

GitLab acquires Gitorious to bolster its on premises code collaboration platform

Sytse Sijbrandij (<https://www.twitter.com/sytstes>) Mar 3rd, 2015

As reported by the Next Web (<http://thenextweb.com/insider/2015/03/03/gitlab-acquires-rival-gitorious-will-shut-june-1/>) GitLab and Gitorious announce today they are joining forces in an effort to strengthen the development of GitLab's open source

Git management application and provide Gitorious customers with an enhanced user experience.

Since 2008, Gitorious has been one of the leading providers for open source hosting and on-premise enterprise Git management around the globe. Gitorious was the first widely used open source Git management application.

“We believe that, in the long term, coming together under one umbrella with a common goal will benefit everyone, so we are getting that process started today” says GitLab CEO, Sytse Sijbrandij.

GitLab is a simple upgrade path for existing Gitorious users. GitLab offers Git repository management, code reviews, issue tracking, activity feeds, wikis and continuous integration.

Rolf Bjaanes, Gitorious CEO, gives some background on the reasons for the acquisition: “At Gitorious we saw more and more organizations adopting GitLab. Due to decreased income from on-premises customers, running the free Gitorious.org was no longer sustainable. GitLab was solving the same problem that we were, but was solving it better.”

“This acquisition will accelerate the growth of GitLab. With more than 100,000 organizations using it, it is already the most used on-premise solution for Git repository management, and bringing Gitorious into the fold will significantly

increase that footprint.” says Sytse Sijbrandij, GitLab CEO.

Starting today, Gitorious.org users can import their existing projects into GitLab.com by clicking the “Import projects from Gitorious.org” link when creating a new project. Gitorious.org will stay online until the end of May 2015 to give people time to migrate their repositories. Existing users of Gitorious on-premises can contact sales@gitlab.com for more information.

We are both confident that the communities around GitLab and Gitorious will see the advantage of combining our strengths to make the best open source software to collaborate on code.

Install GitLab on your own server in 2 minutes (</downloads>)

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169 Comments

GitLab B.V.

 Sytse Sijbrandij ▾

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**veleiro** · a month ago

I am worried about the licensing. I always preferred gitorious over gitlab because it was AGPLv3

18 ^ | ▾ · [Reply](#) · [Share](#) ›**isacdaavid** → [veleiro](#) · a month ago

Same thoughts, when equivalent free software projects exist copyleft is preferable. I also valued Gitorious because it stood for freedom of speech against the takedown of satirical programming language C+=, while Gitlab, Github, Bitbucket bent over time after time whenever controversial, yet legal and harmless, arrived at their sites.

13 ^ | ▾ · [Reply](#) · [Share](#) ›**anatoly techtonik** → [isacdaavid](#) · 19 days ago

Unfortunately AGPL support is not sustainable due to the bugs in economy. Support requires knowledge of codebase and time, and no company will support you, because they can not support themselves providing stuff for free.

^ | ▾ · [Reply](#) · [Share](#) ›**Fedrick** → [anatoly techtonik](#) · 19 days ago

say that to Red Hat, a publicly traded billion dollar company that subsists on supporting copylefted software. I don't see how the economy of the AGPL is different from GPL and LGPL.

Also, sustainability doesn't imply commercial activity; sometimes the community can do it without a monetary interest in mind

^ | ▾ · [Reply](#) · [Share](#) ›**anatoly techtonik** → [Fedrick](#) · 9 days ago



For me the difference between AGPL and GPL is huge enough to completely change the business model of company that provides web services.

And RedHat and Ubuntu are too unique. I'd see examples of the companies from this century who survive without subsidies.

I also don't believe that communities will survive through the increased market pressure. If you look at new generation, it is interested in startups and money - even if they had desire, they don't have time to "power" the communities that "do the work for free".

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



maatunix → veleiro · a month ago

I share your pain, that's a shame. AGPLv3 still a much better Open-Source license.

12 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Sytse Sijbrandij Mod → veleiro · a month ago

GitLab CE is MIT licensed. Why do you prefer AGPLv3?

2 ^ | v · Edit · Reply · Share ›



Aaron Wolf → Sytse Sijbrandij · a month ago

Because many of us want to promote and support free software and not support proprietary software. Contributing to GitLab necessarily assists the develop of the proprietary Enterprise Edition, thus promoting non-free software. The AGPLv3 allows us all to share while remaining on the same neutral ground. I want to assist true public goods, not volunteer to help a proprietary company, even if they make a large portion of their work freely-licensed. That said, it is still great that GitLab CE is functional on its own.

