

Building a Safer Open Source Supply Chain

with Software Heritage, the Great Library of Source Code

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10 Oct 2025

8th Madrilenian Seminar on Software Research (MADSESE)

Madrid, Spain



Software Heritage

THE GREAT LIBRARY OF SOURCE CODE

- 1 Preface
- 2 Source code as knowledge
- 3 Software Heritage
- 4 Highlight #1: The evolution of public code
- 5 Highlight #2: Cross-fork 1-day vulnerabilities
- 6 Highlight #3: Efficient open compliance
- 7 What about AI?
- 8 Conclusion

B_IGNOREHEADING

About the speaker

- Professor of Computer Science, Télécom Paris, Polytechnic Institute of Paris
- Free/Open Source Software activist (20+ years)
- Debian Developer & Former 3x Debian Project Leader
- Former Open Source Initiative (OSI) director
- Software Heritage co-founder & CSO

Outline

- 1 Preface
- 2 Source code as knowledge
- 3 Software Heritage
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B_IGNOREHEADING

Software is dual-form knowledge



"The source code for a work means the preferred form of the work for making modifications to it."

GPL Licence



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Hello World

Software is dual-form knowledge



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Hello World

Program (excerpt of binary)

```
4004e6: 55
4004e7: 48 89 e5
4004ea: bf 84 05 40 00
4004ef: b8 00 00 00 00
4004f4: e8 c7 fe ff ff
4004f9: 90
4004fa: 5d
4004fb: c3
```

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Hello World

Program (excerpt of binary)

```
4004e6: 55
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4004f9: 90
4004fa: 5d
4004fb: c3
```

Program (source code)

```
/* Hello World program */

#include<stdio.h>

void main()
{
    printf("Hello World");
}
```

Software source code is precious *human and technical* knowledge

Harold Abelson, Structure and Interpretation of Computer Programs (1st ed.)

1985

“Programs must be written for people to read, and only incidentally for machines to execute.”

Apollo 11 source code (excerpt)

```
P63SP0T3      CA      BIT6      # IS THE LR ANTENNA IN POSITION 1 YET
               EXTEND
               RAND      CHAN33
               EXTEND
               BZF      P63SP0T4      # BRANCH IF ANTENNA ALREADY IN POSITION 1

               CAF      CODE500      # ASTRONAUT:  PLEASE CRANK THE
               TC      BANKCALL      #              SILLY THING AROUND
               CADR      GOPERF1
               TCF      GOTOP00H      # TERMINATE
               TCF      P63SP0T3      # PROCEED      SEE IF HE'S LYING

P63SP0T4      TC      BANKCALL      # ENTER      INITIALIZE LANDING RADAR
               CADR      SETPOS1

               TC      POSTJUMP      # OFF TO SEE THE WIZARD ...
               CADR      BURNBABY
```

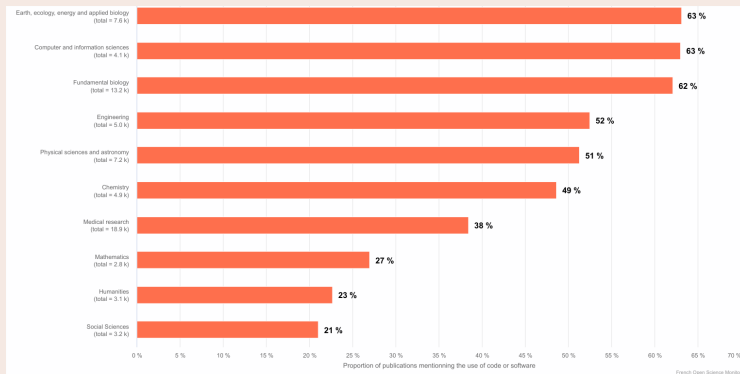
Quake III source code (excerpt)

```
float Q_rsqrt( float number )
{
    long i;
    float x2, y;
    const float threehalfs = 1.5F;

    x2 = number * 0.5F;
    y = number;
    i = * ( long * ) &y; // evil floating point bit level hacking
    i = 0x5f3759df - ( i >> 1 ); // what the fuck?
    y = * ( float * ) &i;
    y = y * ( threehalfs - ( x2 * y * y ) ); // 1st iteration
    // y = y * ( threehalfs - ( x2 * y * y ) ); // 2nd iteration, this
    // can be removed

    return y;
}
```

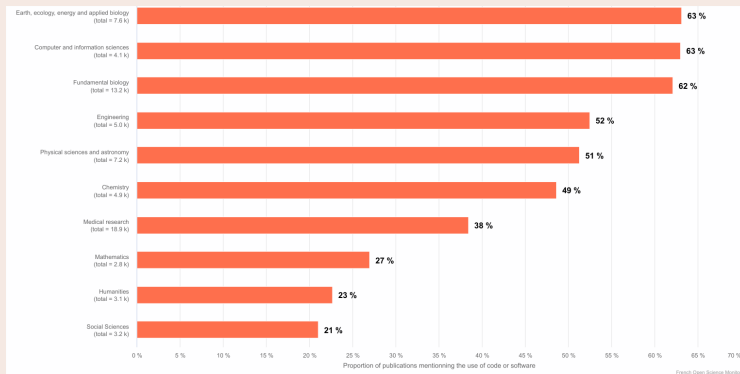
Software source code is precious *scientific* knowledge



Software powers modern research: 20%+ articles use software, all disciplines.

2023 French Open Science Monitor

Software source code is precious *scientific* knowledge



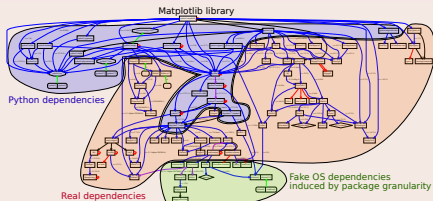
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2023 French Open Science Monitor

We need a *dedicated infrastructure* to preserve and share *all* this knowledge!

Enhancing software Reuse, Security and Transparency

Software complexity is growing...



...you need to Know Your Software (KYSW)

Sonatype Stops Software Supply Chain Attack Aimed at the Java Developer Community
Sonatype is stopping a supply chain attack targeting the Java Developer Community.

SolarWinds hack that breached gov networks poses a "grave risk" to the nation
SolarWinds hackers posing a "grave risk" to the nation.

Equifax website hack exposes data for ~143 million US consumers
Breach affecting 44 million consumers.

Supply chain security guidance
Supply chain security guidance.

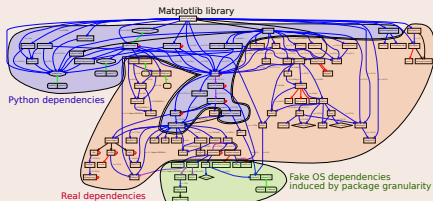
DoJ says SolarWinds hackers breached its Office 365 system and read email
Department discovered the intrusion 8 days after SolarWinds hack came to light.

