the following questions:

- What's the business purpose?
- Who developed it?
- What are its building blocks?
- What's the cost to distribute?

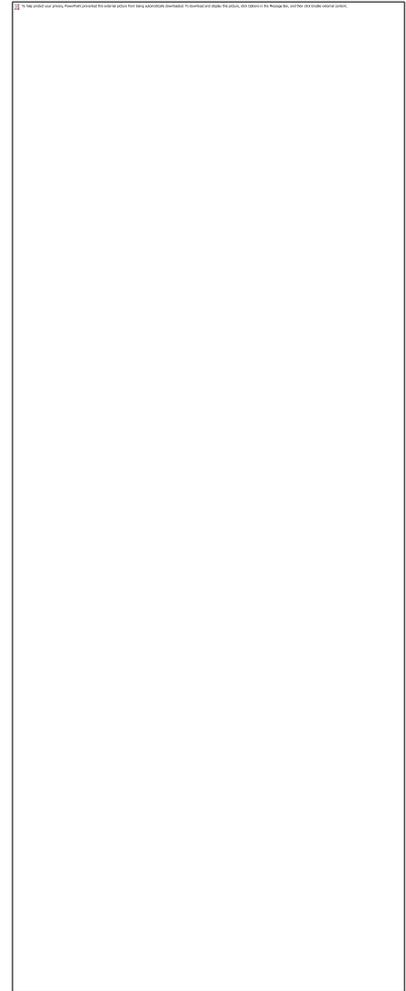


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Who Developed the Code?

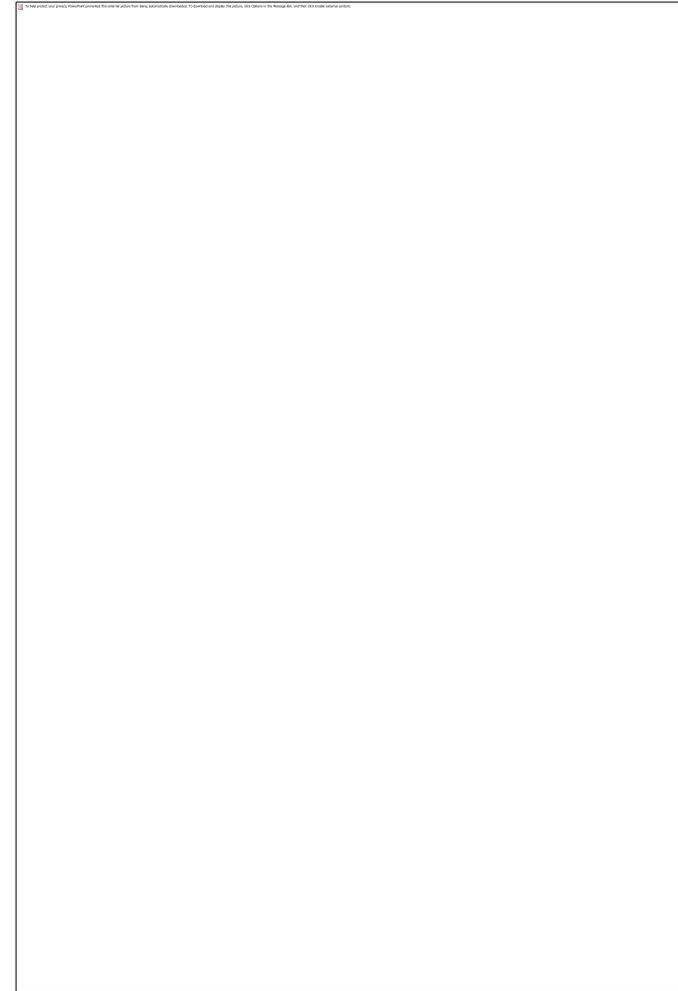
The code was developed by:

- Agency staff on the job
- Contractors under a contract granting the Agency the necessary rights to distribute the code.
- Agency staff on their own time
- Under a contract that requires permissions
- A mix of various employees, contractors, and preexisting code; no one kept track



