

Qt license options: choosing the most suitable license

Topi Ruotsalainen

Legal Counsel

Digia Plc

- Background
- Qt: Digia's offering
 - Licenses
 - Support & services
- Qt and LGPL
 - Theory
 - Practice
- License differences and summary

Trolltech & Nokia time

- Earlier Trolltech and Nokia offered Qt under commercial and GPL licenses
 - Already then the code was in a public repository and code contributions were accepted to Qt
- In 2009, Nokia began to offer Qt under the LGPL v. 2.1
 - Later on the Open Governance was initiated, and the Qt Project established

Digia time: part I

- Nokia began searching for a partner who could focus on commercial customer's professional needs
- In March 2011, Nokia transferred the commercial licensing business to Digia under exclusive license

Digia time: part II

- In August 2012, Digia acquired all rights to Qt from Nokia
- Digia now owns all Qt trademarks and majority of the copyrights
 - Qt contains code from 3rd parties; either contributed to Qt and licensed to allow re-licensing or under permissive licenses (e.g. BSD)
 - Furthermore there is LGPL licensed WebKit 3rd party module

Qt: Digia's offering



- Evaluation License
 - License to evaluate the software for a fixed term
- Commercial Developer License: containing
 - Right to develop applications, and
 - Right to distribute applications
- Commercial Distribution License
 - License to distribute runtimes
 - Applicable only to device creating

- In addition to three (3) “basic” licenses:
- Support services, typically included to Developer license
 - Support for the licensed platforms e.g. error correction
 - In practice: support forms an integral part of the offering
- LGPLv2.1 and GPLv3 through the Qt Project

- A perpetual license to develop applications using Qt technology
 - License is granted for certain amount of users within licensee company's employees and third party consultants
- The purpose of the license is the creation of applications for any devices, including e.g. mobile phones and tablet computers.
- There are two (2) different type of developer licenses:
 - as for applications, the right to distribute is included into the developer license
 - as for devices, distribution rights need to be acquired under separate distribution license

- Rather limited amount of restrictions applicable to distribution of such applications:
 - valid copyright notices, applications must add primary functionality to Qt technology and they cannot compete with Qt technology etc.
- Support and updates included for the first year
 - possible to renew

DISTRIBUTION LICENSE FOR DEVICES

- A perpetual license to distribute runtime copies of Qt which are included into the licensee's product
 - Licensee is granted a specified number of distribution licenses, applied through purchase orders
- Restrictions are rather limited:
 - record keeping, Digia's inspection rights etc. typical terms

- It is Digia's goal to have You succeed with Qt Commercial
- Digia's technical support is included in a Qt Commercial license
 - No limitation on the number of support requests or type of question
 - Response from Qt Commercial support within two (2) business days
 - Very high customer satisfaction and renewal rate for support
- Qt Commercial provides a solid bridge between R&D and support
 - The team works hand-in-hand with developers on the Qt Commercial releases, providing them with the customer feedback based on market needs
- Many additional services available to commercial customers
 - e.g. training and consultancy, local services in US, Europe and Asia

- Qt commercial license is a perpetual license
 - First year of technical support and updates included
 - Renewal for support and updates keeps you equipped with new versions
- Qt Commercial protects your investment to Qt and gives flexibility compared to the LGPL
 - It is possible to change from Commercial to LGPL, but not from LGPL to Commercial – the decision to go to LGPL is final and has to be followed throughout the life-cycle of the developed software asset
- Possibility to negotiate about the license terms

- Qt Commercial can be used ‘silently’ to create products
 - No need to mention in documentation, end-user license, to provide source code etc. that LGPL requires
- Qt Commercial can be used in conjunction with most commercial and open-source licenses
 - Many SW products are not compatible with LGPL – having commercial license allows all options
- Some industries have ‘allergy’ to open-source
 - Open Source is either banned altogether, or would require a lot of effort and administrative details with certain industries
 - Commercial license avoids these challenges

LGPL & Qt



- A license agreement written and copyrighted by the Free Software Foundation
 - Digia cannot modify the terms
- LGPL is a “copyleft” open source software license that is less restrictive than the GPL (GNU General Public License)
 - LGPL still follows the 4 principle “freedoms”

- LGPL permits Qt users to create proprietary applications that **dynamically** link to the LGPL licensed Qt library provided:
 - Modifications to the Qt library need to be shared (i.e. “works based on the Library”) while application code (i.e. “works that use the Library”) can be licensed under proprietary terms
 - Copyrights need to be maintained

