



Ext JS License change and personal attacks

April 26, 2008 by Jack Slocum

It's not right the amount of personal attacks I have been receiving lately. I have people questioning my ethics, business practices and saying we changed Ext JS to GPL v3 because my (and I quote) "greed for money came before your moral ethics".

Is it fair that some people who don't know me at all seem to pass judgement on me as if they do? The people who know me know that for me, it's not about money, but about a passion for doing something that I love. If it was about money would Ext JS really have gotten started the way it did? I think with some clarification it's easy to see there was some history that led up to the GPL license for Ext JS.

So let's go over that history:

- In 2006, for 7 months I wrote yui-ext full time from my home, gave it away under a BSD license and loved every minute of it. There weren't many donations and no official support from Yahoo. With my third child due, and savings running low I had to find a way to continue building what was now changing to Ext JS and also find a way to earn a living from it.

At this time I contemplated switching to a strictly commercial framework. I openly discussed this decision with the community in the Ext forums. If you want to read the discussions, they are here:

"Official Commercial License Input Thread"

<http://extjs.com/forum/showthread.php?t=2194>

"Official Open Src License Thread (Commercial License Part 2)"

<http://extjs.com/forum/showthread.php?t=2253>

In the end, after much discussion with the community, I decided to go to the LGPL.

- Shortly before 1.0 is released, there numerous Ext "clones" started popping up that were hacking Ext themes, css and other resources from 1.0 - before we had even released 1.0. Here I had 4 new themes for Ext JS 1.0 that I had spent countless hours working on (I am not a great designer) and what could now be considered competitors were already using it before I even have a chance to release Ext 1.0.

That's why the proprietary license on the "Assets" (CSS and images) was introduced in Ext 1.0.

- Ext JS 1.0 is released under the LGPL, minus the Assets license as mentioned above. Shortly thereafter 2 major publicly traded corporations (names withheld) embedded Ext JS into their development frameworks. With no mention of Ext JS except in credits files that no one ever saw. No support for all the work that had been put into the framework. Neither one of them even contacted us. How can that be possible? Can they do that? How can we compete with them taking such a large chunk of our potential customers? These are the questions I was faced with and so began my "Intro to Business 101".

The next release of Ext JS was released under the Ext License, to serve as proxy to the LGPL and add the additional "no framework/toolkit" restriction that was present until 2.1.

"Ext where open source is not open source at all"

Until recently everything after that went pretty smoothly. We continued to work on and crank out what we consider to be the best JS framework on the planet. Still lovin' it. Then:

- This blog post comes out on CNET out of nowhere:
http://www.cnet.com/8301-13505_1-9878693-16.html
- Alex Russell publicly bashes the Ext License on Ajaxian (sorry no link, I could't find it) and then continues his attack on the license with me personally over email. He then follows with this blog post:
<http://alex.dojotoolkit.org/?p=654>
- Matthew Garrett decides in his infinite wisdom to completely disregard our Ext License or Assets license:
<http://mjpg59.livejournal.com/84586.html>
- Dion Almaer of Ajaxian privately informs us of concerns he has about the Ext License. His points are very clear and

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sincere and he is only interested in the open source community as a whole.

- Several private conversations were held with customers regarding the license, spurred by the links and discussions above.

(Mentioning these guys above is in no way meant to be negative and I thank these guys for their positive indirect influence on improving the Ext open source license.)

How to fix it?

At this time it became clear that we needed to do something to clean up our license. In particular, we want to remove the proprietary Assets license and the restrictions on toolkits/framework. The only logical route, considering past circumstances and that we wanted to remain open source, was the GPL. This way we could a) release everything under a single license and b) ensure we still have ability to continue to support development through commercial licensing.

We are also actively researching how we can provide a similar exception to the [FLOSS Exception](#) provided by MySQL to continue to allow non-GPL based open source projects to use Ext JS.

Today

This leads us to today. Today, I got the attack of all attacks. I consider this attack "the straw that broke the camels back". Its rooted in speculation about me from someone I have never met and have only exchanged a couple emails with. But somehow, this guy seems to believe he knows me and everything I do and think. He takes a personal conversation that should remain cordial and makes it a public personal attack on me. WTF?

The post is here:

http://www.jroller.com/sjivan/entry/my_response_to_jack_slocum

Here is my reply:

Most of you probably know that ExtJS has suddenly been changed to GPL and now Jack Slocum, Ext author, has decided to start spreading FUD and misinformation on my forum. Here's my response to his post. I have decided to respond in my blog as I feel the community deserves to know the unethical path that Ext has chosen to take.

Here's the link to the thread:

<http://www.gwt-ext.com/forum/viewtopic.php?f=5&t=1061&st=0&sk=t&sd=a>

I reread the posts I made in your forum, and I still can't see any effort to create "FUD". I was only trying to help your user, explain the position of Ext JS and prevent a difficult situation.

What should I say? "Sure, violate our license, it's all good"? The fact is this person is not "confused" by our license or "FUD", they understand it perfectly and are choosing challenge it. I think considering the circumstances and my personal investment in Ext JS, I was pretty cordial.

*Jack,
Welcome to the GWT-Ext forum. Its unfortunate to see you join the forum only to see you stoop to the level you have. I really don't know where to start as what I'm seeing of you is like a bad dream.*

Lets start from the beginning and for the benefit of the community lets do a recap first.

I have had nothing but good words for you in the past and have been a great evangelist for Ext. This should be evident all over my blog. For example :

http://www.jroller.com/sjivan/entry/ext_vs_dojo

I have never tried to misrepresent what GWT-Ext does, or even take credit for any of your work.