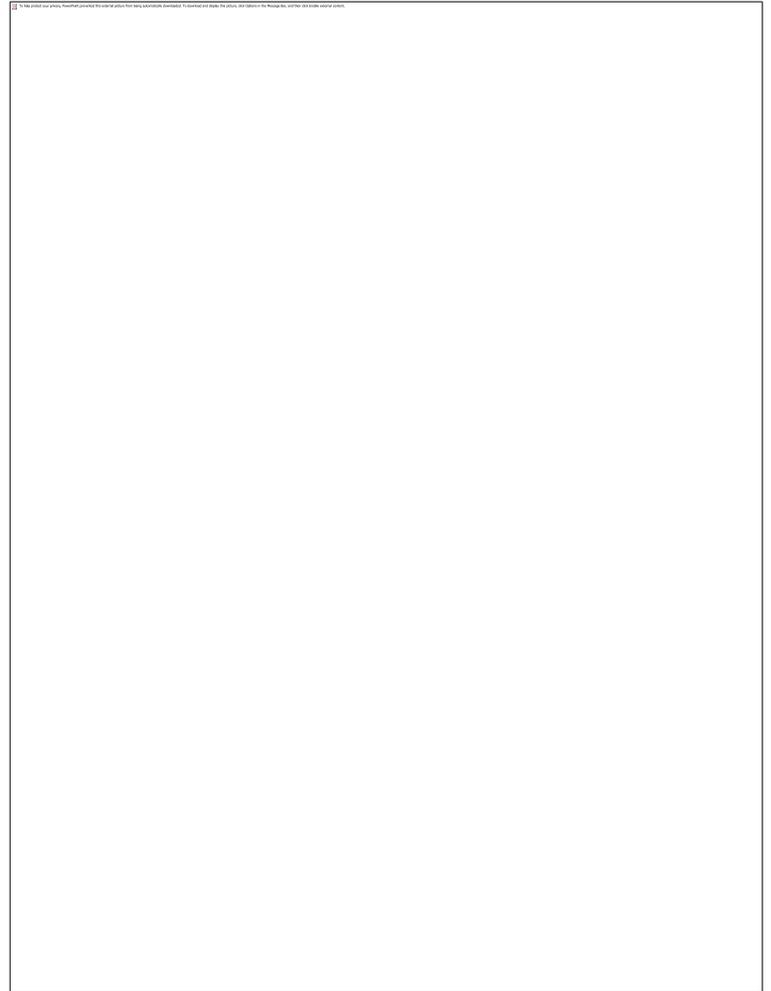
What's it built on?

- The code is not built/based/dependent on proprietary software.
- The code is related to proprietary software but stands alone
- The code is inextricably connected to proprietary software



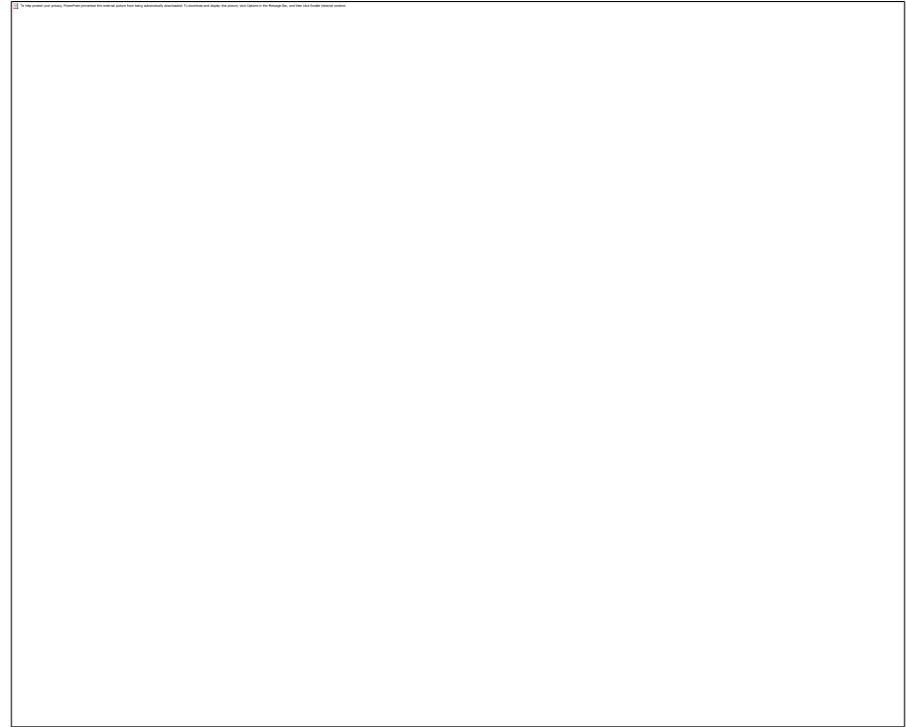
What's the Cost?

