

Packages - Freedom Issue #2700

Freedom Issue # 972 (forwarded upstream): TeXLive freedom verification

Re-evaluate [texlive-fontsextra]

2020-04-14 06:01 PM - theova

Status: confirmed	% Done: 0%
Priority: freedom issue	
Assignee: oaken-source	
Category:	
Description	
Parabola's PKGBUILD removes the font ogham from texlive-fontsextra:	
<pre># remove nonfree packages # no specific free license rm -v ogham.tar.xz ... # remove nonfree packages references from package list sed -ri '/^ogham /d' CONTENTS</pre>	
The font ogham is released into the public domain. This qualifies it as being free [1]. I suggest to add it back. This would make the PKGBUILD not significantly different to Arch's PKGBUILD. As a consequence, [texlive-fontsextra] can be un-blacklisted.	
[1] https://www.gnu.org/licenses/license-list.html#PublicDomain	

History

#1 - 2020-04-18 02:14 PM - oaken-source

- Assignee set to oaken-source

- Status changed from unconfirmed to confirmed

the source files of that package mirror your findings.

<https://github.com/rf-latex/ogham/blob/master/ogham.mf>

I think you are right, we can probably unblacklist this package. not something we do very often!

I'm waiting for a second opinion on this before taking action.

#2 - 2020-04-18 02:52 PM - oaken-source

I retract my statement. the issue here is the declaration of code into the public domain, which, depending on the circumstances, may be void:

https://fedoraproject.org/wiki/Talk:Features/TeXLiveLegalAudit#Public_Domain

#3 - 2020-04-19 04:55 PM - theova

I see your point. (Note that the Fedora Audit has not seen an update since July 2011, so not all informations may be up to date).

From <https://www.gnu.org/licenses/license-list.html#PublicDomain>:

Being in the public domain is not a license; rather, it means the material is not copyrighted and no license is needed. Practically speaking, though, if a work is in the public domain, it might as well have an all-permissive non-copyleft free software license. Public domain material is compatible with the GNU GPL.

If you want to release your work to the public domain, we encourage you to use formal tools to do so. We ask people who make small contributions to GNU to sign a disclaimer form; that's one solution. If you're working on a project that doesn't have formal contribution policies like that, CC0 is a good tool that anyone can use. It formally dedicates your work to the public domain, and provides a fallback license for cases where that is not legally possible.

And <https://www.gnu.org/philosophy/categories.html>:

Public domain software is software that is not copyrighted. If the source code is in the public domain, that is a special case of noncopyrighted free software, which means that some copies or modified versions may not be free at all.

So what I read from GNU/FSF is contradictory. Maybe we (or I) should ask FSF for clarification?

#4 - 2020-04-19 05:22 PM - oaken-source

it is not in fact contradictory. software can be in the public domain for various reasons, it just cannot be easily /placed/ in the public domain by its author by a simple declaration.

apparently, fedora has sorted this all out in 2012, I found the statement that all legal issues had been resolved at that time, but digging through the mailing list archives, I'm not entirely sure /how/ exactly they were resolved.

#5 - 2020-04-19 06:12 PM - theova

oaken-source wrote:

it is not in fact contradictory. software can be in the public domain for various reasons, it just cannot be easily /placed/ in the public domain by its author by a simple declaration.

you mean: writing "this document/program/font/... is released into the public domain" qualifies it as free, whereas if it is not explicitly stated, the document/program/font/... is non-free?

oaken-source wrote:

apparently, fedora has sorted this all out in 2012, I found the statement that all legal issues had been resolved at that time, but digging through the mailing list archives, I'm not entirely sure /how/ exactly they were resolved.

Could you share a link? I would like to read into that.

#6 - 2020-04-19 06:29 PM - oaken-source

theova wrote:

you mean: writing "this document/program/font/... is released into the public domain" qualifies it as free, whereas if it is not explicitly stated, the document/program/font/... is non-free?

No. I mean that software can enter the public domain when its copyright expires, for example, or when it has been created by a government body. But a simple declaration like "this work is in the public domain" is not enough in some jurisdictions where the author can not legally declare to have no rights to a work he authored. In such areas, this declaration is void and the work is without license. Works without license are by default /proprietary/, and not free software.

which means for every /public domain/ package, we need to verify whether the declaration is actually valid. I assume fedora have done this, but it is hard to track down. The texlive people should also have done this, since they are committed to delivering an entirely free distribution of Tex. I think it comes down to asking the right people and searching through old mailing list archives on this one.

oaken-source wrote:

apparently, fedora has sorted this all out in 2012, I found the statement that all legal issues had been resolved at that time, but digging through the mailing list archives, I'm not entirely sure /how/ exactly they were resolved.

Could you share a link? I would like to read into that.

see here: https://fedoraproject.org/wiki/Features/TeXLive#Comments_and_Discussion

As of Aug 30, 2012, there are no known legal issues remaining in TexLive2012

this is an entry point to some fragments of that discussion on the texlive mailing lists:
<https://www.mail-archive.com/texlive@linux.cz/msg00234.html>

#7 - 2020-07-01 10:32 PM - bill-auger

so this ticket can be closed?

#8 - 2020-07-15 04:49 PM - theova

I would like to help resolving this issue.

I found on the [[<https://www.mail-archive.com/teXlive@linux.cz/msg00255.html> mailing list]] the following message resolving (?) the issue:

- ogham
Reason: Could not find a license. Forced to assume it is non-free.

Robin was able to contact the author, who has released it as pd. ogham.mf has been updated on CTAN + TL.

The font also includes a request to contact the author with changes, but not, as I read it, a requirement. Hope you will agree.

Since the TeXLive maintainers are committed to FSDG freedom, is it enough to ensure that they have examined this well enough? Otherwise should I contact them on this?

#9 - 2020-07-19 10:32 PM - nona

"Spot" says that it is NON-FREE in the [TeXLive Legal Audit from Fedora](#). However, the [source code](#) says:

```
% This font was designed by Alan M Stanier ( alan@essex.ac.uk ),
% at Essex University Computer Service, Colchester, Essex CO4 3EA. England.
%
% Maintenance now overseen by Robin Fairbairns of Cambridge University.
% (search on the web for my email address)
%
% Alan Stanier asked that if you make significant additions
% or improvements to the font, you should send him an updated version;
% if you send it to CTAN as a contribution, and mark it for my attention,
% I shall see that it is installed, and ensure that Alan has a copy.
%
% The font is released into the public domain.
```

This is UK jurisdiction, so [it is free](#). (Does the package need to be updated for this to be closed?).