Log4j: Google and IBM call for list of critical open source projects
After attending a meeting at the White House, Google also proposed creating an organization to serve as a marketplace for open source maintenance.

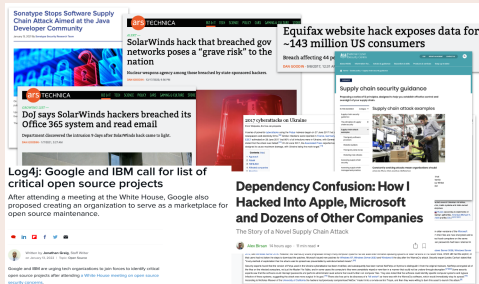
Dependency Confusion: How I Hacked Into Apple, Microsoft and Dozens of Other Companies
The Story of a Novel Supply Chain Attack

Enhancing software Reuse, Security and Transparency

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Sec. 4. Enhancing Software Supply Chain Security

ensuring and attesting [...] to the integrity and provenance of open source software

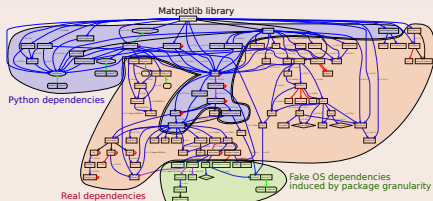
May 2021 POTUS Executive Order

EU Cyber Resilience Act (2024/2847)

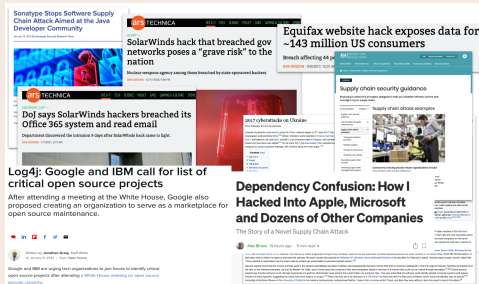
Regulation aims to [...] ensuring [...] software products [...] with fewer vulnerabilities.

Enhancing software Reuse, Security and Transparency

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Sec. 4. Enhancing Software Supply Chain Security

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EU Cyber Resilience Act (2024/2847)

Regulation aims to [...] ensuring [...] software products [...] with fewer vulnerabilities.

We need a trusted knowledge base providing software integrity and provenance!

Software source code is fragile

Endangered source code ...



A word cloud illustrating various risks to software source code. The words are arranged in a circular pattern, with 'damage' and 'disaster' being the largest. Other prominent words include 'malicious', 'deletion', 'obsolete', 'attack', 'dependencies', 'dangling', 'wear', 'corruption', 'encryption', 'format', 'reference', 'storage', 'aging', 'media', and 'tear'.

- *link rot*
- *data rot*
- *platform consolidation*
 - 2015 Google Code and Gitorious.org shutdown: ~1M
 - 2019 Bitbucket mercurial phase out: ~250.000
 - 2022 GitLab.com: **remove inactive projects?**

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... is endangered knowledge!

broken links and missing pieces in the *web of knowledge* of humankind

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Bottomline: we need a global, long term effort

to build a *universal archive of all software source code*

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Unveiled in 2016



Software Heritage

THE GREAT LIBRARY OF SOURCE CODE

Collect, preserve and share *all* software source code

Preserving our heritage, enabling better software and better science for all

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Research infrastructure



enable analysis of all
software source code

Today: a *universal* software archive, as a shared infrastructure

One infrastructure
open and shared



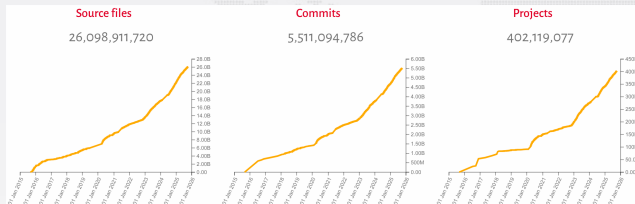
Inria  

Today: a *universal* software archive, as a shared infrastructure

One infrastructure
open and shared



The largest archive ever built

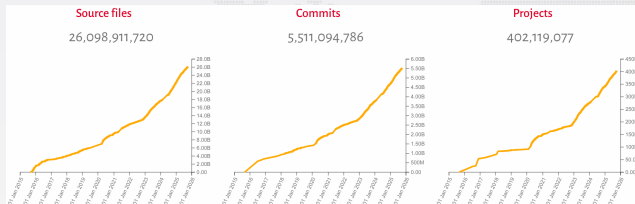


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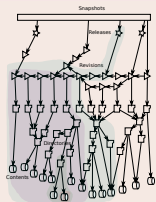


Bitbucket 2,818,626 origins	debian 142,984 origins	git 33,472 origins
R 29,046 origins	Gogs 422 origins	go 1,966,688 origins
GitHub 266,235,919 origins	Guix 56,248 origins	Heptapod 1,358 origins
launchpad 654,759 origins	Maven 425,606 origins	NixOS 34,420 origins
npm 4,070,945 origins	Phabricator 198 origins	Packagist 380,156 origins
Fedora 72,459 origins	SOURCEFORGE 382,368 origins	pub.dev 63,003 origins
PAGURE 621,919 origins	stagit 343 origins	

figures as of January 18 2025

A revolutionary infrastructure

The *graph* of public software development



All software development
in a **single graph** ...

- enable traceability

A revolutionary infrastructure

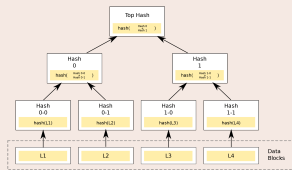
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The *global ledger* of public code

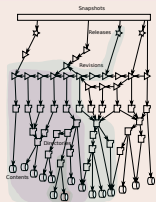


... a **Merkle** graph

- ensure integrity

A revolutionary infrastructure

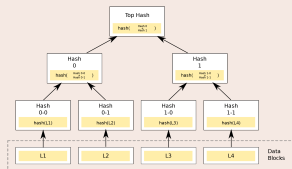
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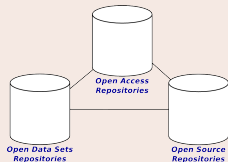
The *global ledger* of public code



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A *pillar* of Open Science



Reference **archive** of
Research Software

- reproducibility
- reference

A revolutionary infrastructure

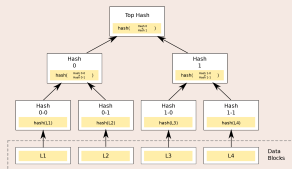
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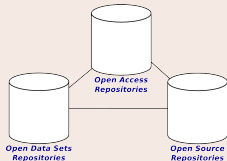
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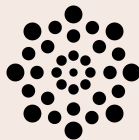