- “Works that use the Library” (i.e. applications) may be licensed under terms of your choosing provided:
 - Terms permit modification for the user’s own use & reverse engineering for debugging such modifications
 - A notice is provided with each copy stating that the Library has been used
 - A copy of the LGPL 2.1 license is provided
 - If the work displays copyright notices, you must include a notice for the LGPL library as well

- Additionally Section 6 requires one of the following:
 - 6(a) Provide the complete corresponding machine readable source code of the **work that uses the Library** (i.e. applications) as object code or source code
 - 6(b) Use a suitable shared library mechanism for linking with the Library
 - 6(c) Provide a written offer of where you can get the items in §6(a)
 - 6(d) If an executable is distributed from a particular location, provide the items in §6(a) from the same location
 - Verify that a user has already received the items described in §6(a)

- LGPL is a complex license that can not be negotiated or modified – you must fully comply with it
 - A full legal check on LGPL compliancy may cost more than using Qt Commercial
- If one fails to fully comply with LGPL there are no rights to distribute at all
 - LGPL obligations should be followed similarly as with all other licenses
 - Breach of license will have consequences

- User has to be notified of the LGPL license in many ways
 - All Copyrights need to be maintained and informed to the user
 - Mandatory to provide a copy of LGPL 2.1 license
 - A notice is provided with each copy stating that the LGPL library has been used
- LGPL: modifications allowed for user's own use and reverse engineering for debugging such modifications
 - These have to be allowed in the EULA of the product
 - Commercial products, especially embedded systems?
 - What happens if something goes wrong? Who is liable?

- The full source code of the LGPL library has to be provided to the user
 - Including all modifications
 - The user has to get exactly the same source code as is in the application or device – even if it has not been modified at all
 - At least a written offer of the above must be made
- Rights of the recipient (user) cannot be restricted in any way
 - License context cannot be changed
 - All the rights go down in the chain of recipients – especially in conjunction of an embedded system there can be a large amount of recipients during the life-cycle of the device

- LGPL approach towards patents
 - A potential risk as competitors would get free rights to use licensee's patents in question
- Many commonly used software licenses are not compatible with LGPL
 - Prevents the use of those products with Qt under LGPL license
- LGPL states that the user must to be able to freely modify Qt and re-link with the application
 - Typically possible for the desktop, but not as straightforward for the embedded systems
 - It is not clearly stated whether or not the user has to be able to place the modified library back into the device, but that has been indented by the license and is also Digia's interpretation of LGPL

- Static linking causes the application to be derivative work, thus requiring the source code of both the application and the library to be provided
- Even if it seems possible to dynamically link now, the option to statically link may be necessary in the future for the developed asset
 - For example iOS AppStore requirement currently makes it hard to use dynamic linking
- These examples in the previous slides are not exhaustive
 - Always contact an experienced lawyer before choosing LGPL

License differences



| | LGPL | Commercial |
|---|------|------------|
| The World's most powerful cross-platform UI and application framework | X | X |
| Qt Creator IDE for Qt C++ and Qt Quick development | X | X |
| Qt Designer, Assistant, Linguist and Visual Studio Add-In | X | X |
| Worldwide ecosystem of developers, contributors and service providers | X | X |
| Verified Qt Project reference platforms | X | X |

| | LGPL | Commercial |
|---|------|------------|
| Verified additional platforms (e.g. VxWorks, Solaris, QNX, INTEGRITY) | | X |
| Application source code can be private when linking dynamically | X | X |
| Application source code can be private when linking statically | | X |
| Additional Qt features and functionality (e.g. charts add-on) | | X |
| Improved development tools (e.g. embedded Linux target and images) | | X |

| | LGPL | Commercial |
|--|------|------------|
| Online SDK with access to all additional components | | X |
| Unlimited technical support without additional cost (Standard support) | | X |
| Protection of developed IPR through a commercial Qt license | | X |
| High compatibility with different commercial and open-source licenses | | X |
| Possibility to use Qt without delivering the full source of the library code to end users - and no need to set up delivery system for the exact source code used with to product (as required by LGPL) | | X |

| | LGPL | Commercial |
|---|------|------------|
| Possibility to keep own modifications to Qt private | | X |
| Possibility to create products without mentioning Qt to the end users | | X |
| Protection against reverse engineering of the product | | X |
| Protection for end user being freely available to modify Qt within your application or device - and from delivering end user the needed tools do so | | X |
| Protection against injunction | | X |

| | LGPL | Commercial |
|---|------|------------|
| Possibility to change license of the developer asset later, if needed | | X |
| No need to provide a royalty free patent license to the recipients | | X |
| Possibility to negotiate on license terms | | X |

