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About best practices on licensing topics for your
Free Software project.



Who is this guy?

- Long time Free Software contributor
- Software Quality researcher
- Freedom Task Force coordinator
- Father of two

What is the FSFE?

- Free Software Foundation Europe
... Europe
- Policy work at EU level
- Freedom Task Force
... IANAL

Free Software projects

- Business-led
- Community-led
 - ... most interested in development
 - ... less interested in copyright, trademarks, assets
 - ... least interested in management and records

License compatibility

- Wouldn't it be nice ...
 - ... compatibility
 - ... usefulness
 - ... understandability

License compatibility

- Can satisfy the requirements simultaneously
 - ... use is simple
 - ... distribution is not
 - ... patents are terrible

License compatibility

- GPL compatibility is well-understood
- Top-10 compatibility is understood
- After that, see a lawyer

License maintainence

- A license is granted by the holder of (copy)right
- So keep track of all the holders (GPLv2 2.a)
 - You must cause the modified files to carry prominent notices stating that you changed the files and the date of any change.
- Keep in contact with the holders

License checking

- You know what your license is
- You need to use compatible components
- You need to find out what license applies
 - ... usual engineering applies
 - ... don't trust package metadata
 - ... look for validation efforts

License safety

- Safety in numbers
- Central or decentralized
 - ... decentralized is low-overhead
 - ... centralized needs some tools
 - ... CCA, CLA, FLA

Fiduciary Licensing

- The FSFE's FLA is a specific legal document
- A fiduciary is a trusted second party
- The FLA is under CC-ASA and GFDL
- Works across Europe

Fiduciary Licensing

- Assigns rights exclusively to the fiduciary
- Grants non-exclusively the original author a license
 - ... to sub-license
 - ... to use, study, modify and distribute,
 - ... all assignable rights

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... and to ask questions?

