

Ticket Details

Status	Priority	Source	Type
Open	High	Portal	figshare
Group	Agent	Product	Region
figshare	Adrian-Tudor Panescu	figshare	Americas
About	Elements environment	Elements version	Elements Area of support
figshare product	Altmetric Product		
figshare.com			

by Favonia on Sun, 26 Mar at 1:27 PM via Portal

Publishing data under mixed licenses

I would like to understand how to release data under mixed licenses. I was planning to release a snapshot file (something like an image of a virtual machine) but it contains several components released under different (free and open) licenses. Although I can redistribute the files according to these licenses, there is no single license that I can use to re-license the entire snapshot, and it would defeat my goal of helping users if I have to divide the the snapshot into multiple components.

Comments

by Adrian-Tudor Panescu on Mon, 27 Mar at 6:00 PM as Outbound email

Hello,

Currently figshare does not allow attaching multiple license to an item. What could be done here is including the licenses in the fileset of the item and adding a note on this in the description of the item (e.g., "This item is mixed-licensed, the list of applicable licenses is ..., the full text of each one is attached."). I know this is not ideal, but can overcome the current limitation.

Please let me know if I can provide further clarifications.

Ticket: <https://support.figshare.com/support/tickets/36526> (<https://support.figshare.com/support/tickets/36526>)

Adrian-Tudor Pănescu
Software Development Engineer (Implementations)

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store, share, discover research at figshare.com (<http://figshare.com>)

by Favonia on Mon, 27 Mar at 6:09 PM as Incoming email

Hi Andrian-Tudor Pănescu,

Sorry but I fail to see how this could be done (legally) in the current system. The system forces me to choose a single license even for filesets, and as far as I understand by doing that I already violated the legal terms of these licenses. There is not an option like "most under GPL" and additional notes will not fix the legal violation. Could you elaborate a little bit more how you would avoid the legal problem? I already know how to do this in a technically sensible way, but this seems legally impossible.

Best,

Favonia

by **Adrian-Tudor Panescu** on **Tue, 28 Mar at 1:55 PM** as **Outbound email**

Hello,

I understand your point and thank you for your patience; this will allow us to improve our licensing model. We are thinking about splitting the metadata (title, abstract, etc.) license from the file license, with the metadata having a CC-0 license by default and the files whatever the user chooses. [Here](https://figshare.com/articles/Einstellungen_zum_Inklusiven_Schulsystem_EZIS_/2245630) (https://figshare.com/articles/Einstellungen_zum_Inklusiven_Schulsystem_EZIS_/2245630) is an example where the item license (CC BY) does not match the file license (CC BY-SA), but arguably that is not legally binding.

My suggestion was to have the list of licenses in the description (abstract) of the item as the description is both human and machine readable, so anyone looking at the item on figshare would be able to infer that multiple licenses are applicable.

In order to be fully compliant though I would create a collection ([example](https://figshare.com/collections/Unraveling_the_complexity_of_transcriptomic_metabolomic_and_quality_environmental_response_of_tomato_fruit/3727630) (https://figshare.com/collections/Unraveling_the_complexity_of_transcriptomic_metabolomic_and_quality_environmental_response_of_tomato_fruit/3727630)) with an item for each component which is differently licensed; I know this is not ideal in terms of user experience, but we do not offer any other solution in terms of legality.

Please note that we cannot extend the list of licenses we currently have in the default figshare offering, and in general this list follows the [FAIR principles](https://www.force11.org/group/fairgroup/fairprinciples) (<https://www.force11.org/group/fairgroup/fairprinciples>)

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by **Favonia** on **Tue, 28 Mar at 2:27 PM** as **Incoming email**

Hi,

I believe the example you gave should be interpreted as being dual-licensed and thus the CC BY-SA icon is meaningless, as you already suspected.

Since you are a software engineer, let me just tell you that I am trying to release a Docker image, a live DVD or something like that. And in my opinion dividing a snapshot file into pieces is not only difficult but also defeating the entire purpose.

