
K-Notes: GNU General Public License

from Free Software Foundation

“The LGPL is the most interesting license to commercial companies.”

Know the AGPL License

If using open sourced software, make sure your client knows that under an AGPL license, if they make changes to the software, they must share those changes back to the community by sharing it or making it available to the public.



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KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Be aware of “contaminating” software**

If your client uses open source software, co-mingling it with their own, their part of the software is now contaminated with open source, and is considered open source as well under certain licenses.

- **The GPL applies to distribution of software**

GPL license kicks in when you distribute software. However, the internet has created a loophole. If you make a website based on AGPL open source software however, you don't have to distribute it like the GPL. It becomes active when people visit your site.

- **Acknowledge the source**

No matter which of the three GNU licenses you are using, you will always need to acknowledge the source of the software you use.

- **The LGPL is preferred by businesses**

The LGPL license is used by many commercial interests because it allows them to use the open source software freely without fully contaminating the rest of their software for licensing purposes.

“A lot of companies benefit by having a ‘try-it-before-you-buy-it’ business model. They can let people use the software on their own servers without having to purchase it.”