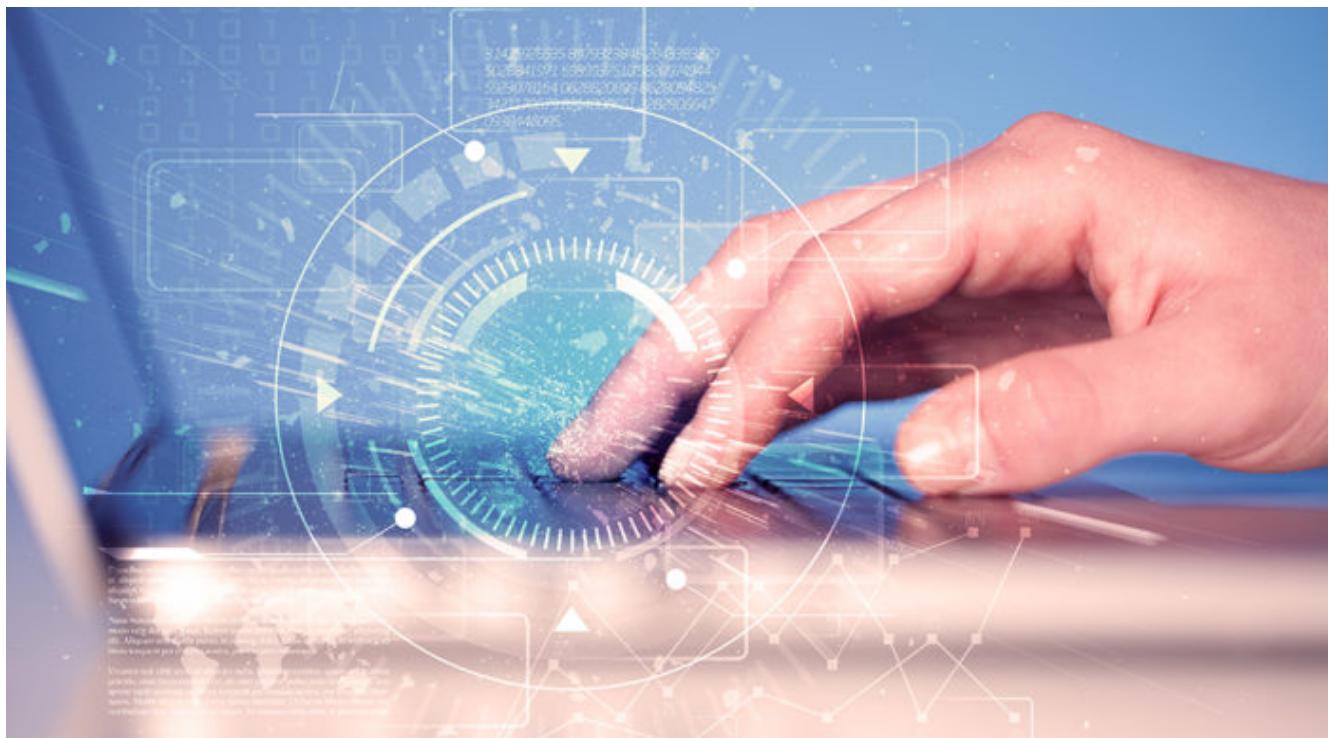# All change: Grafana switches core open source projects from Apache to AGPLv3 licensing

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Grafana Labs is changing the licensing for its core open source projects (Grafana, Grafana Loki, and Grafana Tempo) from the Apache License 2.0 to the Affero General Public License (AGPL) v3. The company says the vast majority of users should be unaffected by this decision, which follows similar moves from other open source software companies.

Grafana made the announcement on its [blog](#), but has also published the results of an [internal Q&A](#) with Grafana

Labs CEO and co-founder Raj Dutt that outlines some of the reasons.

Dutt said the decision to revamp licensing from the Apache License 2.0 to AGPLv3 came after "almost every at-scale open source company that we admire (such as Elastic, Redis Labs, MongoDB, Timescale, Cockroach Labs, and many others) has evolved their license regime."

In almost all of these cases, the result has been a switch to a licence that is not recognised as a true open source licence. Grafana has instead settled on AGPLv3 as an OSI-approved license that continues to meet the criteria for Free and Open Source Software.

Plugins, agents, and certain code libraries associated with the Grafana projects will remain under Apache licensing.

Grafana is also updating its [contributor license agreement (CLA)](#) to a new CLA based on the CLA set forth by The Apache Software Foundation, in order to avoid licence incompatibilities.

The background to this story is that other open source companies, such as Elastic and MongoDB, changed their licensing in order to combat what they saw as abuse of the open source licensing terms by cloud service providers taking their products and offering them as commercial services. To combat this, they have adopted licenses such as the Server-Side Public License (SSPL) which specify that anyone offering the software as a

service has to make all the source code that drives the service available for download under the terms of the licence, in addition to that of the software itself.

MongoDB made this move [back in 2018](#) , while [Elastic followed its example](#) earlier this year for its products such as Elasticsearch and Kibana.

Grafana's tools are widely used, and the firm has been quick to reassure end users , stating that the vast majority of users will already be in compliance with the AGPL licensing from day one.

"It's important to note that this change does not prevent our users from using, modifying, or providing our open source software to others – provided, however, that under the AGPL license, users have to share source code if they are modifying it and making it available to others (either as a distribution or over a network)," Dutt said.

Amanda Brock, CEO of OpenUK, a not-for-profit company which supports open source collaboration, was cautiously welcoming of the move.

"Grafana has carried out a well-managed licence shift to AGPLv3 that moves them away from Apache to the GPL copyleft family, but keeps them in the parameters of open source. This is unlike other companies like Elastic and Mongo that moved from open source to the proprietary SSPL licence," she said in a statement sent to DevClass.