<http://www.infoq.com/news/2008/02/gwt-ext-2>

I agree 100%. And I have always said positive things about GWT-Ext as well, as you noted later in your post.

I started this project knowing the Ext JS would was available to the community under a commercial friendly LGPL terms. I started GWT-Ext as a pet project but decided to make it available to the users after the great feedback and interest I received.

http://www.jroller.com/sjivan/entry/gwt_ext_integration

When you started your project, Ext was already under the Ext License and the Assets license.

This should all seem familiar to you as the inception of Ext was similar where you initially started out extending YUI's capabilities out of passion. Now that I had made GWT-Ext an LGPL based open source project, I had a commitment to the community and it was no longer a pet project. I worked tirelessly during nights and weekends working on a project that I truly believed in.

Yes, I do understand how this is. However, it's worth noting that I was creating completely new stuff, not wrapping someone else's. In fact, you may remember that it was Ext 1.0 that I removed the dependency on YUI and allowed multiple base libraries. As a business, having everything dependent on 1 library, which they could stop building at any time (or do slow releases, as they were), was not a good decision and so I decided to remove the dependency.

During this period I received encouraging words from you showing your full support. Ext 2.0 came out and I worked overtime redesigning and supporting the new API's. The userbase of GWT-Ext grew very rapidly and you reaped the benefits by increased sales of ExtJS commercial license / support. (I have always encouraged GWT-Ext users to support Ext). I know of atleast what amounts to \$30-40K of sales of Ext licenses that can be attributed to sole users of GWT-Ext. What do I get in return? Nothing monetarily, but working on an OSS project helping users, working on cool stuff and so on was rewarding to me.

As I still have shown support even today, in your forums. As for Ext JS "reaping the benefits" I'd have to say I think it is the other way around. Ext JS exists fine without GWT-Ext, however GWT-Ext does not exist without Ext JS. If anything, you have reaped benefits from Ext JS through your "GWT-Ext Plus" package. Which is priced similar to Ext JS, yet doesn't actually grant a commercial license for the framework. ?? More on that later.

Seeing the popularity of GWT-Ext grow, you send me a note asking if I'd like to be a sub-project of ExtJS. I respectfully turn it down saying that I'd rather build my own reputation and identity in the OSS community. In hindsight, this was probably the wisest move that I've made in my professional career.

It had nothing to do with "seeing the popularity of GWT-Ext grow". When the email was sent your forum had about 100 users. Ext JS had around 20,000. So it had nothing to do with "popularity". I contacted you out of respect for what you were doing, having been there and figured you might want to be part of the Ext community. This was around the same time we did the same with the Ext.nd project. However, your desires, as you stated in your post, were instead all about your own personal gain.

In the meantime another GWT based project named MyGWT starts which uses Java API's but borrows Ext's CSS and Stylesheets without attributing those to ExtJS. You catch wind of it and work out some deal with him to allow use of what you view as Ext based assets.

Conversations with Darrell of MyGWT started way after this. Like 3 months. But then again, you weren't involved in those conversations so I guess this is again speculation.

Things start looking suspicious as the Ext 2.0 final license is full of ambiguities designed to trick users into buying a commercial license, yet users were told Ext is LGPL thereby drawing more users in.

Please see the history above to see why the license additions were made. I think it makes a little more sense than "full of ambiguities designed to trick users into buying a commercial license".

At this point you're trying to support MyGWT (LGPL at the time) as well as support my project to maximize your revenue.

First, we received no revenue from MyGWT. As for Ext-GWT, of course I supported your project - both because I thought it was good work and because it did have licensing potential for us. This is a business and the more people that use Ext JS, the better it is for our business. This is common sense, not a scam or ploy.

What triggered you recently was this post <http://mjg59.livejournal.com/84586.html> where some user looked at your Ext 2.0.2 license and said, "wait a minute.. this license is dubious but to debunk it I'll basically remove all ExtJS's additional license restriction clauses and redistribute it purely as LGPL, because per-LGPL, I'm well within my rights to do so."

This upset you because you realized that the FUD license you created that was intended to prevent redistribution under

pure LGPL and / or forking was flawed and you panicked. Within a few weeks of that blog, you suddenly, without any notice to the community, change the Ext license to GPL in a minor release.

It was much more than just that post. Like I said, see the history above.

At the same time you quickly adopt the not-as-complete GWT solution of MyGWT and also make that library GPL too.

We are building what in the long term we feel will be a superior solution. As a business, we consulted our customers. They preferred a pure Java solution, not a wrapper library. It's easier to debug. You get automatic dependency management and don't need to include ext-all.js. You can subclass and extend in Java without ever going to JavaScript.

Sure, today GWT-Ext is much more mature because it uses Ext JS 2.0 while Ext GWT is 1.0 beta 1 - and may always be a little ahead because it's using the latest Ext JS. But Ext GWT will have features not found in Ext JS (or GWT-Ext) that java developers will appreciate, and I think that will more than make up the difference.

In the end, Ext GWT will have a team of innovative engineers behind it, led by Darrell Meyer, and we expect it will be a fantastic solution for those developing GWT applications. That's our goal.

Your greed for money came before your moral ethics and you decided to screw all the users who you lead to believe that Ext was LGPL all along.

If you knew me, you wouldn't say such things. Every decision made is always for a reason, and it's never out of greed or screwing people.

What percentage of your community do you think you would have had, if users were told upfront that Ext would turn GPL? Do you think Ext would have been where it is today without the active participation and voluntary time put in by extremely dedicated and smart users. I have high regards for several voluntary "Ext Support Staff" like Animal, Saki, mystix, hendricd and a few others - but don't you think you used them to meet your own selfish goals? Do you think that you would have been able to man the support for your 35,000+ users without their help?

