

Affirmation of the Open Source Definition

PALO ALTO, Calif. - Feb. 5, 2019 -- In 1799 the kilogram was defined as the mass of a litre of water. In 1889, metal cylinders of the precise identical mass were created as reference objects.

In the hundreds of years since, the physical nature of the metal caused those cylinders no longer to reflect the identical mass as defined. In order to ensure the integrity of a vital unit of measurement, the kilogram was redefined as the same mass but simply expressed in terms of fundamental and invariable physical constants.

Without this single, standard definition of this or other fundamental units, commerce as we know it would not be possible. There is no trust in a world where anyone can invent their own definition for units, items, and concepts on which others rely, and without trust there is no community, no collaboration, and no cultural or technological development.

In exactly the same way, the term "open source software" was coined in 1998 as software that provides a set of precise freedoms and benefits, including but not limited to the freedoms to run, study, redistribute, and improve the software on which you rely . These benefits are codified in the [Open Source Definition](#) (OSD), which is based on the [Debian Free Software Guidelines](#). The Open Source Initiative, its members, affiliates, and sponsors, promote and protect this fundamental definition through software license review and approval.

Without this single, standard definition of "open source," software development as we know it would not be possible. There is no trust in a world where anyone can invent their own definition for open source, and without trust there is no community, no collaboration, and no innovation.

Recently there have been efforts to undermine the integrity of open source by claiming there is no need for a single, authoritative definition. These efforts are motivated by the interests of a few rather than the benefit of all, and are at odds with the principles that have so demonstratively served us well in the past decades. If allowed to continue, these efforts will erode the trust of both users and contributors, and hinder the innovation that is enabled by open source software, just as surely as having multiple definitions of a kilogram would erode and undermine commerce.

We, the undersigned, affirm our commitment to the Open Source Definition. We acknowledge its importance to the development of the software on which we rely to operate our businesses and

organisations. We pledge to guard and maintain the Open Source Definition and we recognize the Open Source Initiative as the steward of the Open Source Definition.

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