Reference **archive** of
Research Software

- reproducibility
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Reference platform for *Big Code*

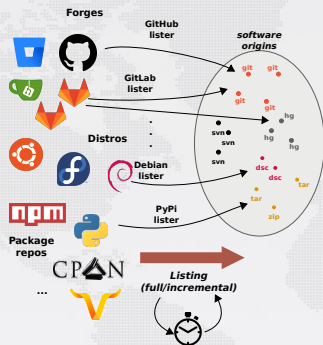
uniform data structure



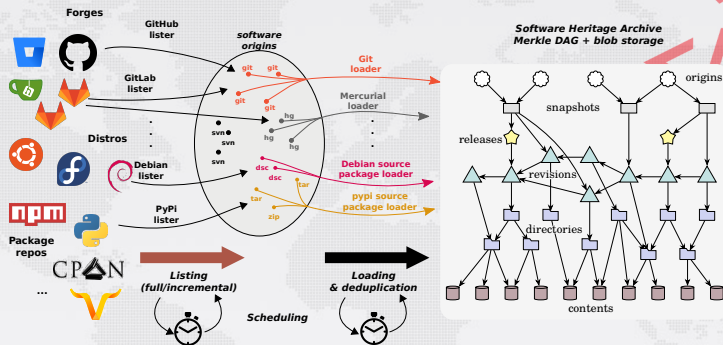
- large scale studies
- cybersecurity
- machine learning, AI, ...

(more later)

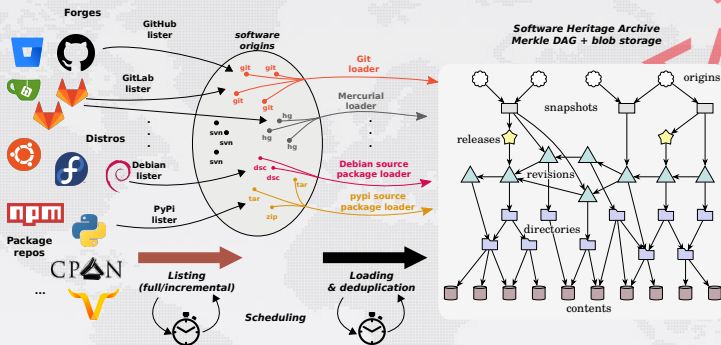
A peek under the hood: a universal archive



A peek under the hood: a universal archive



A peek under the hood: a universal archive



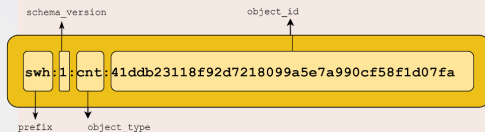
Global development history permanently archived in a uniform data model

- over 24 billion unique source files from over 375 million software projects
- ~2PB (compressed) blobs, ~50 B nodes, ~900 B edges

Referencing all source code artifacts with SWHIDs

Software Heritage Identifiers (SWHID)

see swhid.org



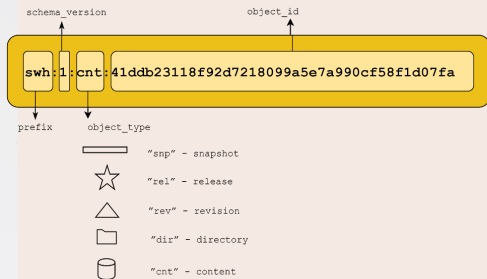
50+B

intrinsic,
decentralised,
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Full fledged *source code references* for traceability, integrity and reproducibility

- Linux Foundation [SPDX 2.2](#)
- IANA-registered "swh:"
- WikiData property [P6138](#)

Examples: [Apollo 11 AGC excerpt](#), [Quake III rsqrt](#)
Guidelines available, see [the HOWTO](#)
[ISO/IEC 18670](#), see swhid.org

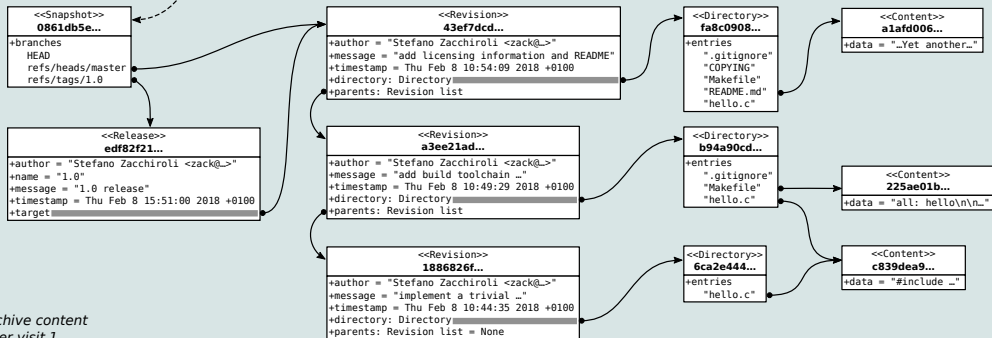
The archive: a (giant) Merkle DAG

origin
https://forge.softwareheritage.org/source/helloworld.git

visit
1

snapshot
0861db5e...