Actually a couple of those people work for us full-time. But to answer the question, no, I don't think we would. We definitely appreciate all the active members of the community and try to show them so. None of those people mentioned, that I know of, has any problem with our license change. Why are you trying to make it seem like they do?

Back to GWT-Ext. With your bait-and-switch to a GPL license, you figured - "hey, I'll join with the MyGWT project and make MyGWT licensed under GPL too. Actually lets call it "Ext GWT" so that it adds confusion. Now since GWT-Ext requires users to download and use Ext, when I move to a GPL license, users of GWT-Ext will also need to buy Ext JS licenses." You suported my project all along yet adopted MyGWT just so that you could get revenue from both sources. You also removed the Ext 2.0.2 license and download from extjs.com in an attempt to force users to use the GPL 2.1 version of Ext.

For someone who doesn't know me at all, you sure seem to think you know me intimately.

Unfortunately for you, this plan backfired bigtime. I refuse to screw my users by making the GWT-Ext project GPL too. I state on my forum that the Ext 2.1+ roadmap for the next year or so doesn't really have anything useful to add since most of the functionality on Ext's roadmap 1) Is already provided by GWT itself, 2) functionality is already available today in GWT-Ext from user contributed plugins or 3) Not relevant to GWT Java development.

That's fine, you are welcome to stay on Ext 2.0.2. I wonder what happens though when FF3 or IE8 is released?

Seeing this, you send me a nasty email trying to strong-arm me into changing my license to GPL. However I am not willing to change the GWT-Ext license to GPL just to please you.

Strong-arm you with a nasty email? I'll admit, when I sent the email I was pretty disappointed in your decision. I think considering the circumstances, I was again, pretty nice about it. I, personally, don't see any "nasty"ness in the email.

Let's look at this "nasty" email where I tried to strong-arm you:

Hi Sanjiv,

I noticed some recent discussion in your forum about attempting to continue GWT-Ext with Ext 2.0.2 and LGPL. I am disappointed in this decision as I feel it is not a good choice. While I understand our license change effects your project in ways you may not like, it was an intelligent and well thought out decision that will continue to proliferate open source

usage. Obviously there are some people who don't like the decision, but with any change there will be some who are unhappy. This is inevitable with a community of over 35,000 members.

There will always be people who choose to use GWT-Ext over the recently released Ext GWT as it will probably always be ahead of Ext GWT. Our decision on the usage of a Java API we decided to take was simply based on business circumstance - corporate users prefer to remain in pure Java - and hopefully doesn't appear to reflect negatively on your project.

With that said, I feel it's critical that GWT-Ext continue on the same path of Ext JS release new releases with the current version of Ext JS and under GPL. Regardless of what others may think of the 2.0.2 license and it's enforceability, there won't be a fork. The proprietary license on the Assets alone prevents a fork as the components are useless without the included CSS or a derivative. Any effort to fork it will be notified. Any one who uses a forked version will be notified. As a business, we have to ensure our license is respected.

Up until this point we overlooked your usage of Ext JS to create a developer toolkit because you have worked with us to ensure there was a continued opportunity for us to obtain licensing from users. If you continue down a path that is no longer supportive of Ext JS, this puts us in awkward position don't you think?

Regards,
Jack

And now you have the audacity to come on my board, scaring users off saying the use of GWT-Ext with Ext 2.0.2 was not permitted by your license. How dare you!

Link? I never said that.

Well that's enough of a background, so lets talk business now.

I tried to. You don't want to talk business. You want to write blog posts calling me names.

** You fully supported GWT-Ext and I have all the emails exchanged, PM's sent and your forum posts. For example this one where you advise users to use Ext in the manner that GWT-Ext does :
— Any software development libs that include Ext should include installation instructions with a link users to ExtJS.com to get Ext for themselves. Similar to how GWT-Ext does it.*

Yep, and that was exactly what I was asking you to continue to do.

And don't bother cleaning up your forum - knowing your character I have already taken an archive of your forum.

Again, you know me so well!

You have constantly altered your interpretation of your license to suit your convenience and mean whatever you wanted it to mean rather than what the actual license read. You surreptitiously kept changing the contents of the <http://extjs.com/license> page over the last year and you continue to do so this week. There's really no way to tell what your license is on any given day.

That's an informative page, nothing more, and we are always trying to improve the information on it. For example, "you continue to do so this week" would mean adding answers to common questions (as requested by our community) and an open source FAQ (as requested by our community). All this stuff is nothing more than informational and so should be expanded as needed or requested.

The Ext 2.0.2 license says

If you plan to distribute Ext in a product that will be packaged or sold as a software development library, toolkit or plug-in-based framework ("LIBRARY"), we require that you work with us to establish a specific license that is appropriate.

GWT-Ext does not package or sell Ext.

Please don't cut out the next line to try to make a point. Put the full paragraph in your quote if you are going to quote it.

Now before you continue spreading more FUD on my forum telling users what they can and can't do with Ext 2.0.2, please have your IP council clearly state every single detail of where the violation has occurred (if any and unbenounced to me) and I'll make sure that they are rectified promptly. The bottom line is I am not going to change the license of GWT-Ext to GPL only because you "feel" I should. You cannot undo the Ext 2.0.2 license.

