

Free / Open Source Software at the University... from a Technology Transfer perspective



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FOSS has always been particularly welcome in Universities.

Its spirit corresponds generally with the academic state of mind, and royalty-free technologies are particularly appreciated where money is usually lacking.

But at the opposite side of the spectrum, the universities' TTO's (Technology Transfer Officers) are supposed to "valorize" the production of research departments and to enable profit making cooperations with the industry.

How should FOSS licensing be tackled in such context?

UNIVERSITY RESEARCH

(TECHNICAL)

Services to society / teaching / “scientific” (“theoretic”) research...

Innovation = aim as such (in opposition to repeating tasks)

not business driven / no end products

“academic freedom”

Looking for :

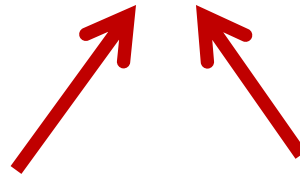
“intellectual satisfaction”

financing (staff and material)

reputation



?



INTELLECTUAL

PROPERTY

(LEGAL)

IP in the broad sense (copyrights, industrial property, know-how, etc...)

“Knowledge” Protection

IP = the “easiest exploitable part”

Control / Processing /

Securing / Management

Contracting

“Burdens & hurdles”

“VALORIZATION” / REUSE

OF THE RESULTS

(ECONOMICAL)

Identifying & “protecting” transferable technologies

“Valorization” & negotiation :

money / spin off / other

(network, influence, reputation,...)

Awareness raising/ Administrative

procedures/ Incentives/

Revenues sharing policies

■ INPUT :

- Open source licences = unrestrained access to knowledge
- Facilitates sharing and common development...
- ... without worrying too much on IP, licensing, etc.
- Tools allowing not to reinvent the wheel (innovation without replication)
- Royalty free = less expenses

■ OUTPUT :

- Diffusion of knowledge / teaching / service to society
- Logic of sharing, exchanging, collaboration...
« From the public to the public » spirit
- Finalities : no end product but « to be continued » projects
- Reputation, Awareness, Ethical positioning, etc.

■ INPUT :

- Researchers misconceive FOSS licensing (FOSS >< public domain):
- No harmonized practices
- No proper management of licences
- Licences are “accepted” by researchers (employees) but this affects the employer (University)’s IP (presumption of IP transfer)
 - ⇒ risks of IP infringement / legally incoherent & non exploitable results
 - ⇒ (no output)
- TTO’s are not familiar enough with FOSS licences
 - => software likely to be immediately classified as non exploitable

■ OUTPUT :

- Technology governed by Royalty Free Licences: uneasily “sold”
- IP & licences complexities
 - require specific knowledge
 - imply more administrative tasks
- University is not or is a very particular « service provider »

- **Best practices**
- + Supervision**
 - **Internal policies**
 - **Administrative processes**
 - **Code documentation**
 - **Licences compliance checks**
 - **Awareness raising**
 - **...**
- **Use of tools (code check)**
- **TTO's training**
- **Development of new Business models**

Re-conceptualizing the academic freedom

Investments

Creativity

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