The University of Texas at Austin

Office of the Chief Information Officer

Procedure for Releasing Software as Open Source or Contributing Software to Existing Projects Licensed Under the GNU General Public License
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1. Procedure

The University of Texas System has an existing Administrative Policy governing disclosure, licensing, and distribution of software developed by University of Texas System employees. This policy is available online. The policy speaks directly to two common software development activities on campus:

- Developing software and releasing the software as open source under the GNU General Public License
- Making modifications or improvements to existing GNU-licensed software

Both activities are permitted under the UT System Administrative Policy referenced above. Specifically,

- Software may be publicly distributed under the GNU General Public License or other similar restricted license when the developer and a designated software consultant determine that such distribution is in the best interests of the university and the public.
- Software developers may utilize and benefit tremendously from the large body of public domain software available today. Improvements, modifications, and updates of such software are usually shared with the community. So long as such modifications meet the criteria set forth herein (i.e., benefits of sharing are greater than potential commercial value), sharing such software in accordance with custom is appropriate.

To streamline the process of open source software contributions, campus software developers should consult with the Director of ITS Applications, whom the Vice President for Information Technology has designated as the "designated software consultant" referenced in the UT System Administrative Policy

on Software Licensing. In order to release code as open source, a campus developer needs to send the following information to the Director of ITS Applications:

- Copy of software to be contributed
- Date of contribution
- Description of the software
- Name and Web site of project if contributing to a pre-existing GNU-licensed open source project

The Director of ITS Applications will review this information to determine if the benefits of sharing the code are greater than potential commercial value as described in the UT System administrative policy. If so, a letter will be prepared stating that the applicable code can be contributed to the relevant open source project and a record will remain on file with the Vice President for Information Technology.

The following letter is a sample of the type that would be prepared:

Software Contributor,

We have reviewed your request to contribute two bug fixes (described below) to the Apache Software Foundation's HTTP Server Project.

1. Description of Bug Fixes
2. Apache Software HTTP Project

We confirm that the benefit of sharing this code to the open source Apache Project is greater than any commercial benefit the university could receive from the code. Under the provisions of the UT System Administrative Policy on Software Licensing, we gladly approve the contribution of this code to the Apache Software Foundation.

Thank you for your contributions to this project and for making the software that thousands of people rely on even better.

2. Revision History

Version	Date	New	Original
Procedure for Releasing Software as Open Source or Contributing Software to Existing Projects Licensed Under the GNU General Public License	3/3/2011	Converted web page to PDF	No changes

3. Approvals

Name	Role	Members	Date
Chief Information Officer	Approval	Brad Englert	4/9/2010