First off, your users are in fact my users too. In fact, when they run their applications they run MY CODE not yours. So please understand, if I feel they are trying to do something against our license, I prefer to talk to them informally to let them know how I think about it. When it comes to Ext JS and their application, it has nothing to do with you. Once it goes through the GWT compiler, their application is generated and Ext-GWT is out of the picture - it's pure Ext JS.

There's nothing real exciting in the Ext 2.1 roadmap over the next year+ for GWT-Ext users. GWT-Ext on the other hand will continue to grow and expand with other library capabilities like Tibco Message Bus, Fusion Charts, Pipes, Extensions and more and will do so with commitment and integrity to its userbase.

If there's one thing for sure, Ext JS is an ever improving framework. What may not sound very impressive to you on our roadmap, sure is nice when it done. 😊 However, our roadmap only covers through Ext 3.0, expected end of 2008 so I am not sure how you can say "year+"? Also, when FF3 and IE8 come, what do you do then?

: 0

Now that we have gotten that out of the way, it's my turn to state the obvious:

Why can't GWT-Ext be GPL?

The primary reason is it ruins your business model. Contrary to the Ext JS business model, you chose to create a "GWT-Plus". This model requires a liberal license on the standard open source version and then charges for other features users will need when building real applications such as GWT-RPC / Ext Store integration.

We invited you to be part of Ext early on, you declined.

The reason you gave was for your desire to pursue your own company. That's cool and I definitely respect that. However, you must realize that with that decision and subsequent talks we agreed to have some form of cooperation. When you break that cooperation, and your product is so heavily dependent on ours you put your business and ours in a tough spot. And a blog post bashing me and calling me names isn't going to make that better.

Business ethics?

You seem to cite that somehow our license change was unethical. I think I have already asserted that it was done for good reasons.

You personally knew of our license restrictions, it's intentions and suggest to find some kind of way to circumvent it. That Sanjiv, is bad business ethics.

Enough is enough

It's 8am and I'm still awake so this post is probably borderline incoherent - sorry about that. My kids are waking up so I have to cut this short. I understand this change hasn't been easy on everyone but I stand by my position that it was a well thought out decision and was for good reasons, not money or greed. So, please, stop the personal attacks.

Update

Apparently comments have now went through on the blog. Thanks!

This entry was posted on Saturday, April 26th, 2008 at 7:56 am and is filed under [Miscellaneous](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#) feed. You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site.

32 Responses to "Ext JS License change and personal attacks"

Steve

April 26th, 2008
9:15 am

As a newly formed businessman you should soon discover that your broader "user" base is not as vocal nor as interested in these debates / issues (you know, the ones with money that actually use your product). As important and fundamental as this issue is it's disappointing to hear you being dragged in to this type of "administration". I'd rather wake up reading about the innovation / leadership EXT is providing (which historically has been the case). Innovation occurs in open and closed source worlds. I really don't care what yours is as long as it's compatible with my business objectives.

Like it or not this is a capitalist market - you must exchange money to play. You are under no obligation to distribute your IP according to someone else's rules. The market will

change, and I can tell you (and Sanjiv serious project underway using GWT IPING GWT-EXT and forever avoiding

payment is due, and expect great

Mike Hoefler

April 26th, 2008
1:08 pm

ultimately decide whether it agrees with you or not. I see your model akin to "freemium" which nobody should dispute is effective and fair.

In deciding to use your framework I read the licensing options and felt they were reasonable (supported what I needed to do). In fact, it seemed like you are running things with an eye toward building a sustainable business which is strategically important to us since we're hooking up in a pretty substantial way.

Follow your dreams, amaze your customers, keep thinking for yourself and don't let the special interest groups get in your head.

Keep up the great work Jack and get some rest.

Jack Slocum

April 26th, 2008
2:22 pm

@Steve

Thanks for your informative reply. I agree 100% and have for a long time avoided these types of discussions. There really is nothing that can come of them that is positive - for either side. However, because of the personal nature of these attacks I felt a need to reply. You are right though and I already wish I hadn't replied.

@Mike

Thank you for the vote of confidence. I really appreciate it.

Bill

April 26th, 2008
3:10 pm

After reading your post, I went in search of Sanjiv's "Ext Plus".. Then I finally found the hidden link <http://gwt-ext.googlecode.com/svn/gwt-plus.html> Its not even advertised on the gwt-ext site.

Wow.. I'm speechless.

Hurry up on Ext GWT!!

Lou D.

April 26th, 2008
3:18 pm

Jack,

Sanjiv obviously has motives of his own. Don't fall into the trap of arguing with someone who has no leg to stand on. Although your supporters might not be as vocal as the fretards, your decision was a good one.

Go spend some time with your family it's Saturday!

Ajaxian » Ext JS and the fun with Open Source licenses

April 26th, 2008
3:26 pm

[...] I have publicly tried to stay out of the discussion, but today Jack published his thoughts and timeline, as well as frustrations with personal attacks. [...]

Andrew Dupont

April 26th, 2008
3:33 pm

Jack, I know little about the controversy between Ext and GWT-Ext, but I commend you for switching to the GPL in order to address the problems with the Ext License. I'm sure you objected to the tone of CNet's and Matthew Garrett's blog posts, but they raised legitimate points, and I'm happy you realized that continuing with the "no toolkit/framework" restriction wasn't going to work.

Eric J. Smith

April 26th, 2008
3:47 pm

Jack,

I went through the same thing myself. You are always going to have vocal whiners.

The fact of the matter is that you have a great product and people are more than happy to reward you for your hard work and amazing product.

Keep up the good work and all of us will keep supporting you!

Ludovic Dubost

April 26th, 2008
4:27 pm

Jack,

What's really sad is that your whole reasoning is the one of a closed source company that want to protect it's intellectual property by all means.