- The code can be released without restrictions and without cost beyond development.
- The Agency would have to pay extra to release open source.
- The contractor imposes restrictions and will charge a substantial fee.



U.S. Government Works

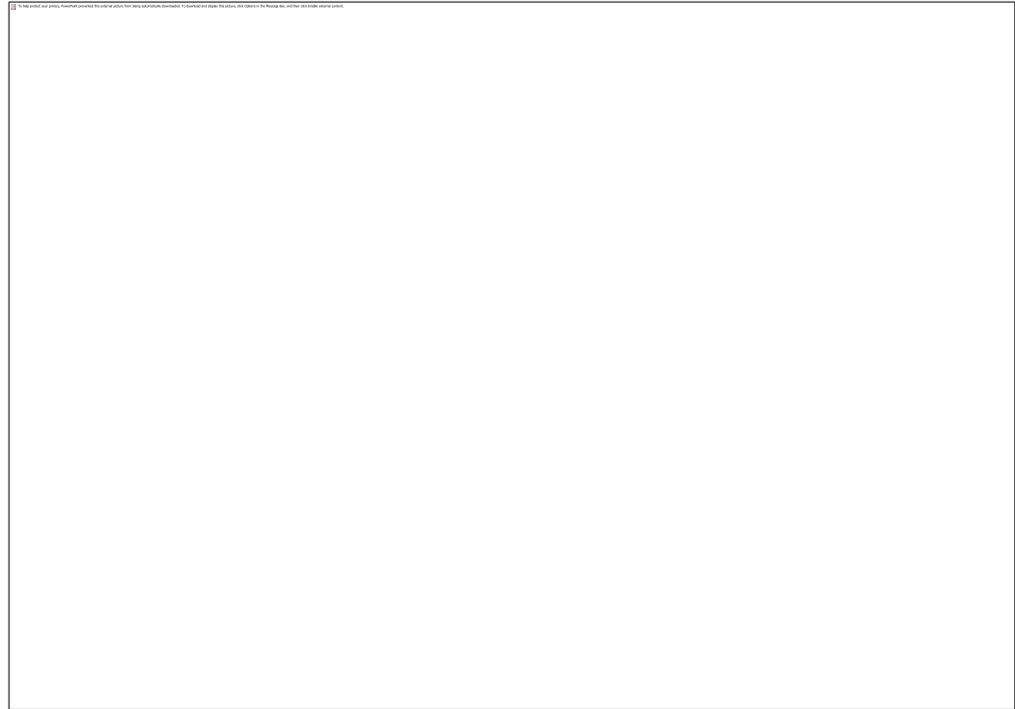
- Works created by Agency staff should be designated in the source code comments as a U.S. Government work or as a work within the public domain.
 - This allows identification of a particular segment of code as a USGW even if the code is subject to a more restrictive license



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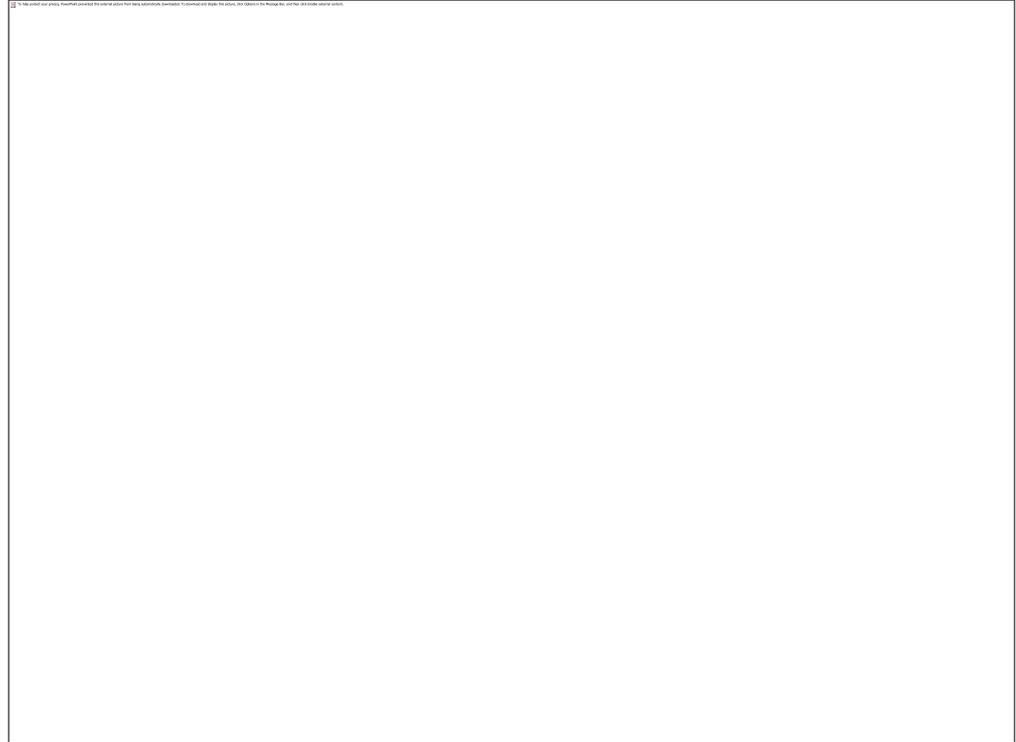
Choice of Open Source License

