

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: What does OIN do?

Answer: We foster a community of non-aggression between companies and organisations, to lay down their patent weapons on a limited set of Linux packages, and by creating a patent "no fly zone" around Linux and Open Source in general. The licensees are supporting this community by pledging patent non-aggression.

Question: Why should I join OIN?

Answer: There are many reasons to sign a license with OIN.

1. You are helping to support a community of interest that is dedicated to making Linux and Open Source a success.
2. There is no fee or other payment required to become an OIN licensee.
3. You build a formal relationship with a well-funded, experienced organisation that may be able to provide assistance if you are approached by any aggressive third parties regarding Open Source technology.
4. You get direct benefit through free patent licenses from almost 750 OIN community participants in the context of Linux System technology.
5. You get direct benefit through a free, unrestricted license to all the patents and applications owned by OIN. That includes in excess of 850 US and international patents and applications (see note below).

Question: What are the downsides of joining OIN?

Answer: There are no downsides to joining the OIN community. If you had any patents that read on the definition of "Linux System" you would need to license those patents to other OIN participants, and they would do the same for you. This promotes a litigation-free environment for our licensees over Linux System technology. The protection you receive is far greater than the grant you give.

What is the catch?

Answer: There is no catch. OIN does not make money from its licensing program. OIN was formed in 2005 with investments from Red Hat, IBM, Sony, NEC, Philips and Novell to protect and promote Linux. Our only mission is to support and enable Linux-related technology as a key driver of open innovation.