You said you will notice any people forking your 2.0.2 code that his near-LGPL but that is not LGPL (which has mislead many many people in thinking it was open).

You talk all the time about competition that could rip off your code without giving you money.

in a respectful and straight-forward way (as around the license change).
 fighting for nothing - sure no license is going to be handed to you and you have to pick one up and buy a commercial license.
 if you are a business is a business and you are

You seem to fear competition.

And I don't understand why you do. ExtJS is great and regardless of companies using it for free you would do great. The reason is that you have the brand and that LGPL would have protected your code and your brand.

This is exactly the behavior of closed source companies.

You cannot want to have the behavior of a closed source company and wanting at the same time the benefits of open source with the community and all the bells and whistles.

Ludovic

XWiki, LGPL without additions

James Hughes

April 26th, 2008
 4:46 pm

Sam Smythe

April 26th, 2008
 5:02 pm

Jack,

you are trying to have it both ways — you want to have the advantages of being an open source developer while expecting people to purchase your software as if it were a commercial package.

a tonne of people will use Ext if you revert back to open source (like how things were in the beginning before Ext 1) but if you go commercial you will lose that "open dev" appeal and its user base. You have to make a decision, but you can't have it both ways.

in addition, using your children ("I have a third child on the way") is a poor attempt of sympathy. If you can't make enough money to support your family with an open source Ext JS you are 1) either doing something wrong or 2) you simply can't do it — therefore find another way to make money.

what's sadder is that I donated money to Ext before it became Ext 1.0 in order to keep things free. And now that it is going commercial it infuriates me.

It appears that you got donations from us and got the free marketing when Ext was entirely free, now that you have a user base you are trying to turn a profit from us. This is disgusting.

I am glad I left the Ext JS community a year or two ago. There are plenty of other packages out there that are free and won't try to make a buck off you, have better support and foster a better community (there are too many asshats in the Ext forums, one of them being one of the moderators).

Jack, make a decision (open or commercial or discontinue Ext JS and find another job) — when you do make the decision stick with it and get back to spending your energy in a constructive manner.

For those of you who aren't interested in this soap opera I suggest you look at other libraries:

dojo

mootools

Yahoo UI!

and plenty other *free* ones

2stepsback

April 26th, 2008
 5:27 pm

Can at least some of us hear RMS (yes, that bearded apostle-like much-hated egomaniac who wrote the GPL) the words : "I told you so" in a wise, deep tone...?

This is exactly what the GPL was designed to prevent - fragmentation is the correct word. And the GPL does not prohibit dual-licensing at all.

You make money, free software users get code for free and everyone gets the best patches. Read the GPL over and over and the GPL FAQ over and over.

You'll not find a better license to protect your rights as a user and as a programmer.

About Managers, CXOs and PHB's I'm not too sure 😊 :-)

Full support here JAck, you've actually taught the importance of the GPL to a large majority of misinformed web developers. The great idea seems to be making money by ripping off a framework with an anarchic license and selling it for money and a desired name on the front. This, when there are now enough app engines (EC2, Google, Yahoo, Facebook) to make full apps. There's tons of data API and thousands of good services waiting to be implemented. Catch up on Tim Berners-Lee's vision of the next generation of the web.

if you charge for a library or not as long as we are considered better when paid for we need it. The problem with the clients a lot of our clients and management jobs for them. Now they have to revisit this decided your library will have to respond to the jobbing for ext and finding this or other personal emails and it will be good for

Max

April 26th, 2008
5:34 pm

Jack, I think you should go right ahead and dual-license without a second thought. If nobody donates, you have every right to earn and you are not holding back the community in any way.

Given enough quality brains, all features are implementable by the community and it all goes back into the source as well. Can't be nicer than this for users and you (Jack).

As for the complainers, they could as well get hold of real customers and implement the changes they want to keep private as contractors and do much of the work in duplicate at other client locations and get paid more for it 😊

Couldn't you guys figure out this much?

Well, it's called earning from support. All you have to do is let go of the snatching-and-egg-hatching hardwired into your brains because of excessive exposure to commercial closed source.

Drop that barrier and see how free it feels in the head and light on the pocket, while it means nothing bad to your bank account.

Yes, the GPL is mighty impressive legal and economic hack. It works and it's better than you think. Just that you have to think differently 😊

Remove the PEBKAC and your opposition to the GPL will vanish. It's neither viral nor the plague.

Would you consider injecting oxygen into the suffocating closed-source-driven market, a bad thing?

It's not viruses being injected. It's oxygen being spread (not too much, you can dual license commercial/GPL without a problem (after all, too much oxygen can burn as well))

All in all, nice job done.

Feel free to point out any flaws in what I'm saying.

The GPL is as close to everyone-friendly as legalese can ever get 😊

Andrew Dupont

April 26th, 2008
5:48 pm

Jack, I've read over the background materials once again and want to address the dispute you're having with Sanjiv. Here's what I think:

1. He impugns your character and tries to read motives into your decisions. That's clearly a mistake. You can't make a convincing argument if you assume bad faith on your opponent's part.
2. His tone is out-of-proportion with the act that caused it (your posting on his forums in order to clarify the 2.0.2 license terms). He's clearly been pissed off for a while and deemed this to be the "last straw."
3. There is a giant disconnect between your view of the 2.0.2 license and the view of many people — including Sanjiv, Alex Russell, Matthew Garrett, Matt Asay, and myself. When Matthew redistributes ExtJS under the LGPL, he is not "disregarding" your Ext License; he is following its terms to the letter. His reading of the license is one that gives him those rights. I think his reading is correct and yours is not.

