Distribution of Software

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Programming for Scientists

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Why Make Your Software Available?

- You want to.
- You have to.
http://sciencecodemanifesto.org/
http://sciencecodemanifesto.org/

Many other similar initiatives.
What is open-source?
Wikipedia-level introduction to intellectual property:

1. copyright
2. patent
3. trademark
A license is a loosening of the default “All Rights Reserved” framework.
Licenses

1. Public-domain
2. BSD or MIT licenses
3. GPL (copy-left)
4. ...(10 million others)
I can do whatever I want.
MIT License

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3. Neither the name of the <organization> nor the names of its contributors may be used to endorse or promote products derived from this software without specific prior written permission.
http://www.gnu.org
- Free as in beer (gratis)
- Free as in speech (libre)
You can distribute & modify the software as long as

- you make the source code available,
- you license your modifications under the GPL.
You can use BSD licensed code in a GPL. BSD is GPL compatible.
If you write a library and release it under the LGPL, then closed-source programs can use it.
Summary

- Think about your license
- Pick either BSD/MIT, or GPL, or LGPL
- Be careful about code re-use
Non-Code Open Source

- Creative Commons.
- GFDL
- ...

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Restrictions

- **Attribution** [By] you need to state the source
- **Non-Commercial** [NC] you cannot use it for commercial purposes
- **Non-Derivative** [ND] you may not modify the work
- **Share-Alike** [SA] you must license your derivative works similarly

Mix & match to get a license, e.g., By-NC-SA.
This is Complicated...

... can’t I just put up my software on my lab webpage?
This is Complicated...

... can’t I just put up my software on my lab webpage?
Let me give you two answers:
This is Complicated…

… can’t I just put up my software on my lab webpage?
Let me give you two answers:

1. Yes, but that is a confusing legal grey area and some people (like me) will complain.

2. No, because doing so is the same as writing “this is made available for you to look at, but I might change my mind at any minute and demand that you start paying, take it offline, &c.” Because, the default is “all rights reserved.”
How do you actually distribute your software?

- Put it on your home page
- Put it in PyPI (Python Package Index)
- Use a service like Github, Google Code, Launchpad, ...
Python Package Index