
Subject: Re: Free Software Foundation Listing
Posted by [connie](#) on Fri, 09 Feb 2018 20:23:38 GMT
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We have applied for the certification a while ago, and took several specific steps to get into compliance. Our original March 1 2016 request can be seen here:

<https://lists.nongnu.org/archive/html/gnu-linux-libre/2016-03/msg00001.html>

An important July 31 2016 milestone, where we purge properly licensed mozilla products in order to comply with FSDG:

<https://lists.nongnu.org/archive/html/gnu-linux-libre/2016-07/msg00021.html>

To the best of my recollection, we haven't received a software-related bug report since then. The next snag we've hit had to do with the name. For some reason, the fsf licensing team decided not to CC a public forum, but here it is:

received on 2017-04-06

Quote:Hello again,

We've been discussing things with your application internally, and have unfortunately hit a bit of a snag. The problem is that under our guidelines, one of the rules is that the OS cannot have a name similar to a non-endorsed distro:

"We will not list a distribution whose name makes confusion with nonfree distributions likely. For example, if Foobar Light is a free distribution and Foobar is a nonfree distribution, we will not list Foobar Light. This is because we expect that the distinction between the two would be lost in the process of communicating the message.

In particular, the principal name of the free distribution ("Foobar", in this example) should not be part of the name of any nonfree distribution."

<<https://www.gnu.org/distros/free-system-distribution-guidelines.html>>

We've come to the determination that FreeSlack falls afoul of this. Clearly, it is the 'Slack' portion of the name that is causing the trouble ('Free' is fine!). This is obviously a pretty big ask, but I'm afraid we can't move forward without a tweak to the name. I know you omitted the 'ware' portion of the name, but we're still in the situation where we are concerned that people will lose sight of the differences in communicating about your distro.

Do you think this is something we could work together on fixing?

--

Sincerely,

Donald R. Robertson, III, J.D.
Licensing & Compliance Manager
Free Software Foundation

We were actually ready for this eventuality, and so we kicked the ball back to them with options:

sent on 2017-04-11

Quote:One more thing for your consideration, please.

How about "Freenix" as a distro name? Here's the closest we can find to a relevant namespace collision:

<https://sourceforge.net/projects/freenix/>

The project above seems to be dead. There was never any activity, really, and absolutely none since 2013. There is no Web front. So this is not an extant distribution, and there are doubts as to whether this is working at all. No domain names were taken by this entity, the best we can tell, and Matt just nabbed freenix.org, just in case.

Please let us know in regard to

- (1) FXP as distro name
- (2) Freenix as distro name
- (3) Using freeslack.org as a Web front for an appropriately-named distro

Thanks again, we hope to hear from you soon

2018/03/22

Quote:I have to apologize here, I seem to have misunderstood this message. I've been calling your project Freenix for some time now. But I didn't realize you were waiting to hear back from us about the name change and URL. But let's go ahead and get things back on track. I will have to check with RMS about the URL issue, and I'll doublecheck on the name as well. Things are going to be a bit hectic this weekend with LibrePlanet, but I will update you by the end of next week, even if it's just to say that we're still working on this issue. I am sorry I delayed things so poorly, but I will make sure things keep moving from here on out.

--

Sincerely,

Donald R. Robertson, III, J.D.
Licensing & Compliance Manager
Free Software Foundation

2018/03/22

Quote:Sounds fantastic. Freenix is our first choice. To sweeten the deal, we are fully prepared to move the distro front to freenix.net, already nabbed by Matt. This might potentially take a long time, but is definitely something we would like to do.

2018/03/23

Quote:Excellent, I got the all clear from RMS for the name Freenix along with the moving to freenix.net. While you make the switch, I'll take one last pass just to make sure there are no other issues, which I don't expect to find, and then we can talk about coordinating the announcement. Thanks again for being understanding; I'm trying to make this process better and you working together with me on it is very helpful.

--

Sincerely,

Donald R. Robertson, III, J.D.
Licensing & Compliance Manager
Free Software Foundation
2018/03/23

Quote:Awesome. We are currently brainstorming the new web front, and will get back to you as soon as we get something up

2918/04/26

Quote:Hi!

We publicized the distribution/project name change, and our websites are all Freenixy now.

wiki, which is the main source of documentation:
<https://freenix.net/dokuwiki/doku.php?id=start>

and the forum: <https://freenix.net/forum/>

Please let us know if you see anything else that requires our attention.

2018/07/19

Quote:Hi everyone!

We publicized the distribution/project name change from FreeSlack to Freenix, and our websites are all Freenixy now. Some notes to reviewers:

Things like names of files are left alone for the current stable (14.2) but will be thoroughly rebranded wherever appropriate in the next stable release.

A lilo screen with branding supplied via Wiki is still old style, but it is not supplied during the installation anyway, requiring 100% manual install, and will be updated for the next release as well.

There are a couple of links from our wiki to Slackware documentation, like this place for example:

http://docs.slackware.com/slackware:beginners_guide#switch_to_a_generic_kernel

It makes zero sense to duplicate the documentation, since our project is dead set on keeping the technical details identical to Slackware as much as possible, allowing us not to

fork support. We don't see a problem with this, but if the consensus is that it may be confusing, we can publish a disclaimer about no affiliation, and how users should be wary of the possibility that non-free software is mentioned there (we are not aware of such an instance, but we have no control over that wiki).