For reference, although I would remain suspicious of the ramifications of MIT, I would be less critical of the CE/EE divide if 100% of the EE features were only about integration with proprietary 3rd-party tools or other things that really aren't normal features. The fact that some regular features everyone might appreciate are in the EE means that we cannot trust the balance here. GitLab is freemium rather than a truly

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 means that we cannot trust the balance here. GitLab is ~~neither~~ rather than a truly
 community project.

15 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



anon → Aaron Wolf · a month ago

Agreed, and the GitLab EE features based purely off free software are irksome as well. But it's put up or shut up time for us. Someone can fork GitLab into an AGPL version.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Sytse Sijbrandij Mod → Aaron Wolf · a month ago

Thanks for your comment Aaron. We try to find a good balance between CE and EE. Having only third part integrations in EE would not make it compelling enough in our opinion. GitLab already includes versioning, code-review, issue tracking, wiki's and CI so you don't need any integrations. What regular features are you most worried about? We think it is a community project since there are many people that participate in it.

1 ^ | v · Edit · Reply · Share ›



Aaron Wolf → Sytse Sijbrandij · a month ago

I'm far less concerned about specific features than about the principles of the community and the trust in the project long-term. I understand deeply how the challenges are for free/libre/open projects to get funding. The thing is, I want to contribute to and use projects that truly serve the community. I don't want to fund or support projects that end up being strongly proprietary or locked-in or having power over the system without the check on that power that comes from the ability to fork.

So, the things that would make me a bit more comfortable with GitLab would be: Make a clear public statement committing to free/libre/open values and committing to keep a certain wide range of essential features in the community edition. Make sure that anyone who uses the proprietary edition could always move to the community edition and not lose any *essential* features. In other words not be locked-in — carefully avoid having proprietary

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features, in other words not be locked-in — carefully avoid having proprietary features that become too compelling to lose.

But still, as long as you have a proprietary edition, you will have a conflict-of-interest in which you will want to keep the CE just compelling enough to keep people using it but may keep putting things in the proprietary edition that cause real lock-in, and once you have customers locked-in, you have power imbalance and an issue with accountability and more.

The real thing that would make me feel totally happy would be licensing the EE with AGPLv3 instead of proprietary.

4 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Sytse Sijbrandij Mod → Aaron Wolf • a month ago

We'll always make sure that GitLab CE is great and usable software. Instead of grand statements we would like people to judge us by what we release every month. Code speaks louder than words. If we fail the rest of the community I'm sure that a fork will quickly rise. We tried licensing EE under MIT but that didn't work out.

1 ^ | v • Edit • Reply • Share ›



Michael Faille → Sytse Sijbrandij • a month ago

As Opensource business model, I suggest you to check

- <http://phabricator.org/hosting...>
- <https://registry.hub.docker.co...>
- <https://wordpress.com/>

Remember that gitorious was a sanctuary for free software hacktivist.

Sooner than later, companies will implement something you already built in your premium version. By this way, they will duplicate your effort and maybe create an alternative. It's why I suggest you to opensource all your code. Maybe, if someone will close source your stuff, sell them your MIT Licence and have AGPLv3 by default.

You don't need proprietary features for this. Just check

- node vs io
- Openoffice vs libreoffice
- mysql vs mariadb
- Hudson vs Jenkins

Personnaly, I really want you to create neutral governance for gitlab like docker.io.

Have success ! :-)

6 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Sytse Sijbrandij Mod → Michael Faille · a month ago

Hi Michael, thanks for the list. For us it is hard to make money on our SaaS GitLab.com, most large customers host GitLab on-premises. We make our money from the on-premises customers so an open-core licensing model makes sense. So far the core-team structure has worked well for GitLab, we try to keep everything as lightweight as possible.

1 ^ | v · Edit · Reply · Share ›



Michael Faille → Sytse Sijbrandij · a month ago

Sytse, thank you for your follow up. Before writing up my comment, I have done some research to understand your business model. So, I agree with you. Can you give me your answer for what I write after the "first list"? Maybe, you just don't expand my last comment and it would be interesting to have a deeper overview from you since you buy Gitorious. Thank you sir.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Sam Gleske → Sytse Sijbrandij · a month ago

By what standards did it "not work out"? I was an Enterprise customer when EE was MIT licensed and remember being quite shocked when GitLab changed the license.

