

Frequently Asked Questions: OpenSolaris

In June 2005, Sun open sourced the Solaris 10 Operating System under the Common Development and Distribution License (CDDL) and launched the opensolaris.org community. The Opensolaris.org project is aimed at Solaris developers and open source contributors worldwide, from corporate and enterprise developers to students and academics who want to contribute to the future of operating system innovations. The OpenSolaris project is expected to drive greater Solaris adoption in key markets especially financial services, Federal, Telecommunications and Education and Research. While Solaris continues to be the fully tested, certified and supported operating system from Sun, future versions of Solaris will be based on the OpenSolaris project source code. As the community grows, the OpenSolaris project will make the Solaris 10 source code ubiquitous among the broad community of software developers -- from the embedded appliance developer to the shoestring ISP and the student developer.

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What is the OpenSolaris project?

The OpenSolaris project is an open development effort based on the source code for the [Solaris Operating System](#) (OS). The project's goals are innovation, collaboration and the extension of OpenSolaris technology.

Initially, the OpenSolaris project will include source for the core kernel, networking, libraries and commands from the Solaris OS. Over time, we plan to open source other parts of the Solaris OS as well.

What is the difference between the OpenSolaris project and the Solaris Operating System?

The OpenSolaris project is not a product offering; rather, it is an open source project complete with

source code and infrastructure for collaborative development at opensolaris.org.

The Solaris OS is Sun's supported operating system offering. Future versions of the Solaris OS will be based on technology from the OpenSolaris project.

In addition, while you can purchase support services for the Solaris Operating System from Sun, you cannot currently purchase support for the OpenSolaris technology. Community support for the OpenSolaris technology is available on the mailing lists at opensolaris.org, however.

What source code does the OpenSolaris project include?

Initially, the OpenSolaris project includes source for the core kernel, networking, libraries and commands from the Solaris OS.

The OpenSolaris source code includes source for all the major innovations that Sun delivered in Solaris 10 - features like Dynamic Tracing ([DTrace](#)) and Solaris Containers ([Zones](#)) and [Predictive Self Healing](#). The OpenSolaris project also includes the source code for both SPARC and x64/x86.

The OpenSolaris project does not include source for some third party components that are in the Solaris OS (such as drivers) which we do not have the rights to ship as open source. As much as possible, these items will be provided as part of a binary-only download.

Over time, we plan to open source other parts of the Solaris OS as well, such as the Solaris Installer software and additional drivers. The [Roadmap](#) has more detail about when other Solaris OS components will be available as part of the OpenSolaris project.

Why is Sun open sourcing the Solaris Operating System?

There are several reasons behind the decision to open source the Solaris OS:

- We believe that a community development model creates more opportunities for collaboration.
- We want to better engage with the Solaris developer and user community, and embarking on a community development project will help us to do that.
- Many Solaris OS customers care about and require open source. Open sourcing the Solaris OS will also allow the Sun and its partners to participate in projects that require open source software.
- We want to create a platform for a whole new generation of innovation by allowing developers to leverage the Solaris technology for their own purposes.
- We aim to open up opportunities in currently closed markets – if a startup wants to build a product around the OpenSolaris technology, we think that's wonderful, and want to enable and encourage that.
- In short, the OpenSolaris project will significantly expand the ecosystem of Solaris technology.

Does the OpenSolaris project include source code for both the SPARC and x64/x86 architectures?

Yes. There is only one source base for the Solaris operating system for both SPARC and x64/x86 systems, and we build the binaries from that common source. By open sourcing the common Solaris source base we automatically open the code for both SPARC and x64/x86 systems.

What license are you using for the OpenSolaris source code?

The majority of the OpenSolaris source code is released under the [Common Development and Distribution License \(CDDL\) Version 1.0](#) -- an [Open Source Initiative \(OSI\)](#)-approved open source license. The OpenSolaris project also includes a number of components based on existing open source projects, which will continue to be available under their current licenses (e.g., [Perl](#) is licensed under [The Artistic License](#)).

Please refer to the [Licensing Page](#) for more details about the licenses associated with the OpenSolaris project, see the [CDDL FAQ](#) for more information about the CDDL, and visit the [OSI website](#) for information about other open source licenses.

Is there any cost for using the OpenSolaris source code?

No. The OpenSolaris source code is free to use, free to modify and free to redistribute.

What release of the Solaris source code will be open sourced?

We are opening the latest snapshot of the Solaris Operating System that is under development. At the OpenSolaris launch, this corresponds to Solaris 10 as well as six additional months worth of improvements and engineering. As new features are developed, they will be included in the OpenSolaris project, too. At this time, we have no plans to open source the code for previous versions of the Solaris OS such as Solaris 8 or Solaris 9.

How Do I Participate?

The best place to start is the [Communities Portal](#) where you can find information about OpenSolaris technologies, discussion groups, downloads, source code, and more.

Do I need to register the OpenSolaris source code I have downloaded from the site?

No. There is no registration. There is no click-to-accept license. Enjoy!

Are you concerned about compromises in security in the Solaris OS due to the broad availability of the OpenSolaris source code?

No. The Solaris source code has been available on a controlled basis for many years and this has enhanced the security features of the Solaris OS. Open source software is well-known for its advantages when it comes to security. Security is all about getting the details right, and so having thousands of people examining the source code dramatically reduces the chance that an important bug remains undiscovered and ensures the fastest possible resolution.

If you find a security bug in the OpenSolaris source code, please follow the standard process for reporting the issue detailed at the [Sun Security Coordination Team](#) page.

Are you concerned that once you open source the Solaris source code, your innovations will be ported into other operating systems?

No, we're not concerned about this. That's a great measure of success.

How will the OpenSolaris program affect Sun's ISV partners who support the Solaris Operating System?

We understand that the test matrix that many of our ISV partners manage is daunting, and we will not be increasing their workload by asking them to certify to the OpenSolaris operating system. We anticipate that unless an ISV partner's solution requires customization of the operating system, ISVs will continue to certify to the Solaris OS, which offers regular release cycles, stringent quality control and Sun support.

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