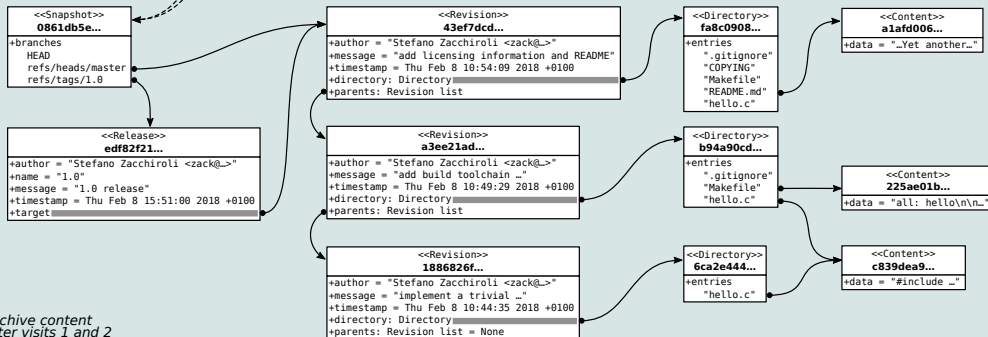
timestamp
Fri Feb 9 12:38:45 2018 +0100



Archive content
after visit 1

The archive: a (giant) Merkle DAG

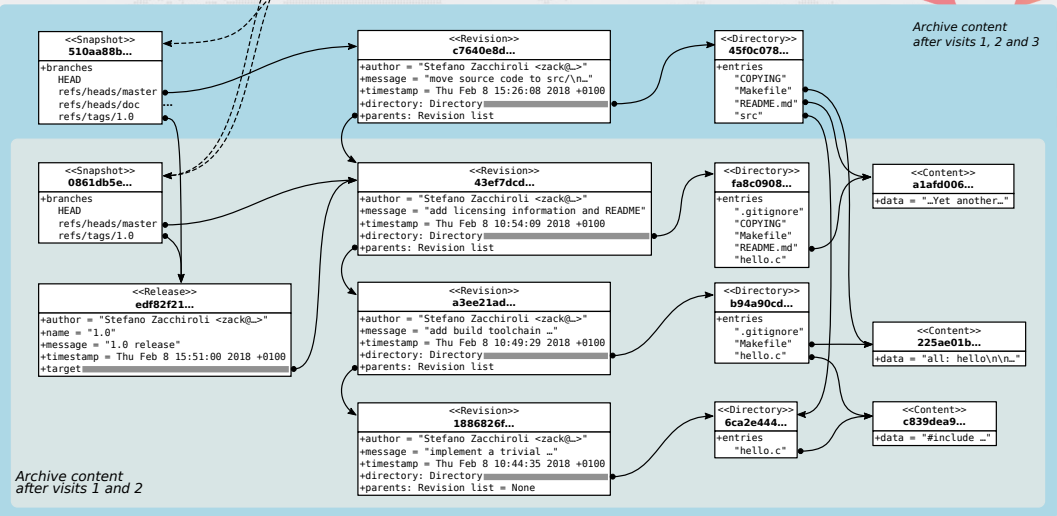
origin	visit	snapshot	timestamp
https://forge.softwareheritage.org/source/helloworld.git	1	0861db5e...	Fri Feb 9 12:38:45 2018 +0100
https://forge.softwareheritage.org/source/helloworld.git	2	0861db5e...	Fri Feb 9 13:29:00 2018 +0100



Archive content
after visits 1 and 2

The archive: a (giant) Merkle DAG

origin	visit	snapshot	timestamp
https://forge.softwareheritage.org/source/helloworld.git	1	0861db5e...	Fri Feb 9 12:38:45 2018 +0100
https://forge.softwareheritage.org/source/helloworld.git	2	0861db5e...	Fri Feb 9 13:29:00 2018 +0100
https://forge.softwareheritage.org/source/helloworld.git	3	510aa88b...	Fri Feb 9 15:52:50 2018 +0100



A walkthrough

General

- Browse [the archive](#), get and use SWHIDs, e.g. [Apollo 11 excerpt](#), [Parcoursup excerpt](#)
- Trigger archival with the [browser extension](#) or [webhook forge integration](#)

Open Science

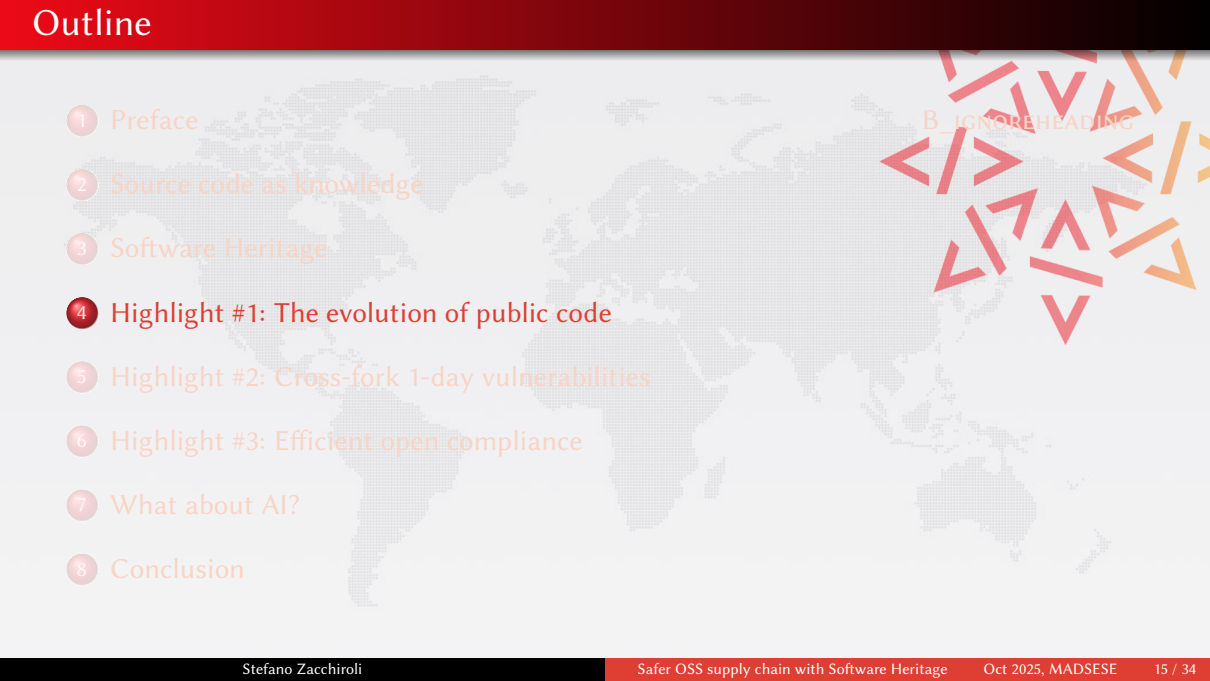
- Curated deposit via HAL, e.g.: [LinBox](#), [SLALOM](#), [Givaro](#), [SumGra](#), [Coq proof](#), ...
- Cite software with the [biblatex-software style](#), e.g.: [article from IPOL](#)

History of software: rescuing landmark legacy software

see [SWHAP process](#), [Software Stories](#), and [SWHAP Days 2022](#)

Public code

Archived source code from [code.gouv.fr](#)

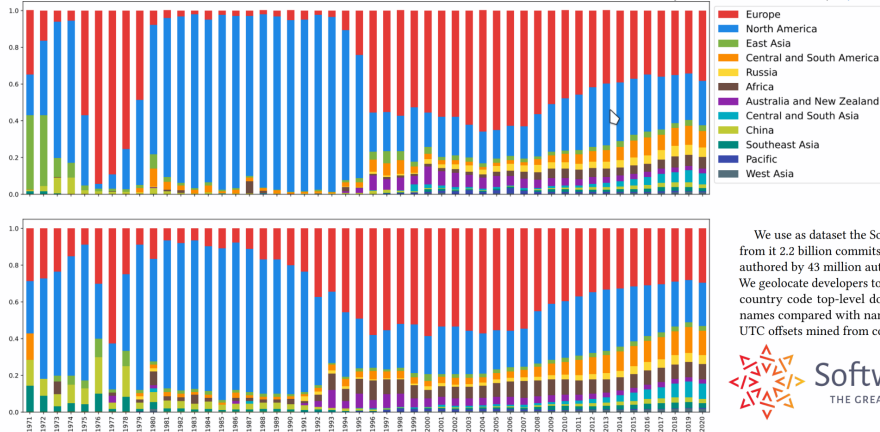
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(Open) Source Code comes from all over the world...