Our wiki, which is the main source of documentation:
[https://freenix.net/dokuwiki/doku.php?id=start\[1\]](https://freenix.net/dokuwiki/doku.php?id=start[1])

And our forum: [https://freenix.net/forum/\[2\]](https://freenix.net/forum/[2])

Please let us know if you see anything else that requires our attention.
2018/08/21

Quote: Just a note to let you know that we haven't forgotten about you. It looks like your thread on the linux-libre mailing kind of petered out. Would you maybe want to respond to bill-auger's questions to try and spark it back to life?

— —

Sincerely,

Donald R. Robertson, III, J.D.
Licensing & Compliance Manager
Free Software Foundation
2018/08/23

Quote:Do you mean this post by Bill Auger?

On Thu, 19 Jul 2018 10:52:18 -0700 Ivan wrote:
> It makes zero sense to duplicate the documentation

On Thu, 19 Jul 2018 10:52:18 -0700 Ivan wrote:
> Our wiki, which is the main source of documentation:

if the distro is technically identical to slackware then why would an entire wiki be required to document it? - one would expect that the documentation that is relevant only to freenix but is not relevant to slackware would be minimal (perhaps a single mission statement page of the main site) - so why not just refer users to the slackware documentation for everything?

if there is any conflict with the FSDG in this, i dont think it is the confusion of affiliation, but the directing of users to a website that hosts non-free software

a counter-point could be made that it is better to provide documentation as complete as possible on the distro's own infrastructure to avoid referring users to the slackware site for any reason

[illegible]

I am not sure what kind of response Bill expected, if any. He's not asking any questions or making any definitive claims or counter-claims. We are fully aware of the options he describes. Please let us know if we can do anything else.

2019/08/06

Quote:Hello again,

We have finally concluded our internal discussion. It was regarding the issue of Freenix documentation linking to Slack, just that it was a discussion we had to have, rather than going back to the gnu-linux-libre mailing list. I don't believe we'll really need them to review your work again, it's just a matter of settling the policy regarding documentation.

And the conclusion there was that endorsed distros should not be linking to third party documentation, but rather should provide their own documentation. Where the documentation is freely licensed, it can be copied over. The problem with third party documentation is that the maintainers don't have control over it, and thus cannot respond to freedom issues except to remove the links to the offending article.

In some instances, Freenix was linking to documentation on Slack that was directing users to nonfree software. For example,
<http://docs.slackware.com/slackware:beginners_guide#switch_to_a_generic_kernel> states "Many people use computers with a modern graphics card powered by a Nvidia or Ati GPU (graphics processing unit). The vendors of these high-performance graphics card offer non-free (proprietary binary-only) drivers for their cards. These binary-only drivers will boost your computer's graphical and in particular OpenGL performance. If you own such a card you may want to read our Wiki article "Proprietary Graphics Drivers".

The linked article describes how to download and use those proprietary drivers. This item doesn't meet the criteria, and so would need to be redone.

I apologize again for the delay in coming to this conclusion, we're always a little behind on everything but particularly so when we have staff turn over. But I'm dedicated to working with you directly to get this issue resolved so we can finally get Freenix on the endorsed distros list. Thank you, and let me know if you have any questions.

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Sincerely,

Donald R. Robertson, III, J.D.
Licensing & Compliance Manager
Free Software Foundation

2019/08/13

Quote:

Signed by melikamp@melikamp.com. [Show Details](#)

Internally, we've reached similar conclusions, and going forward, we will simply duplicate relevant pieces of documentation whenever we want to

publicize them among our users, rather than linking to third-party Slackware-related resources. At this moment, we don't have any such problematic links from our web wiki, and we will treat them as freedom bugs. Please let us know of any new developments

2019/08/22

Quote:Great, I'm glad that wasn't too burdensome in the end. I took another pass and things are mostly looking good but just a few quick fixes.

* On <<https://freenix.net/forum/index.php?t=msg&th=11&start=0&>> and <<http://freeslack.net/dokuwiki/doku.php?id=start>> there seems to be recommendations of distros that are not on the FSF endorsed list. Some of them, like ConnochaetOS and Uruk are interested in gaining endorsement and hopefully will gain it. But until then we shouldn't be recommending distros to people that haven't passed the criteria yet, and could potentially contain nonfree software or other issues.

* It wasn't immediately apparent where users should direct reports of freedom issues. It would be good to put that information on the participation page <<https://freenix.net/dokuwiki/doku.php?id=participation>>.

I know I said previously that we shouldn't need the mailing list to review things again, but that wasn't quite accurate. The final step in the process is that we give the mailing list one last "Speak now or forever hold your peace" chance right before we announce endorsement. This isn't really meant as a review, it's more of a heads up so they know that endorsement is about to be announced.

So once we get the above two items squared away, I'll ask RMS for approval, then we'll get the ball rolling on working on the announcement.

Thank you so much for your patience and care throughout this process, and let me know if you have any questions.

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Sincerely,

Donald R. Robertson, III, J.D.
Licensing & Compliance Manager
Free Software Foundation

2019/08/27

Quote:We no longer mention ConnochaetOS in the wiki, as they seem to be winding down all activity anyway.

The public forum is where random people are saying things. That particular thread had a super-misleading subject line, and I just fixed it.

...

The participation page now starts with Report Issues section. I can't believe it wasn't there before, this was a really great suggestion.

Please let us know of any developments on your side
