Code License Agreement

Background

First of all, what exactly is a Contributor License Agreement (hereafter referred to as **CLA**)?

Most of us that have been employed as Software Engineers by corporations are already intimately familiar with **CLAs** although in the corporate world they are generally called a *"Intellectual Property Assignment Agreement"*. In many ways a **CLA** is nothing more than that but specifically geared towards Open Source projects.

A **CLA** is a legal document in which you state you are entitled to contribute the code/documentation/translation to **FreePBX** and are willing to have it used in distributions and derivative works. This means that should there be any kind of legal issue in the future as to the origins and ownership of any particular piece of code, then **FreePBX** has the necessary forms on file from the contributor(s) saying they were permitted to make this contribution.

The **CLA** also ensures that once you have provided a contribution, you cannot try to withdraw permission for its use at a later date. People and companies can therefore use that software, confident that they will not be asked to stop using pieces of the code at a later date.

Why

To contribute to the **FreePBX** project you completely fill out and send in a code submission agreement form. This page was created to maintain a simple way to explain to end users the need for Code License Agreements and why they are so important. It is key to note that the **FreePBX** project is *not* the first to do this and certainly will not be the last. Contributor License Agreements (**CLA**s) can be used to enable vendors to easily pursue legal resolution in the case of copyright disputes or to relicense products from which contributions have been received from third parties.

The purpose of a **CLA** is to ensure that the guardian of a project's outputs has the necessary ownership or grants of rights over all contributions to allow them to distribute under the chosen license. In the case of **FreePBX** this means that, you, the contributor will assign the copyright in all contributions to the project owner, which is **Sangoma Technologies Corp.** (who bought the previous company and FreePBX owner Schmoozecom Inc. in 2015).

> Even the **Free Software Foundation** (the creators of the **GPL** license used within FreePBX) require you to sign a **CLA** to submit code back to the project. See for yourself: http://www.gnu.org/licenses/why-assign.en.html

Where

> You must completely fill out the address portion with an address. Please don't submit the document without that filled out.

If you would like to contribute to **FreePBX** and are willing to sign the document then you will be able to find it here for download.

But Foo Project Does Not Require an Agreement!

Just because other projects do not require a **CLA** does not mean every project besides **FreePBX** does not require a **CLA**. In no particular order here is a list of some famous and well known companies that also require a code submission agreement to contribute to their source code.

- Google
- Openstack
- Oracle
- Digium
- Apache Software Foundation
- Bacula, Canonical Ltd
- Chef
- Diaspora
- Digia/Qt Project
- Discourse
- Django
- Dojo Toolkit
- Eclipse
- Free Software Foundation
- Go
- JBoss Netty
- Joomla
- jQuery
- Meteor

- Node.js
- OpenMediaVault
- OpenStack
- Zend for Zend Framework

Our agreement is very similar to agreements you'd have to fill out if you want to make patches or submit code to any of the companies or projects above.

Appendix

Sections Attributed to:

- http://fusion94.org/blog/2013/01/16/clahub-clas-done-right/
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contributor_License_Agreement

If you'd like to see some examples of other legal language for Contributor License Agreements then you can certainly checkout these two:

- Google: https://developers.google.com/open-source/cla/individual?csw=1
- Oracle: https://wikis.oracle.com/display/mysql/Contributing+Code+to+MySQL