MSR '22, May 23–24, 2022, Pittsburgh, PA, USA

Davide Rossi and Stefano Zacchiroli

Geographic Diversity in Public Code Contributions: An Exploratory Large-Scale Study Over 50 Years. MSR 2022) <https://doi.org/10.1145/3524842.3528471>



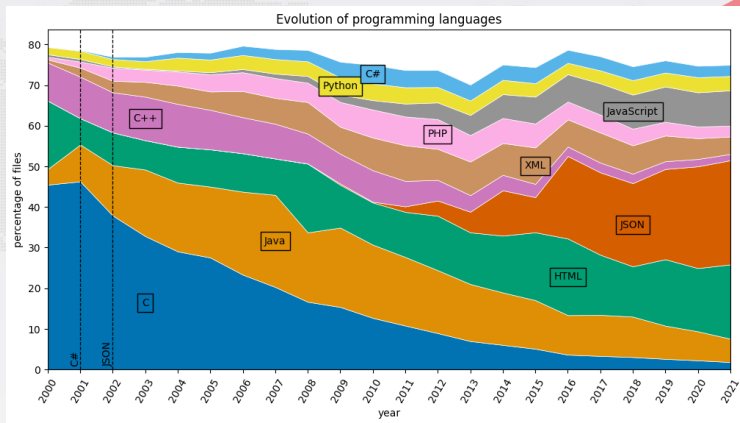
We use as dataset the Software Heritage archive [3] and analyze from it 2.2 billion commits archived from 160 million projects and authored by 43 million authors during the 1971–2021 time period. We geolocate developers to 12 world regions, using as signals email country code top-level domains (ccTLDs) and author (first/last) names compared with name distributions around the world, and UTC offsets mined from commit metadata.



Software Heritage
THE GREAT LIBRARY OF SOURCE CODE

Figure 3: Ratio of commits (above) and active authors (below) by world zone over the 1971–2020 period.

... it is written in many (programming) languages ...



Evolution of the activity for programming, markup, and data languages from 2000 to 2021.

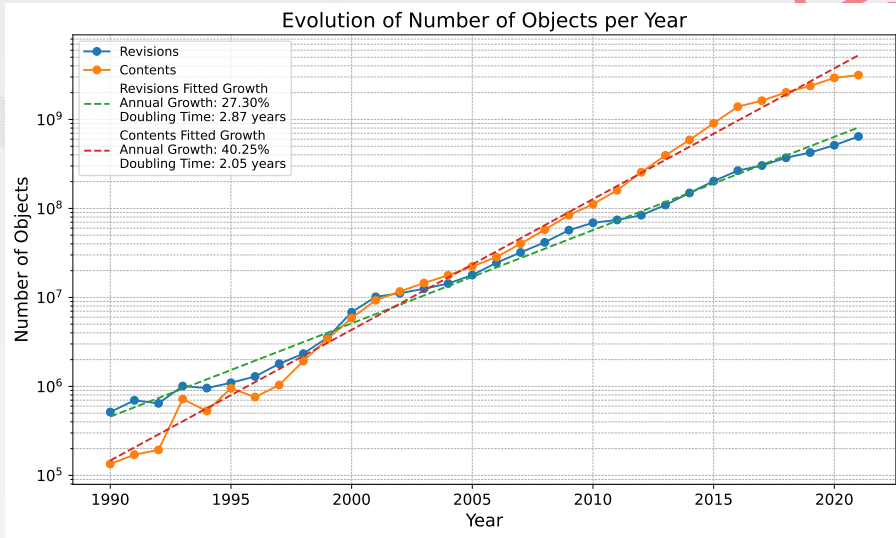


A. Desmazières, R. Di Cosmo, V. Lorentz

50 years of programming language evolution through the Software Heritage Looking Glass

MSR 2025. To appear.

... and it grows at an exponential rate



Rousseau, Di Cosmo, Zacchirolì: Software provenance tracking at the scale of public source code. *Empir. Softw. Eng.* 25(4): 2930-2959 (2020)

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Open source security

Open source software can be freely used, copied, and modified.

Open Source Software (OSS) is everywhere

- Huge boost for **innovation**! (e.g., reduced time to market)
- **96%** of (non-open) software products **depend on open source** (2022).
- Open source is at the heart of the **global digital infrastructure**.

Open source security

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With great exposure comes great scrutiny...

- ...by both good and bad actors.
- OSS is more and more **targeted by attackers**.
- Increased **policy attention** to secure OSS, e.g.:
 - US: Biden's executive orders (2022, Jan 2025!)
 - EU: CRA, progressively coming into effect

TOP 10 EMERGING CYBERSECURITY THREATS FOR 2030



THREATS



2030

1

Supply chain compromise of software dependencies

More integrated components and services from the supply chain and partners could lead to more as well as enhanced vulnerabilities with components on the supply and customer side.



2

Advanced disinformation campaigns

Disinformation can manipulate conversations for ideological reasons and for monetary gain.



3

Rise of digital surveillance authoritarianism/ loss of privacy

Facial recognition, digital surveillance, pervasive tracking and digital identities data stores may become a target for criminal groups.



4

Human error and exploited legacy systems within cyber-physical ecosystems

The fast adoption of IoT, the need to retrofit legacy systems and the growing skill shortage could lead to a lack of knowledge, training and understanding of the cyber-physical ecosystem, which can lead to security issues.



5

Targeted attacks enhanced by smart device data

There are also enhanced threat vectors, connected smart devices, vehicles can access infrastructure for tailored and more sophisticated attacks.



6

Lack of analysis and control of space-based infrastructure and objects

Due to the interaction between private and public infrastructure in space, the security of these new objects and technologies could be investigated as a lack of understanding, oversight and control of space-based infrastructure can make it vulnerable to attacks and sabotage.



7

Rise of advanced hybrid threats

Physical or cyber attacks are evolving and becoming more complex with cyberattacks due to the increase of cyber threats, cyber espionage, cyber sabotage and social engineering.



8

Skill shortage

Lack of capabilities and competencies could see cybercriminal groups target organizations with the largest vulnerability and the least security.



9

Cross border ICT service providers as a single point of failure

ICT sector connecting critical services such as transport, energy, grids and industry that provides services across borders are likely to be targeted by hackers, such as backdoors, physical manipulations, and threats of service and equipment being, or being potential conflict.