- . Digia provides its customers with licensing options
- . Get your legal team involved early to make the right decision between commercial license and LGPL
- . Understand your obligations with LGPL (i.e. modifications to Qt, static linking, etc.)
- . In addition to technical support and expertise available, commercial License gives you options and control

http://qt.digia.com/licensing

The screenshot shows a Windows Internet Explorer browser window. The address bar is circled in red and contains the URL <http://qt.digia.com/licensing>. The browser's title bar reads "Licensing - Digia Plc - Windows Internet Explorer". The page content includes the Qt logo, a navigation menu with links for "Product", "Support", "Services", "Qt In Action", "Try Now", and "Blog", and a search bar. The main content area is titled "Qt Licensing" and contains the following text:

Qt is licensed under a commercial and open source license (GNU Lesser General Public License version 2.1).

We want to make sure that you are fully aware of the license types of Qt and which is the correct one to use based on your development project.

Commercial licensing

The commercial License of Qt is the correct license to use for the development of proprietary and/or commercial software with Qt where you need to safeguard your development investment to secure your competitive advantage.

You should develop with a Qt commercial license if you:

- Use, modify and redistribute Qt with no obligation to share your source code
- Access technical support and product updates
- Enjoy greater freedom to license your application as you wish
- Use static linking in your application
- Use the additional functionality provided as the part of commercial license
- Need to incorporate proprietary software for mission-critical applications that prohibits use of open source software
- Need for product warranties & indemnities
- Need to secure that your software cannot be accessed or manipulated by end users

In order to get started developing with a Qt commercial version, please contact our sales team or download the [free evaluation](#) under the Qt commercial license.

Open Source Licensing

Alternatively Qt is also licensed under under the GNU General Public License (GPL) (version 3) and the GNU Lesser General Public License (LGPL) (version 2.1). You can use this edition of Qt to create and distribute software with licenses that are compatible with these free software licenses. LGPL and GPL are complex licenses that contain many obligations and restrictions you must abide with. Always consult an experienced lawyer before choosing these licenses for your project.

You can download Qt under an open-source license from <http://qt-project.org/>

The page also features a "Navigation" sidebar with links to Qt SDK, Class Library, Qt Creator IDE and tools, Platforms, Qt for Mobile Platforms, Programming Language Support, Qt Quick, Qt Add-Ons, Licensing (with a sub-link for License Comparison), Buy Qt, and Version Changes. Another sidebar titled "Qt Licensing Information" contains a link for License comparison chart.

At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with the Digia logo, contact information for Digia Oyj, and social media links. The browser's status bar at the bottom shows "Error on page.", "Local intranet | Protected Mode: Off", and a zoom level of 75%.

http://qt.digia.com/Product/Licensing/License-Comparison

License Comparison - Digia Plc - Windows Internet Explorer

http://qt.digia.com/Product/Licensing/License-Comparison/

Qt Product Support Services Qt In Action Try Now Blog

License Comparison

The commercial Qt license includes standard support and access to updates and allows you to develop fully closed source software. The LGPL carries some restrictions regarding the ability for users to relink libraries and other restrictions that may impose architectural requirements that some organizations might not be comfortable with.

If you are uncertain as to whether or not you will be able to comply with the LGPL requirements at the time you begin your development, our recommendation is that you purchase a commercial license.

Comparison:

| | LGPL | Commercial |
|--|------|------------|
| The World's most powerful cross-platform UI and application framework | X | X |
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| Application source code can be private when linking dynamically | X | X |
| Application source code can be private when linking statically | | X |
| Additional Qt features and functionality (e.g. charts add-on) | | X |
| Improved development tools (e.g. embedded Linux target and images) | | X |
| Online SDK with access to all additional components | | X |
| Unlimited technical support without additional cost (Standard support) | | X |
| Protection of developed IPR through a commercial Qt license | | X |
| High compatibility with different commercial and open-source licenses | | X |
| Possibility to use Qt without delivering the full source of the library code to end users - and no need to set up delivery system for the exact source code used with to product (as mandated by LGPL) | | X |
| Possibility to keep own modifications to Qt private | | X |
| Possibility to create products without mentioning Qt to the end users | | X |
| Protection against reverse engineering of the product | | X |
| Protection for end user being freely available to modify Qt within your application or device - and from delivering end user the needed tools to do so | | X |
| Protection against injunction | | X |
| Possibility to change license of the developer asset later, if needed | | X |
| No need to provide a royalty free patent license to the recipients | | X |
| Possibility to negotiate on license terms | | X |

Navigation

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Local intranet | Protected Mode: Off 75%

THANK YOU!

. Questions / Comments



Topi Ruotsalainen

Legal Counsel

Digia Plc

Topi.ruotsalainen@digia.com

