Localizable - Support #1581

Licensing terms in code conflict with GPL

2020-06-05 04:10 - Jens Kraemer

Status:	Resolved		**Start date:**	
Priority:	Normal		**Due date:**	
Assignee:	Emilio González Montaña		**% Done:**	0%
Category:	General		**Estimated time:**	0.00 hour
Target version:				

Description

Thanks for creating this plugin. I am currently investigating it because a customer of Planio wishes to use it with their account, and while I don't see any technical issues with it, there appears to be a legal issue.

The archive (0.4.0) I just downloaded has this in the ruby files' headers:

```
Copyright © Emilio González Montaña

Licence: Attribution & no derivates

  * Attribution to the plugin web page URL should be done if you want to use it.

    https://redmine.ociotec.com/projects/localizable

  * No derivates of this plugin (or partial) are allowed.

Take a look to licence.txt file at plugin root folder for further details.
```

First of all, the referenced licence.txt isn't there.

Second, and more importantly, since your plugin hooks into Redmine code by calling and extending Redmine code at runtime, and because Redmine itself is released under the [GPL](#), your plugin is covered by the GPL as well, by definition.

Unfortunately, the license terms you state are in conflict with the GPL's requirements of freedom of use, change and redistribution in original and changed form. As I understand your 'no derivatives' clause, it forbids any changes to the code at all, wether they are being redistributed or not. Also, while I personally don't have a problem with a link to the Plugin author (as is the default in Redmine's Plugins page anyway), I am afraid that making this a requirement in the licensing terms is also not in the spirit of the GPL.

Since we would indeed need to make some minor changes to your plugin for use with Planio (most importantly, put all the patches in a common plugin-specific namespace to avoid naming conflicts in the global namespace) I would kindly ask you to re-release a version of the plugin under the GPL to clarify this situation. Also it would be really convenient if a public code repository would be available, ideally on Github so we can contribute our changes / fixes back as we usually do.

Thank you in advance :)

Associated revisions

Revision 381f6baa - 2020-06-05 18:31 - Emilio González Montaña

#1581 Add missing license.txt

History

#1 - 2020-06-05 18:29 - Emilio González Montaña

- Status changed from New to Resolved

Hi Jens,

Thanks for reporting missing license.txt, I will add it (same file than other plugins, for instance:

   https://redmine.ociotec.com/projects/redmine-plugin-scrum/repository/74/revisions/master/entry/license.txt

I'm not agree with your interpretation of GPL license from Redmine, I'm not modifying Redmine in anyway, I'm just using it, All my plugins just use standard Redmine way to define plugins, my plugins installation instructions don't include any instruction to modify the base Redmine installation

(extending at runtime is the documented way to do plugins indeed).

There are a lot of Redmine plugins out there with different licenses, some of them you must pay for them (https://www.easyredmine.com/redmine-plugins for example).

Any company can use the plugin as it is, but no derivatives are allowed, if someone wants to sell it or modify it I'm concerned about that (my "free" time is not "free").

If you want to create modifications to the plugin to support Planio is OK, I see a win-win relation on this, this open source plugin can be supported by Patreon:

>   https://www.patreon.com/ociotec

If you support the plugin development via Platinum supporter tier you will be able to send me pull requests in my GitLab repository (accessible for at least Silver supporters).

Hope it clarifies a little bit.

Kind regards.

#2 - 2020-06-05 18:37 - Emilio González Montaña

Added missing license file to the master branch:

>   https://redmine.ociotec.com/projects/localizable/repository/77/revisions/master/entry/license.txt

#3 - 2020-06-06 01:56 - Jens Kraemer

Emilio González Montaña wrote in #note-1:

> I'm not agree with your interpretation of GPL license from Redmine, I'm not modifying Redmine in anyway, I'm just using it, All my plugins just use standard Redmine way to define plugins, my plugins installation instructions don't include any instruction to modify the base Redmine installation (extending at runtime is the documented way to do plugins indeed).

Redmine plugins call Redmine code, and use Redmine's data structures, which is enough to make GPL apply to them. Please refer to the "GPL FAQ": https://www.gnu.org/licenses/gpl-faq.html#GPLPlugins ..

> There are a lot of Redmine plugins out there with different licenses, some of them you must pay for them (https://www.easyredmine.com/redmine-plugins for example).

Some licenses, i.e. MIT, are compatible with the GPL, some (like yours), are not.

Easyredmine and others (redmineup, for example) walk a fine line but in general do not technically violate the GPL. They do this by putting their Ruby code under the GPL as required, but everything else (graphics, CSS, Javascripts) under their own license. Since the Ruby code alone is not enough to use the plugin, and the JS is often a substantial part of their plugins, this works for them. They also charge for support. We are using RedmineUP plugins we are paying for ourselves at Planio, so I am quite familiar with the exact situation here. However, if you wanted to, you could legally take their Ruby code, modify and redistribute it (for example, with your own JS / CSS / Graphics).

Another good example are Wordpress plugins - there are many sites that re-distribute commercial Wordpress plugins for free, which is perfectly legal because they're GPL. Developers usually make money through support plans. You might want to have a look at Themes are GPL too written by the creator of Wordpress himself, or this GPL explainer in the context of Wordpress

> Any company can use the plugin as it is, but no derivatives are allowed, if someone wants to sell it or modify it I'm concerned about that (my "free" time is not "free").

I completely understand that, and as you might have noticed I also invest a lot of time in mainaining / building open source stuff. That is why I think it is important to respect other's work, and the licenses they chose for it.

I'd really like to encourage you to read up a bit especially on the Wordpress situation as it applies quite well here. I am aware there are some people who will say that it's perfectly fine and GPL does not apply to plugins but only to modifications of Redmine itself, and it never has been really resolved in court (yet). However it's not only a legal thing, but also an ethical thing. And to me, as a developer, a broader application of the GPL feels like the right thing to do.