10

Artificial Intelligence Abuse

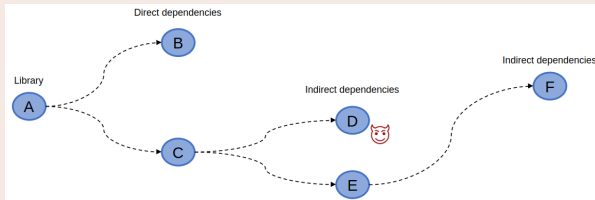
Manipulation of AI algorithms and training data can be used to enhance cyberattacks and activities such as the creation



Software supply chain attacks

Reusing OSS via dependencies

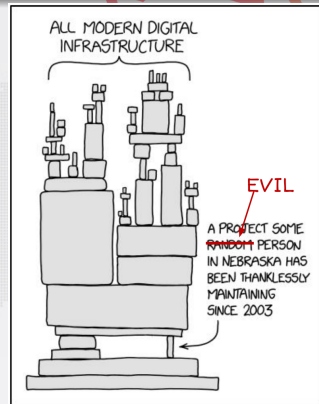
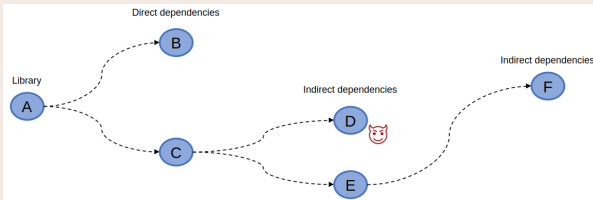
- **Software dependencies:** a popular way of reusing open source software.
- Software product *A* uses functionalities implemented in OSS product *B* ...and so on.



Software supply chain attacks

Reusing OSS via dependencies

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based on xkcd.com/2347

Attacking the software supply chain

- Attacking **undermaintained "leaf" packages** (e.g., D) → efficient attack strategy
- Many documented attacks: event-stream (2018), node-ipc (2022), XZ utils (2024), ...

Securing open source with Software Heritage

What does Software Heritage bring to the table?

- The largest archive that guarantees the:
 - 1 availability,
 - 2 integrity, and
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SWHSec project

swhsec.github.io

- 2023–2027 R&D project, funded by French national CampusCyber
- 8 research teams, including SWH core



Software Heritage
THE GREAT LIBRARY OF SOURCE CODE

Axes: (1) extending SWH with security info + (2) code analysis, dependency analysis, **vulnerability tracking**, automatic vulnerability fixing, ... at SWH scale.

One-day vulnerabilities in open source

One-day vulnerabilities

- Def.: vulnerabilities that are **publicly known, but not fixed yet** in software you use.
- Challenge: **identify them quickly and exhaustively**, then apply countermeasures.
- Many tools available to detect one-day vulnerabilities *via declared dependencies*.

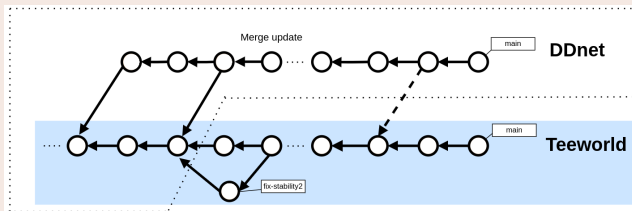
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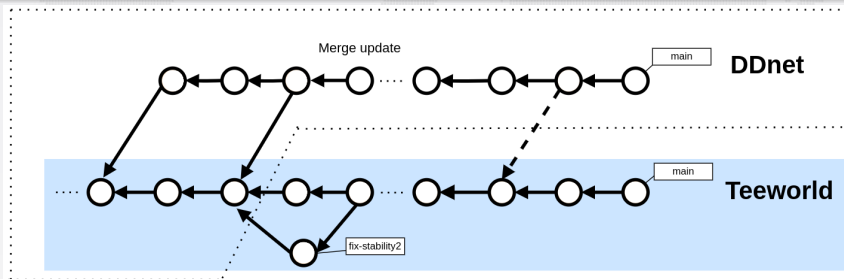
Reusing OSS via forks

Open source is also reused via **forking**: (1) start from existing OSS (e.g., Teeworlds game), (2) create your own (e.g., DDnet), (3) periodically integrate changes.



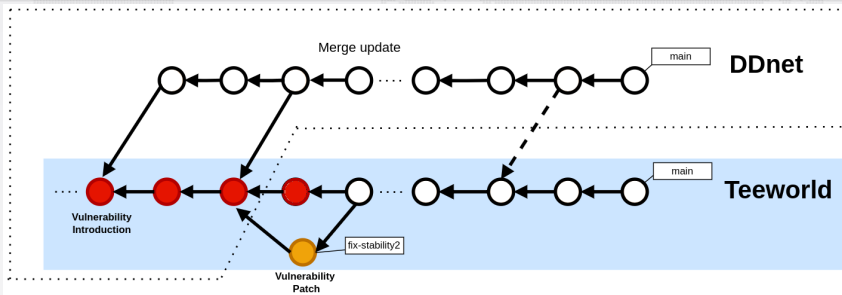
Vulnerability propagation through forks

- Any change to a piece of software (*commit*) can **introduce a new vulnerability**.
- Or it can **fix an existing vulnerability**.
- What happens if a project is forked **between introduction and fix** of a vulnerability?
- It inherits the vulnerability, ... until the change with the fix is integrated.



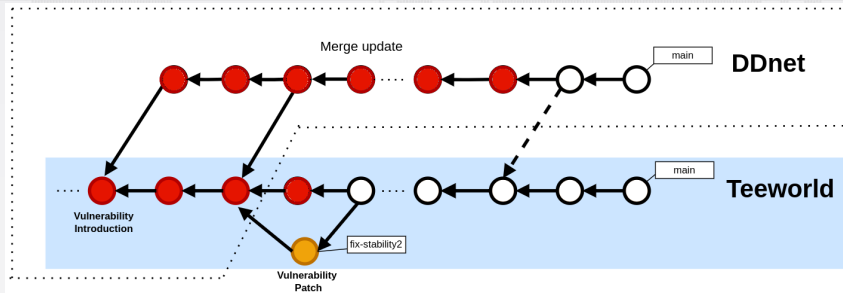
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sw-h-vuln: chasing one-day vulnerabilities across forks... at SWH scale

Approach

- ❶ Start from a **public DB of vuln. introduced/fixed** in public commits (e.g., [OSV.dev](#)).
- ❷ **"Color" the entire graph** of public code development history **with vulnerability info.**
 - Software Heritage is the only place where this can be done at the scale of all forks, across all public code, independently of specific development platforms.
- ❸ **Inform maintainers** of vulnerable forks. (After validation.)