Let's try a mental exercise: picture all the people on earth who have downloaded Ext 2.0.2 under the terms of the LGPL. The Ext License itself states that they are governed by the terms of the LGPL. The LGPL states that software covered by the LGPL can have no additional licensing terms. Therefore, all of those people have the right to redistribute Ext 2.0.2 under the LGPL — and, in fact, would explicitly be prohibited from including your license. (As long as they removed the packaged assets, which carry a separate license.)

By your reading of the Ext License, if any of those people had an intent to distribute Ext 2.0.2 before they downloaded it from you, then they would not be allowed to download it under the terms of the LGPL. You can't tell people they're allowed to download Ext 2.0.2 under the LGPL (which permits redistribution) only if they don't intend to redistribute it. If that was your aim, you should've removed that clause from the LGPL and named the resulting license something else.

In a comment on Matthew's blog post, you say:

Our I.P. council is very well known and very well respected and I imagine they gave us sound advice in helping us achieve this goal.

You're wrong to assume this. They screwed up big time.

4. With the exception of Sanjiv's message, which is out-of-line, you need to take all of this less personally. Framing it in terms of the family you need to support and the time you've invested suggests you view this as Jack Against The Philistines, in which you protect your

ant, this reflects very badly on the
is kind of sneaky even if the reasons
it. Since you can't beat free, you will
rs anyway. However, by blogging in this

creation from those who would try to rob you of security and well-being. For instance, you said this in the GWT-Ext thread:

On a personal level, I see any effort to fork as someone trying to steal two years of 16 hour days, my entire life savings and probably all of my gray hairs from me.

This is unfair. Any effort to fork is done under a good-faith reading of your very own Ext License. If you wanted to make forking impossible, you shouldn't have gotten within ten miles of the LGPL in the first place.

I'll say once again that Sanjiv's message is an unfair personal attack. But you seem to be conflating his attack with the well-meaning actions of others you mention — like Matthew Garrett, Matt Asay, and Alex Russell. Don't. They're committed to the open-source community and have no motive to screw you over.

5. I'll repeat my earlier praise of Ext's new licensing strategy. The "quid pro quo" framing makes it clear that you are just as invested in the preservation of the OSS community as you are in the preservation of your financial security.

mike

April 26th, 2008
5:59 pm

Just wanted to say: Thank you!
Thank you so much for your *truly* outstanding framework.
There will be always someone complaining,
but just try to ignore them (if possible).
I'm sure most of your users are more than happy to comply
with whatever license you provide.

John

April 26th, 2008
6:05 pm

Jack Slocum

April 26th, 2008
6:49 pm

Thanks everyone for your posts.
I in no way meant to make it sound as if Matt Asay, Alex Russell or Dion Almaer were in any way related to Sanjiv's outburst. Their comments were all with good intentions and indirectly led to positive outcome (IMO) which is Ext's open source license being a single, OSI approved license. I added a note in the post above to that effect.

@Andrew Dupont

I agree with most of what you said and I thank you for taking the time to post. One point where I do disagree though is on this statement "Any effort to fork is done under a good-faith reading of your very own Ext License."

Here's an excerpt from the license:

"If you plan to distribute Ext in a product that will be packaged or sold as a software development library, toolkit or plug-in-based framework ("LIBRARY"), we require that you work with us to establish a specific license that is appropriate. Use of the open source license in a LIBRARY is not permitted without explicit permission from Ext JS, LLC."

I don't believe that anyone could read the old license and come away feeling that a fork is ok. If they choose to ignore and/or challenge that restriction how can that be called "good-faith reading of your very own Ext License"?

Alex Russell

April 26th, 2008
7:13 pm

Jack:

Please allow me to clarify: I have not publicly "attacked" you. I have "privately" asked for clarification and shared my view of your actions and if you read that post of mine that you're linking to, it's not an "attack" in any sense. It's a rubric for understanding how good licensing matters to users of *any* OSS project. It's the rationale that allows us (as a community) to trust what comes out of the ASF, Eclipse, the Python Software Foundation, the Dojo Foundation, etc. and it helps explain the drama which is caused by licensing changes like those imposed by MySQL and Trolltech. Further, it helps potential users of OSS projects understand their potential risk profile. I didn't mention projects by name in that post, but if you think it's singling out Ext, I can assure you that it wasn't.

We started Dojo as a way to bring people together and part of that decision was a series of explicit steps designed to reduce the potential for licensing drama. You can take my explanation of that reasoning as an attack if you like, but that wasn't the spirit in which my post was made and it's not the spirit under which we started Dojo as a project to unify the DHTML world's then-disparate efforts, built the toolkit on a flat playing field, and work with anyone who will join us on those same even-handed terms to improve the state of Open Source JavaScript.

entioning these guys above is in no way
r positive indirect influence on improving
in that block while you were writing
n a way that was easily misconstrued.
have some harsh things to say about
e criticism since I know it was with

We (the Dojo Foundation) have repeatedly offered our assistance to you and anyone else doing OSS JavaScript to help them navigate these same licensing shoals and I again extend that offer to you personally and directly: you've got our ear and we'll offer whatever advice we can. Since it seems unlikely that you'll bring Ext as a project to the Dojo Foundation, that's probably the best we can do, but projects that *do* join the Foundation also get an existing structure that helps them avoid all of these issues from day one.

In closing: I'm not attacking you, *haven't* attacked you, and won't. Instead, I've offered advice, clarification, and my view on what is best for the community of OSS JavaScript at large and will continue to do so.