When GitLab changed their license they reached out to me to discuss any concerns I might have, of which I had a few and was against the license change. Needless to say while the theater was a dialogue it wasn't in an open forum where all enterprise customers could see each others' opinions. This in itself made it feel like a one way argument. I felt a bit betrayed when the change happened because I am myself a free software advocate.

I think the concern about keeping enterprise customers locked-in as Aaron describes was the real cause of the license change. Otherwise, it would be too easy for an enterprise customer to simply release the enterprise features which I'm sure made the business model feel uncertain. This is primarily conjecture and hypothesis. The lock-in feature that comes in mind to me is a few specific LDAP features. However, even without that I was happy to support the Enterprise Edition as it existed then.

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Sytse Sijbrandij Mod → Sam Gleske · a month ago

Hi Sam, thanks for being a loyal GitLab user. We discussed the reasons for changing the license in <https://about.gitlab.com/2014/...>

We reached out in private because most customers prefer that. Feel free to repost any part of our conversation here if you prefer that. I'm sorry you feel bad about the process, I can assure you we took all feedback into account.

^ | v · Edit · Reply · Share ›



ConcernedUser → Sytse Sijbrandij · a month ago

@Sytse Sijbrandij Sam's point on how a combination of the CLA + the MIT license allowed a relicense of the entire GitLab EE.

This is scary for CE users. If the code was put into the AGPL and the CLA was removed, it would give the community faith that using the software was safe since a license change would be protected against.

This would also encourage me to become a paying user of GitLab if GitLab EE

THIS would also encourage me become a paying user of GITLAB if GITLAB EE was handled in the same way. I know you *say* that you will not be changing the license for CE, but your track record with EE shows otherwise. Why else would the CLA allow you to relicense the code if you did not intend to do it in the future?

Just my thoughts, not that they matter.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Sytse Sijbrandij Mod → ConcernedUser · a month ago

If we choose non-free license for CE I think a fork would quickly rise. And no license helps against a company with bad intentions, for example see the test code that Oracle is withholding from MySQL. We're proud of our track record with doing an awesome release each month for GitLab CE.

^ | v · Edit · Reply · Share ›



Sam Gleske → Sytse Sijbrandij · a month ago

I was just a bit disappointed is all. I realize you guys do great work and even though I've since moved on from the previous company (that I believe is still using GitLab from my advocacy) I still support your user base in IRC. I don't feel it would contribute much to the conversation by posting email snippets from then. I was just thinking it would have been nice to invite enterprise customers to participate in a closed forum at the time. By that means it would have been optional to either communicate via forum or privately via email. In any case, the change happened so I'll not beat on it too much.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Sytse Sijbrandij Mod → Sam Gleske · a month ago

Hi Sam, I'm very grateful for your continued contributions to GitLab by helping out in the IRC channel. We'll consider a closed forum or slack channel the next time we need to discuss something like this.

^ | v · Edit · Reply · Share ›



Dejan Lekic → Aaron Wolf · 19 days ago

What you say is in fact a very good point. However, people who are concerned are only those who use GitLab code, right? Not those who simply use gitlab.com services.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



veleiro → Sytse Sijbrandij · a month ago

Copyleft is really important to me. When there isnt a copyleft version of something I can use, then I'll fall back to MIT or similar. I wont contribute to noncopyleft code though, its just an ethical principle of mine.

14 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Lilian A. Moraru → veleiro · a month ago

Ethics?

You want to free the code but not the user using the code(developers), right? Doesn't sounds ethical at all, sounds more like selfishness...

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



veleiro → Lilian A. Moraru · a month ago

You mean to tell me that developers are NOT also users?

TIL that developers never use anything

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



David → veleiro · a month ago

I don't see this as an "ethical principle". It's more like one of focusing the difference you are making with your work. Kantian ethics don't require copyleft because they assume reciprocity. Copyleft actively locks those out not sharing the same ethics, so it abandons the categorical imperative.

That's more a practical principle than an ethical one. Nothing wrong with that apart from the label.

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Aaron Wolf → David · a month ago

I used to follow Kantian ethics too, but that's not how the world works. Reciprocity isn't something you can assume. Copyleft anyway doesn't abandon the categorical imperative at all. If everyone behaved ethically as I do and supported copyleft, there would be no inconsistency, no ethical issue.

Without copyleft, we lose the assurance of having a commons. The very fact that GitLab offers a proprietary edition points this out. There's a level of lock-in to anyone who cares about the features in the proprietary edition now or new ones in the future. Thus, nobody can contribute with assurance that the project we build remains a commons-based community project. Instead, we see a weaker community project being exploited to push a proprietary product.