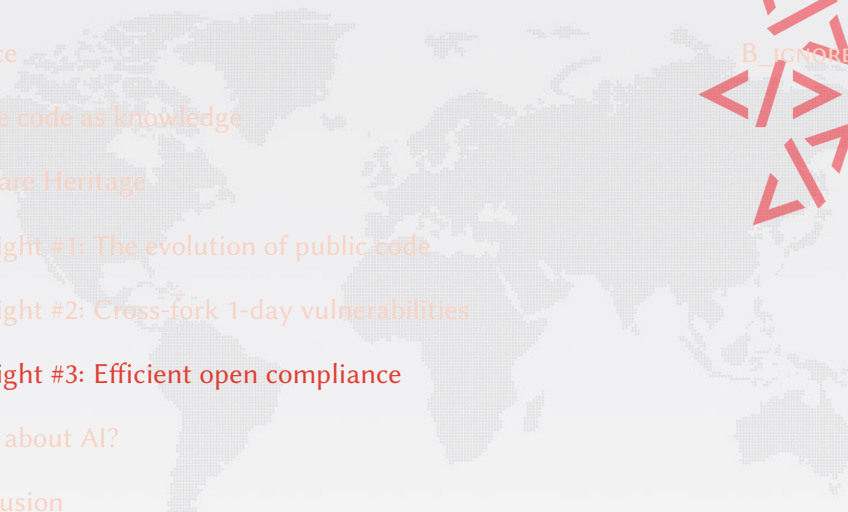
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Early results

- Starting from 7126 projects, identified 2.2 M (million) forks of repositories referenced by OSV.dev, containing vulnerable commits; **1.7 M forks vulnerable** in their most recent commit.
- 86.6 M vulnerable commits were specific to forks and span 312 development platforms, **not findable with current tools.**
- Among 65 manually vetted cases in popular forks, **3 confirmed crit. vulnerabilities.**

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- 1 Preface
 - 2 Source code as knowledge
 - 3 Software Heritage
 - 4 Highlight #1: The evolution of public code
 - 5 Highlight #2: Cross-fork 1-day vulnerabilities
 - 6 Highlight #3: Efficient open compliance**
 - 7 What about AI?
 - 8 Conclusion

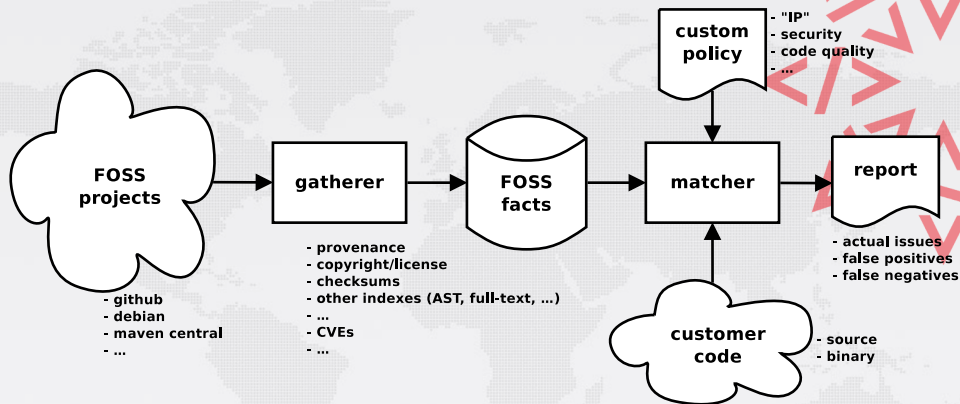
What Is Software License Compliance?

Software license compliance is the process of ensuring that your company is only using software it is authorized to use. The most fundamental part of this process is comparing the way an organization is using software to the software licenses that the organization has purchased. This involves tracking installations and usage, keeping meticulous records, and understanding the terms of software licenses. — Thales, 2025

- Particularly relevant for **open source software**, due to abundance of use.
- Common more general interpretation: **not only about licenses**, but all relevant characteristics (e.g., **security**: known vulnerabilities, historical track record, etc.) of all software components present in your software supply chain.
- **KYSW**: Know Your SoftWare (again!)

S. Phipps, S. Zacchiroli. *Continuous Open Source License Compliance*. IEEE Computer 53(12): 115-119 (2020).

Anatomy of a KYSW toolchain



A **code scanner** is the key ingredient of all KYSW toolchains: it scans a local source code base and compares it to a FOSS knowledge base, summarizing findings.

Open compliance vs Source code scanning

Definition (Open Compliance)

The **pursuit of compliance** with *license obligations* and other *best practices* for the management of open source software components, **using only open technologies** such as: open source software, open data information, and open access documentation.

Why

Reduced lock-in risks, lower total cost of ownership (TCO), crowdsourcing, alignment with FOSS community ethos.

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Q: Can we build an industry-grade source code scanning tool, compliant with Open Compliance principles, on top of Software Heritage?

Vision

swh-scanner is an **open source** and **open data** source code scanner for **open compliance** workflows, backed by the **largest public archive** of FOSS source code.

Design

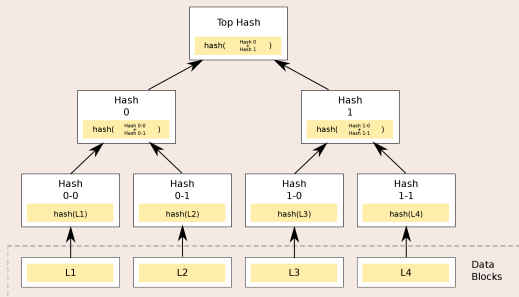
- Partition a source tree into known (= published before) v. unknown
- Provide provenance information on demand
- Software Heritage Archive as **ground truth** for public code
- Merkle DAG model and SWHIDs for **maximum efficiency**
- File-level granularity

Code: gitlab.softwareheritage.org/swh/devel/swh-scanner (GPL 3+)

Package: pypi.org/project/swh.scanner

Leveraging the Software Heritage data model for efficient scanning

Merkle DAG



Efficient scanning

- If a node (e.g., the root directory of a project) is known to the Software Heritage archive, all contained files and directories are known as well → no need to query for them!
- If a node is not known, we recurse to children and stop querying when reaching known nodes (e.g., embedded copies of 3rd party FOSS code or previous versions)



Daniele Serafini, Stefano Zacchiroli

Efficient Prior Publication Identification for Open Source Code

OSS+OpenSym 2022. ACM 2022.

<https://hal.science/hal-03735961/>

Setup

```
$ pip install swl-scanner
```

```
$ swl scanner setup
```

```
$ swl scanner scan $PROJECT_PATH
```

Setup

```
$ pip install swl-scanner  
  
$ swl scanner setup  
$ swl scanner scan $PROJECT_PATH
```

Demo

swh-scanner demo — Efficiency

```
$ du -sh --exclude=.git /srv/src/linux/git
4,1G /srv/src/linux/git
```

```
$ time swh scanner scan /srv/src/linux
Files:              78277
      known:        78267 ( 99%)
directories:         5085
      fully-known:   5081 ( 99%)
      partially-known: 4 ( 0%)
```

```
38,65s user 4,71s system 81% cpu 53,127 total
```

```
$ swh scanner scan --output-format ndjson /srv/src/linux/git | grep false
...
{"scripts/kconfig/symbol.o": {"swhid": "swh:1:cnt:874f19...", "known": false}}
...
```

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Can I train my AI on Software Heritage?