Regards

Jack Slocum

April 26th, 2008
7:32 pm

Dean

April 26th, 2008
7:47 pm

Well, this is sad for everyone especially for the customers. We're going to loose. Basically everyone is a bit right but not all right.

Jack just buggered up Ext GWT 1.0 since it hasn't established itself yet. I feel for Darrell since the day before it was released on the extjs website he said it will be released as LGPL (<http://mygwt.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=1207&highlight=>). You made him look like a fool. It is a real shame. So much potential.

In the end, extjs will do ok since it has a number of customers using the library and is a good library. Not sure if you will attract new customers this way though. I was about to be a customer but luckily I only invested 3 weeks into your product.

It is also a shame that you and Sjivan are conversing on this level since both of you would benefit tremendously of having a good relationship. We understand both of your viewpoints but really Jack what did you expect when you changed the licensing that way without telling anyone including Darrell and he started to work at your company! The link above proved he didn't know (on April 21st for Christ sake).

I don't like the personal attack and there shouldn't be. I do think it is the result of frustration, surprise and everyone's unwillingness to compromise.

This sux.

D

Claude

April 26th, 2008
7:47 pm

Jack,

As usual, no good deed goes unpunished. The majority of the "users" who seek to benefit from your hard work do not they are standing on your shoulders while spitting down on you.

Those of us whose companies have supported Ext since day one have nothing but admiration for your work ethic and incredible ability to support your user community. We were elated to see you form your LLC and look forward to using your products.

Keep up the good work and forget the loud minority.

Andrew Dupont

April 26th, 2008
8:13 pm

(This blog needs a preview feature for comments and/or a clear description of what sort of markup is allowed. 😊)

Jack, you ask:

"I don't believe that anyone could read the old license and come away feeling that a fork is ok. If they choose to ignore and/or challenge that restriction how can that be called 'good-faith reading of your very own Ext License'?"

Two possible reasons.

First: the passage you cite does not specifically address forks. It appears to be more concerned with higher-level frameworks that bundle Ext, rather than with an adaptation/modification of Ext's own source code.

Second: since a fork is just a specialized case of redistribution, my arguments for why redistribution is not a violation of the LGPL portion of the Ext License apply to forking as well. In typical geek fashion, I imagine many people simply reject the portions of the license that they deem nonsensical.

the open source community at Ext JS. Various parts of Ext JS are under more other projects.

tion to the [FLOSS Exception](#) provided source projects to use Ext JS. wn for moving quickly. 😊

Jack Slocum

April 26th, 2008
8:15 pm

I don't use Ext and have no reason to fork 2.0.2, but based on my reading of the license I think I'd be able to do so without any moral or legal conflict. Except in the extremely unlikely case that a court rules on the true force of your Ext License, an individual's honest assessment of the license's meaning (*not* its *intended* meaning, but the literal meaning of its words) is all he has to go on.

Moreover: I came across [this blog post](#) which criticizes your decision to move to the GPL and expresses many of the same views as Sanjiv did. It borders on tinfoil-hat paranoia to suggest that starting with the LGPL and later moving to the GPL was a _calculated move_ on your part, one designed to attract a large development community and then "trick" them into buying commercial licenses. But for many of the concerns raised, an explicit endorsement of a 2.0.2 fork would be the perfect refutation. It'd demonstrate without doubt that moving to the GPL was not a money-grabbing move.

(What a bizarre universe we live in where one has to demonstrate that usage of a viral, free-as-in-speech-and-in-beer license is not a cynical, capitalist ploy.)

Thorsten

April 26th, 2008
8:23 pm

Heads up, Jack!

Rough times now but I'm sure you'll look back some time and know it was worth it. Despite personal attacks and false assumptions made by people who are not admiring the effort you put into Ext, there's a large community behind you that understands your framework just as the way it is: An outstanding piece of work that deserves to be managed as the founders intend to!

I wish you all the best, and may the dust settle soon so we can all go back and concentrate on pushing Ext forward!

ben

April 26th, 2008
8:25 pm

Now all you need is a script to:

1. Download the web.
2. Find all copies of any of your css or assets.
3. Contact the owner with a lawsuit
4. Profit!

Now we call you the JSIAA

!!!

Javascript News » Blog Archive » Ext JS and the fun with Open Source licenses

April 26th, 2008
8:29 pm

[...] I have publicly tried to stay out of the discussion, but today Jack published his thoughts and timeline, as well as frustrations with personal attacks. [...]

John

April 26th, 2008
8:39 pm

Stay away from these oss then commercial projects, not worth the time. You probably will never need all the features these libraries provide in your particular app anyway, why not just build the stuff you need your self and forget about the license worries. Remember, you can always learn from these projects on how things are done without copying 😊

captainskyhawk

April 26th, 2008
9:08 pm

Give 'em hell, Jack. Been using your libraries since 0.33 — can't imagine web development without them.

Seriously, though, don't be too dismayed by this — this is a textbook case. "When you're the guy on the top, it's easier to throw stones at you" — you get the picture. Deep down, some people just get jealous.

Frans Thamura

April 26th, 2008
9:49 pm

We are the most committed OpenSource company in the hell country called Indonesia, where all people that said they are opensourcer but they develop proprietary and several do a bad contract to several of their client like cannot opensourced several bugs fixed bla bla bla.. silly thing happen.

I have operate OpenSource business here more than 7 years, and with local market that bad, my english that also not good. I try to survive, and almost of my client that use my code, refactor and rebrand the code, and never contribute, but complain when they have

problem to me.. and several people make an annoying sounding about my movement and several attach to my personal movement, because this model.