Essentially, if everyone were ethical and fully accepted that all software should be MIT-licensed, then we would live in a Kantian ethical world. That would be fine. The real world isn't that one, so we need copyleft if we are to protect software freedom and community commons.

8 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



veleiro → David · a month ago

No, its definitely ethical.
We're just referring to two different groups of people to stand up for.

5 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



knocte → veleiro · a month ago

You can still contribute to GitLab even considering your ethical principles. Whenever you do a modification, fork it and re-license it to AGPL (yes you can go from MIT to AGPL, but not the other way around). If people start liking your contributions. maybe you can get a bigger community than GitLab.

contributions, maybe you can get a bigger community than GitHub.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Juanjo Marín → David · a month ago

If you assume reciprocity, copyleft is the way to go because all the contributors have the same rights and duties.

3 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Sytse Sijbrandij Mod → veleiro · a month ago

We're very happy with the MIT since it has the least amount of restrictions for everyone. But we respect your opinion and hope you will consider contributing to GitLab in the future.

2 ^ | v · Edit · Reply · Share ›



isacdaavid → Sytse Sijbrandij · a month ago

I don't like license flame wars but I have to assess what I think is a conceptual mistake about copyleft licenses.

Following your line of thought CC0/public domain should be better than the license used by X11, commonly and ambiguously referred to as "the MIT license", because CC0 doesn't "restrict" you to keep copyright notices and attributions.

And this is absurd. Fulfilling this responsibility is not equivalent with being restricted. Neither copyleft is a restriction. In fact non-copyleft licenses like the particular one used by X11 and Gitlab are prone to all the actual restrictions of proprietary software by virtue of degeneration.

5 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Niels Möller → Sytse Sijbrandij · a month ago

I have a lot of respect for people who prefer permissive licenses over copyleft for work they write or contribute to, even if in most cases I would disagree with their choices.

But I don't find statements saying how great the MIT license is very persuasive, when the statements come from someone who chooses a proprietary license over the MIT license for (some of) his/her own code... In my ears, this sounds like a preference that everybody *else* use the MIT license.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Hugo Osvaldo Barrera → veleiro · a month ago

Your "ethical principle" is not to give out code for free for the world to use free of limitations? I don't thinkg "ethical" is the word you're looking for.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



veleiro → Hugo Osvaldo Barrera · a month ago

Free of limitations in order to enslave other users?

Yeah, thats a good way to spread the word of freedom.

3 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Hugo Osvaldo Barrera → veleiro · a month ago

I don't know exactly what you're talking about when you mention slavery (you're missing *a lot* of context there!), but copyleft software can be used to enslave others, as well as mass-murder, guide nukes, etc.

This may sound controversial, but it's been discussed at lengths (including on the debian mailing list IIRC), and that is, be definition, free software (note that no OSI-approved license forbids these sort of things, or using the software for "evil").

In any case, I suggest you read up the MIT licence to clear any doubts. It's essentially, a 2-clause BSD. BSD licenses are used in some omnipresente pieces software, like OpenSSH, part of almost every *nix system out there.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Hong Xu → Hugo Osvaldo Barrera · a month ago

I think his enslave is to distribute nonfree software to users, because they

don't have the freedom to inspect and modify the software. MIT style license allows one to do "enslaving" with its derived work, but a copyleft doesn't allow so.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Hugo Osvaldo Barrera → Hong Xu · a month ago

No one is being enslaved by MIT software. Recipients of MIT software are free to distribute (or not) software on their own free will.

Given how it's actually less restrictive to the user (in comparison to copyleft), it's ridiculous to say it "enslaves" them. In any case, licences such as the GPL can be said to "enslave" users, since they strip them of certain freedoms (since the GPL is designed to protect the freedoms of the software itself, not the user).

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Hong Xu → Hugo Osvaldo Barrera · a month ago

I think you missed a point in my point: MIT licensed software cannot enslave by themselves, but their derived work can. GPL can protect USERS' freedom because it makes sure that any user who have been distributed with a GPL software can inspect and modify the software freely, even after many times of redistribution. In other words, it does not promote proprietary software in a way that a MIT style license does.

If you see the ability to redistribute as a proprietary software as a power, you will see that restrict certain powers is important to spread freedom. That's why we restricted the power of the president. If the president has the "freedom" to control every single piece in the country, more people will lose freedom. That's the current case with many permissive license software, e.g. Android, many web applications.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Hugo Osvaldo Barrera → Hong Xu · a month ago

The GPL is designed to protect the software's freedom at the expense of the

user's freedom. Stop trying to state the contrary when even its authors have stated that that is the intent.