Yes, but only in a principled way.

October 19, 2023

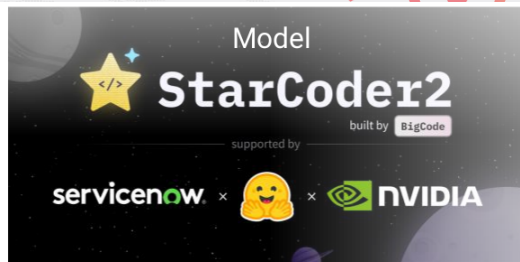
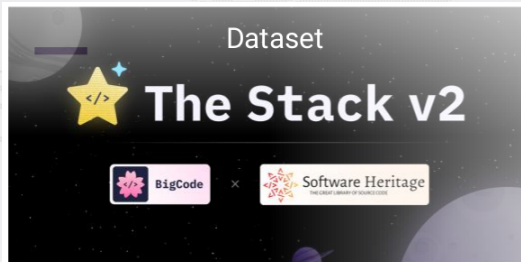
Software Heritage Statement on Large Language Models for Code



Principles

1. Knowledge derived from the Software Heritage archive must be given back to humanity, rather than monopolized for private gain. The resulting machine learning models must be made available under a suitable open license, together with the documentation and toolings needed to use them.
2. The initial training data extracted from the Software Heritage archive must be fully and precisely identified by, for example, publishing the corresponding SWHID identifiers (note that, in the context of Software Heritage, public availability of the *initial training data* is a given: anyone can obtain it from the archive). This will enable use cases such as: studying biases (fairness), verifying if a code of interest was present in the training data (transparency), and providing appropriate attribution when generated code bears resemblance to training data (credit), among others.
3. Mechanisms should be established, where possible, for authors to exclude their archived code from the training inputs before model training begins.

Can we build a state-of-the-art code-LLM that way?



Released February 28th 2024

Yes one can build the best open LLM for code available while fully adhering to the Software Heritage principles for responsible LLMs, ...
and even more: the full training pipeline is made public too!

Anton Lozhkov et al. *StarCoder 2 and The Stack v2: The Next Generation*.
[arXiv:2402.19173](https://arxiv.org/abs/2402.19173), 2024

CodeCommons

Open, responsible, and transparent AI: Our shared goal

CodeCommons is an ambitious project to create the world's most comprehensive digital commons for code



Building on the existing foundation of Software Heritage, the largest publicly available source code archive, CodeCommons aims to bring into one place all the **critical** and **qualified** information needed to create **smaller, better** datasets for the next generation of AI tools.

At its core, the project prioritizes transparency and traceability, enabling model builders and users to **respect creators' rights** while promoting **sovereign** and **sustainable** AI.



codecommons.org

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Conclusion

- Software Heritage is the largest archive in the world of public code and its development history.
- It is a gold mine of research leads in software engineering, software security, ...
- It is also a vast knowledge base providing software integrity and provenance of public code, for industry applications related to the software supply chain.

Research on Software Heritage

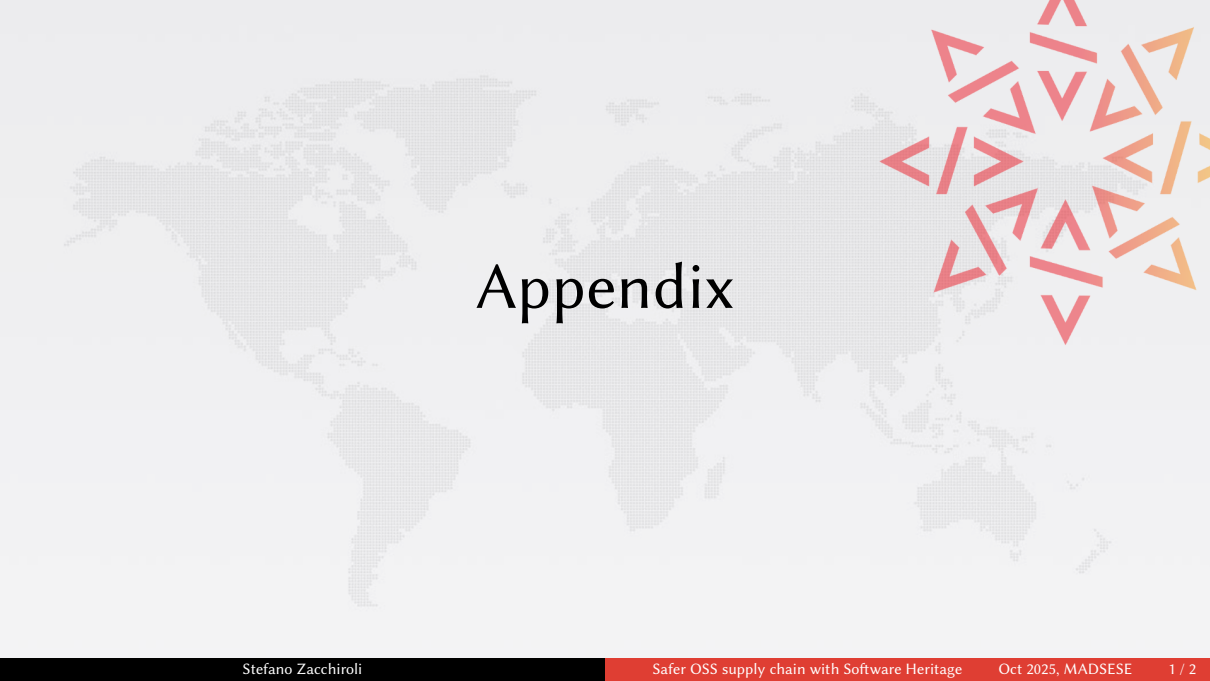
www.softwareheritage.org/publications

Questions?

- Ask me!

Contact

[Stefano Zacchioli](#) / stefano.zacchioli@telecom-paris.fr / [@zacchiro@mastodon.xyz](https://mastodon.xyz/@zacchiro)



Appendix

Sharing the vision



And many more ...

www.softwareheritage.org/support/testimonials

Sharing the vision



And many more ...

www.softwareheritage.org/support/testimonials

Donors, members, sponsors

Inria

Diamond sponsors



Platinum sponsors



Gold sponsors



Silver sponsors



Bronze sponsors



www.softwareheritage.org/support/sponsors

we are all concerned, anyone can join and help