- The appropriate open source license may vary
 - May be set by the preexisting OS project
 - May vary based on software type
 - Contractor, partner, or grantee may specify



Avoid license proliferation

- Custom licenses are strongly disfavored and should be used only in extraordinary circumstances
- Adopt a license approved by the Open Source Initiative (OSI) at opensource.org
- Popular license may create fewer license clashes

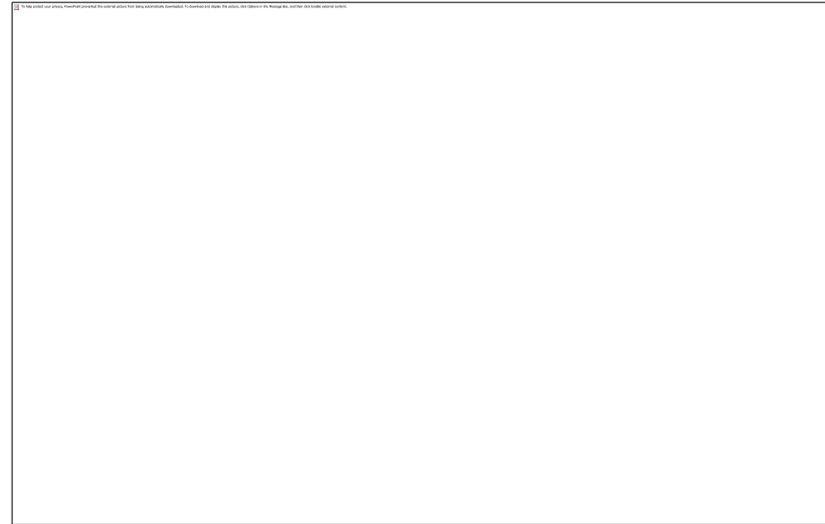


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Permissiveness of License

Generally, the Agency should apply the most permissive license possible consistent with contract, any license for incorporated preexisting code.