The MIT licence does not promote proprietary software in any way. It has a completely neutral stance to it.

Or are you suggesting that by not attempting to forbid something, one is promoting it?

3 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Hong Xu → Hugo Osvaldo Barrera · a month ago

You need to give reference for the first point. I suppose your "its authors" refers the author of GPL, not GPL licensed software.

MIT licensed software is neutral, and promotes both free software and proprietary software. But the proprietary software promoting nature is evil.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Hugo Osvaldo Barrera → Hong Xu · a month ago

It does not "promote" proprietary software (or free software). It does not promote anything.

Go ahead, read it. It's not that long:

<http://opensource.org/licenses...>

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Hong Xu → Hugo Osvaldo Barrera · a month ago

I've read it more than 100 times. If the code can be included in software X, it means the code promotes software X in some degree. This also leads to that the code promotes itself.

If you want to have a software which does not promote anything than itself, it's proprietary software. I'm sure you know the difference between proprietary software and free software.

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Hugo Osvaldo Barrera → Hong Xu · a month ago

> I've read it more than 100 times. If the code can be included in software X, it means the code promotes software X in some degree. This also leads to that the code promotes itself.

Code from the OpenBSD project has been copied into the Linux Kernel many times (wireless drivers, for example). According to that definition of yours, OpenBSD (BSD/MIT licensed) promotes Linux.

In any case, your definition is absurd. The OpenBSD foundation and project are one of those places where ubiquitous pieces of *free* software have come out from (present in almost every single *nix distro out there). That's just a mere example. Stating that these projects which so strongly turn down any trace of proprietary software are actually promoting it is beyond absurd.

In the meantime, copyleft software like the Linux kernel have no problem interacting with binary blob (nvidia drivers, anyone?). IMHO, writing code designed to interact with proprietary software can be seen as promoting it.

Again, licenses don't promote anything. They grant rights. Some, more than others (MIT protects the users' freedoms, GPL protects the software's freedom). Some entail more obligations than others.

The fact that a licence gives you the right to do something doesn't mean it's motivating you to do that something. The GPL give you the right to use your software to murder puppies, yet no one would state that it's promoting such actions.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Hong Xu → Hugo Osvaldo Barrera · a month ago

> > I've read it more than 100 times. If the code can be included in software X, it means the code promotes software X in some degree. This > also leads to that the code promotes itself.

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>

> Code from the OpenBSD project has been copied into the Linux Kernel many times (wireless

> drivers, for example). According to that definition of yours, OpenBSD (BSD/MIT licensed)

> promotes Linux.

>

I don't know how this example supports your point. I guess you have shifted "the code promotes software X" to "the people who developed the code promote software X" in my definition of promotion. In the software level, OpenBSD has promoted Linux, while the people in OpenBSD Foundation don't.

> In any case, your definition is absurd. The OpenBSD foundation and project

[see more](#)

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



asdf → Hugo Osvaldo Barrera · a month ago

today i learned that the software have feelings...

i think what you mean by software is "the original developers and contributors"

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



wwahammy → Sytse Sijbrandij · a month ago

I prefer the AGPLv3 because it provides protection to downstream network users. Without it, there's nothing preventing someone with bad intentions to use the software to create a service that does nasty things without the user knowing. That isn't to say MIT licensed code is bad; it's not. There are positives and negatives to each of course.

4 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



James → wwahammy · a month ago

The AGPLv3 does not provide any actual protection there. If someone has bad intentions, you can first assume they probably don't care about licensing -- nothing stops them from just modifying the code and not telling anyone its modified. Even if you lived in a hypothetical world where everyone respects the license, someone with bad intention could still host unmodified AGPLv3 code and do whatever they want with your data directly out of the database or on-disk, or even just slapping the entire AGPLv3 codebase behind a rogue proxy.

There are some reasons to prefer AGPLv3, but I don't think safety is one of them.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



knocte → wwahammy · a month ago

Hey, but you can still contribute to GitLab even considering your ethical principles. Whenever you do a modification, fork it and re-license it to AGPL (yes you can go from MIT to AGPL, but not the other way around). If people start liking your contributions, maybe you can get a bigger community than GitLab.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



wwahammy → knocte · a month ago

I could also encourage the GitLab folks to relicense under AGPL. I could do a lot of things but that's not the point. I was sharing my opinion on which I prefer and why I prefer it. I hope it's influential but it's totally possible it won't be. No worries.

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