The FAIR principles do not imply the current system limitation. Could you explain why the current license list cannot be extended? What if there is GPLv4 next year? Also, you can easily design a much more powerful, human and machine-readable metadata format inspired by <https://www.debian.org/doc/packaging-manuals/copyright-format/1.0/> (<https://www.debian.org/doc/packaging-manuals/copyright-format/1.0/>). I strongly recommend figshare to consider an improvement following this path.

Best,

Favonia

by **Favonia** on **Wed, 29 Mar at 11:10 PM** as **Incoming email**

Hi Adrian-Tudor Pănescu,

If you feel there is no way for me to achieve my goal in the current system, in what way can I help improve it?

Best,

Favonia

by **Adrian-Tudor Panescu** on **Thu, 30 Mar at 11:34 AM** as **Outbound email**

Hello,

Could you let me know the list of licenses your specific project employs?

I feel that the best solution here would be to allow users to specify their own license, but that needs careful consideration as we need to maintain our compliance with various research data management standards.

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by **Favonia** on **Thu, 30 Mar at 5:49 PM** as **Incoming email**

Hi,

Thanks for your reply and I am looking forward to an improvement of figshare.

It is extremely difficult for me to obtain a complete list for the linux distro (which typically has >100 packages), and also I am trying different linux distros to minimize the image file. However, I can provide the licenses I have seen that figshare might want to consider. Some software packages are already using mixed licenses. The names with "+" means the presence of the "or any later version" clause, and the "/" means the dual-licensing.

You can probably see that the current list on figshare is already insufficient if, say, some researcher wants to release derivative work based on OpenSSL, not to mention other possibly incompatible licenses.

Artistic
Apache 2.0
BSD-2
BSD-3
BSD-4
GFDLv1.2+
GFDLv1.3+
GPLv1+ / Artistic
GPLv2
GPLv2+
GPLv3+
GPLv3+ with OpenSSL exception
LGPLv2
LPGLv2+
LGPLv2.1
LGPLv2.1+
MIT
OpenSSL / SSLeay
Unicode
The license for the GPL license itself

Best,

Favonia

by **Adrian-Tudor Panescu** on **Sat, 1 Apr at 1:18 AM** as **Outbound email**

Hi Favonia,

Another question on this is if it is really required to release the full image; for example, for Docker images, only one license is usually employed (see <https://github.com/gliderlabs/docker-alpine> (<https://github.com/gliderlabs/docker-alpine>)).

The issue with such a long list of licenses is that in order to support it we might need to over-complicate the licensing system on figshare, and this is why I was wondering if it wouldn't be easier to simplify the deposited *dataset*.

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by **Favonia** on **Sat, 1 Apr at 4:21 AM** as **Incoming email**

Hi Adrian-Tudor,

I am actually using Docker images. I believe you have confused the licenses for Dockerfiles (the files describing how to build images) with the license for images. They are different and need different licenses. The former are indeed usually licensed under more permissive terms (like BSD), independent of the software that will go into the actual image. So, you will not find any binary image in the GitHub repository you mentioned, because that would violate the license terms, as I would if I put my image on figshare.

The (incomplete) list I sent you came from comparing several official base Docker images. I did not even factor in the programs I wanted to put in. These software licenses are employed by virtually every desktop Linux installation, and probably every Android phone too. If figshare aims to provide a platform for researchers to host their code and the library code it uses, this is probably unavoidable.

Best,

Favonia

by **Adrian-Tudor Panescu** on **Fri, 5 May at 11:00 AM** as **Outbound email**

Hi Favonia,

We've looked into this and it seems indeed that the best solution would be to allow multiple licensing per dataset, as, for example, Google Chrome does (see attached screenshot).

The best course of action in this case would be to open a case on our [Feature Requests forums](https://support.figshare.com/discussions/forums/6000240572) (<https://support.figshare.com/discussions/forums/6000240572>) as this will help us gather feedback from the community and also prioritise it. Would you like to post it or can I do it for you?

Thank you again for your feedback and for helping us understand the issue at hand.

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by Favonia on Tue, 9 May at 11:15 PM as Incoming email

Hi Adrian-Tudor,

Sorry that I was kind of offline these days. Please go ahead posting it. I will take a look and leave some comments if needed.

Thank you again for your time and efforts into this. I really appreciate them.

Best,

Favonia