[pen-source-kills-community.html](#) brings
y not be to be GPL or any other license,
ct that no-one out there really knows
g like plugin.development. Please make
license policy is not that obvious.

I still dont know what kind of license i have to use for all my blueoxygen projects, because here, we dont have cyberlaw, and the big country like US pushing something to us, and lock the technology and i am believe this country cannot move and make a good market for us here.

But.. as an entrepreneur, and i think you also, we need to make a little game that may be dangerous, and believing if the product getting cool, there will be forker and there will be a bad guy that want to take, and we must keep going, and believe there is a care people that will help and use, esp in OpenSource market.

We are using ExtJS as our UI, and we are now also confuse with your license, but we dont care, our project all based on Apache, and there are several LPGL Code like Hibernate, and we try to upgrade to ExtJS 2.1

Jack,

I am believe that if you keep moveing, your brand and company brand will grow up, and the rest of the world know that you are the creator.. of course there will be someone that will hijack the idea or fork and make a better product, that happen in Compiere vs OpenBravo vs Adempiere, all 2 are compiere fork.

with blogging this, i am personally can see that you are care and want to collaborate with your communities, and this will make you can sustain, in Compiere case Jorg Janke never collaborate with community, and close the contribution, that why Adempiere born.

Mike Hammer

April 26th, 2008
10:24 pm

Sanjiv Jivan

April 26th, 2008
10:25 pm

Jack,

I've calmed down some from yesterday and I can respond each of your response here but I don't see that being productive. So let me try to make this as simple as I can so that you understand where I'm coming from.

Prior to a few days ago, you fully supported GWT-Ext for around 10 months knowing exactly what it did. I recently said that in light of Ext 2.1 changing to GPL, GWT-Ext will simply stay on Ext 2.0.2. And now you are opposed to what you previously agreed on. There needs to be some consistency.

Had you objected to GWT-Ext from day 1, I would not have invested the time in building GWT-Ext, and users would not have even known about its existence. But what you've done here is changed your position on what you previously agreed on and it cost people a lot of time and investment. We're not talking about a few hours, but several man years of time invested by the gwt-ext userbase and me. And only now did you feel the need to come on the gwt-ext forums telling users :

"It's also worth noting that trying to continue an old version of Ext JS under the LGPL for the sake of GWT-Ext won't accomplish a whole lot either. Although sanjiv has made public on his site that HE does not consider using GWT-Ext to be creating combined works, that is contrary to the definition in the LGPL."

And you say that you feel this was is common business sense? You've been telling users that they can't fork Ext since its not LGPL, yet cite LGPL as the reason you consider GWT-Ext a derivate work. I'm not going to rehash everything thats already been said earlier, but there are just too many data points of inconsistencies.

I still stand by what I said in my blog (minus the personal attacks which I apologize for).

This is going to be my only post here as the intent is not to start another argument - just a simple perspective.

Sanjiv

**Former EXT JS/ GWT-EXT
enthusiast**

April 26th, 2008
11:21 pm

Jack,

We were about to start an intranet pilot project with GWT-EXT (in a very large corporation) and thank goodness this happened before we invested our resources into GWT-EXT/EXT JS! Here are the reasons we will not touch neither EXT JS nor GWT-EXT any time soon (e.g. why it is a lose-lose situation for both you and Sanjiv):

1. GWT-EXT's future is now dubious at best, we can not use it and Java is far more important for us.
2. You offered an inferior Java product, called EXT-GWT (not sure if this is an attempt to

Leave a Reply

Name (required)

(will not be published) (required)

Website

trick users that this is Sanjiv's GWT-EXT, the name similarity is pretty telling though). Since EXT-GWT does not fit our needs, EXT JS goes to the trash can too.

3. It looks like the Free Software Foundation (FSS) lawyers will soon take actions against EXT JS LLC (judging from the thread at the GWT-EXT forum), for violating LGPL and not permitting 2.0.2 forks. Regardless if they succeed or not, in corporate environments, lawsuits are the worst kind of fame EXT JS can get and that would be the kiss of death for it.

4. And this is the most important reason: Although we have no problem paying the commercial fee (and would have gladly done so), we will be clearly building our software on a framework with diminishing community. So, 5 years from now, the already disgusted community around EXT JS will have disappeared, EXT JS gone bankrupt. This is an unacceptable risk for a high-profile corporate project.

On a personal note - I was suppose to have a presentation of GWT-EXT/EXT JS next week to offer it as long-term corporate framework. My 2 strong points were commercial support available and vibrant LGPL-driven open-source community (just in case the EXT JS LLC dies). With the licensing tricks you played that is all gone now (see reason 4 above). But not only that - you would have put me personally in an embarrassing situation and harmed my career, because I have trusted you and recommended your product. Further, I now have to send urgent e-mails to professional friends and warn them of the licensing change and the possible death of GWT-EXT, so they do not get screwed by following my recommendations.

On a moral note - and it seems this is exactly what you do not understand: if you chose the GPL+commercial combo from the start, that would have been just fine. There are many Ajax competitors of EXT JS LLC (smartclient.com, appcelerator.com) with similar frameworks which do the GPL+commercial combo and they have a fair chance to succeed or not in the software market economy, BUT THEY ARE HONEST FROM THE START and compete fairly. In contrast, EXT JS LLC attracts a large user base by offering free-for-commercial-use LGPL license, steals their contributions/bug fixes and slaps them with a GPL later, thus gaining an unfair competitive advantage (in a very ugly and dishonest way) over the other commercial Ajax frameworks developers. This is deeply immoral and whining about your kids and personal sacrifices will not get you any support, Jack!

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