Relicensing libVLC and VLC modules from GPL to LGPL

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I’m excited to announce the release of VLC 1.0!

The world’s most downloaded video player:
VLC: www.videolan.org/vlc
(free and open source)
Ecole Centrale Paris
VIA Centrale Réseaux

- Campus student association
- Internet acces through RENATER
- Token Ring

Network Upgrade

- How to pay for our new network?
- How to justify the needs for a faster network?
- 1995 : let's do video streaming!
VideoLAN

1998 project reboot
- Open Source
- Modularity
- Cross-Platform
- Network oriented
- 2nd year project

2001 license change
- ECP headmaster Agreement
- GPL v2 (or later)
Freedom
libVLC license
LGPL
Architecture

Small Core
- libVLCCore
- Light
- Memory, Network and Thread handling
- Module loading
- Clock / Synchronization

Simple Multimedia Framework
- LibVLC
- bindings for C++, C#, Objective-C, Java, lua, Perl and Python
VLC

Completely modularized

- About 300 modules in a default installation
  - Codecs, IO, outputs, (de)muxers, filters, ...
  - Interested in adding new features? Add a module.

600,000 lines of code

- 80k in the core
- 520k for modules

50 external libraries

- Codecs, Output, Effects
- 5M lines of code
Relicensing History

➢ August 4\textsuperscript{th} 2007
  ➢ Littlejohn and Courmisch IRC
  ➢ « Irrealistic »
➢ VideoLAN Dev Days
  ➢ 2008, Pdherbemont mentions it
  ➢ 2009, start of mailing
➢ 2011
  ➢ LGPL of libVLCcore + libVLC
➢ 2012
  ➢ LGPL of modules
WHY?

Why not?
I. GPL violations

GPL social contract
- Free code ↔ Contribution

Numerous GPL violations
- 50+ for Win32, 250 on Mac App Store, Broadcast …

0 help from external people
- While requested

Results
- No benefits, only pain and chasing
Why? (2)

They write the code for fun and/or to address a need of theirs, i.e. to scratch their own itch.
Why ? (3)

III. Competition
- Libav/FFmpeg
  - Harder to use...
- Gstreamer
  - Nice LGPL front-end for GPL code

IV. Commercial interest
- Not enough VLC developers
- Too many users
- Too many bugs
- Reverse the trend!
V. Mobile and Broadcast

- Licences Compatibility
  - Decklink, FDK, ...
  - Apache v2
- Mobile
  - Hate for GPLv3
- Broadcast
  - Fear of GPL contamination
Why NOT?

- NOT FOR MOBILE
  - 2007, seriously?
  - Only modules NOT GPL are iOS ones...
  - Android and Windows are (almost) GPL compatible

- VLC is GPLv2+
  - Interfaces and control modules are GPL
  - Necessary to avoid scams
  - Trademark licence is quite clear
How?

➢ No copyright assignment
  ➢ This would be Evil

➢ Numerous persons
  ➢ Around 300 people to contact
  ➢ Some since 1999

➢ Listing people
  ➢ Git blame extended
  ➢ Git log
  ➢ Grep
How?

- Curating the list
  - Huge Excel spreadsheet
- Mailing
  - And updating the list
- Results
  - Bouncing emails, AWOL, slow persons, morons
  - 50% answers after 3 e-mails
  - Back to stalking
Stalking methods

➢ Basics
  ➢ Emails, IRC
  ➢ FB, LinkedIn, Ohloh, Centraliens, freecode, github
  ➢ Google + Websites

➢ Sneakier
  ➢ LinkedIn InMails, Friend on FB, weird social networks
  ➢ Call them
  ➢ Call their boss
  ➢ Go to their work

➢ F**CKED UP
  ➢ Whois, or whois on 3rd party domain
  ➢ Phone directory
  ➢ Common friends
Answers

➢ Answers
  ➢ Small commits ?
  ➢ Use WTFPL !
  ➢ Thanks
  ➢ Talk to my company
  ➢ Please explain

➢ Remaining issues
  ➢ I see Dead People
  ➢ Revert code
  ➢ Remove features
  ➢ Rewrite code, delete whitespace
  ➢ GPL modules
  ➢ Code isolation
Mistake?

➢ What if I did a mistake?
  ➢ I am very sure about the first 32 people
  ➢ More than 91% of the VLC code

➢ French copyright law on group projects
  ➢ Composite, Collaborative and Collective
  ➢ Collaborative or Collective?
    ➢ Collaborative implies mostly finished works and only with physical persons
    ➢ Collective implies a coordinator and publisher, but no individual traces to meaningful work
Conclusion

➢ Will it work?
   No idea

➢ Should have we done it?
    Yes
Thank You

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