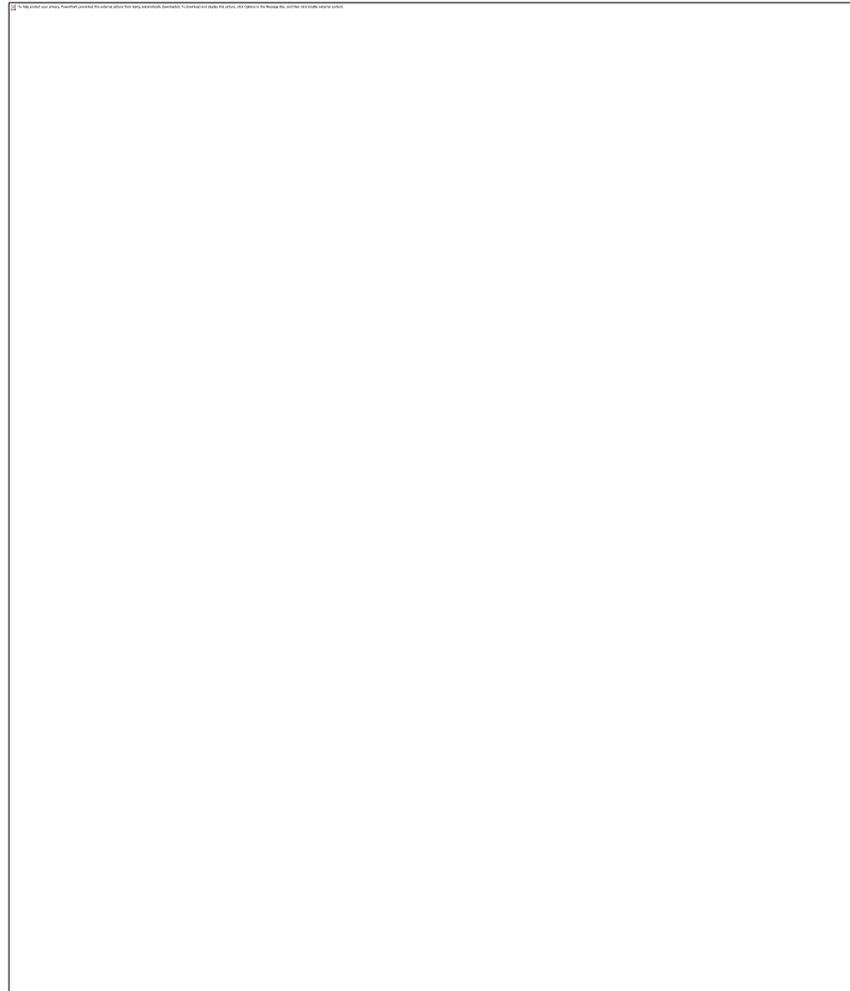
- For example, the Agency should not use a GPL or LGPL license (which imposes restrictions on subsequent use) unless required to do so.
- Can specify greater permissiveness in code comments



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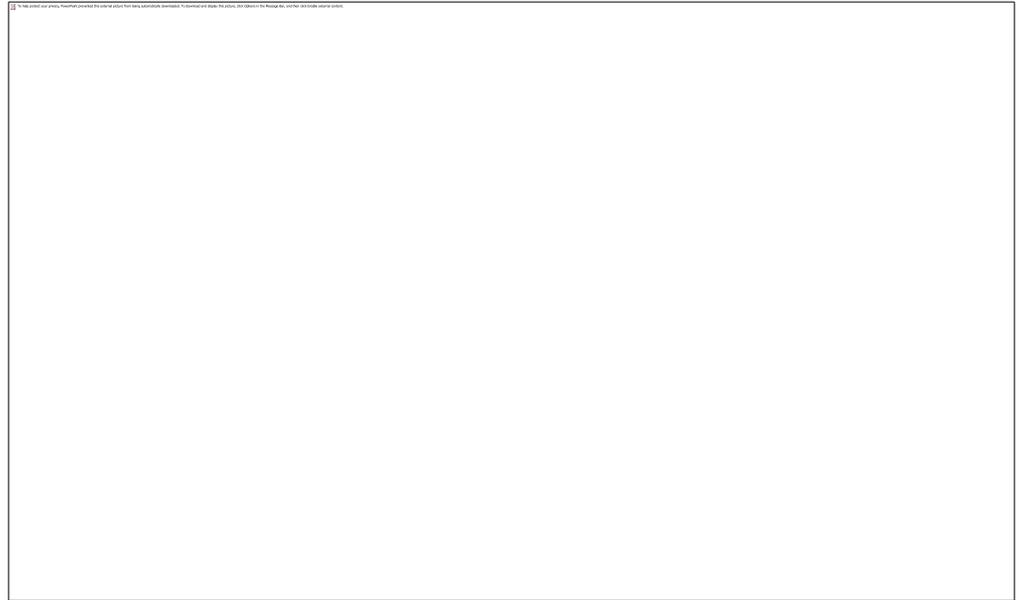
Open Source Distribution Approval Process

- Helpful to have written policy or checklist
- Signoffs on distribution:
 - OGC
 - IT management
- Considerations
 - Business purpose
 - Rights issues



Manage Distribution on Institutional Level

- Single agency account for repositories
- Bring disparate open source projects under one Agency umbrella.
- Don't allow developers' personal accounts to be listed as administrators
 - no blurring of the personal/professional



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Best Practices...Begin at the End

- Placing works into open source is the beginning of development activity, not the end
- Select a project management / development strategy before distribution

