A. HISTORY OF THE SOFTWARE

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Python was created in the early 1990s by Guido van Rossum at Stichting

Mathematisch Centrum (CWI, see http://www.cwi.nl) in the Netherlands

as a successor of a language called ABC. Guido remains Python's

principal author, although it includes many contributions from others.

In 1995, Guido continued his work on Python at the Corporation for

National Research Initiatives (CNRI, see http://www.cnri.reston.va.us)

in Reston, Virginia where he released several versions of the

software.

In May 2000, Guido and the Python core development team moved to

BeOpen.com to form the BeOpen PythonLabs team. In October of the same

year, the PythonLabs team moved to Digital Creations (now Zope

Corporation, see http://www.zope.com). In 2001, the Python Software

Foundation (PSF, see http://www.python.org/psf/) was formed, a

non-profit organization created specifically to own Python-related

Intellectual Property. Zope Corporation is a sponsoring member of

the PSF.

All Python releases are Open Source (see http://www.opensource.org for

the Open Source Definition). Historically, most, but not all, Python

releases have also been GPL-compatible; the table below summarizes

the various releases.

Release Derived Year Owner GPL-

from compatible? (1)

0.9.0 thru 1.2 1991-1995 CWI yes

1.3 thru 1.5.2 1.2 1995-1999 CNRI yes

1.6 1.5.2 2000 CNRI no

2.0 1.6 2000 BeOpen.com no

1.6.1 1.6 2001 CNRI yes (2)

2.1 2.0+1.6.1 2001 PSF no

2.0.1 2.0+1.6.1 2001 PSF yes

2.1.1 2.1+2.0.1 2001 PSF yes

2.1.2 2.1.1 2002 PSF yes

2.1.3 2.1.2 2002 PSF yes

2.2 and above 2.1.1 2001-now PSF yes

Footnotes:

(1) GPL-compatible doesn't mean that we're distributing Python under

the GPL. All Python licenses, unlike the GPL, let you distribute

a modified version without making your changes open source. The

GPL-compatible licenses make it possible to combine Python with

other software that is released under the GPL; the others don't.

(2) According to Richard Stallman, 1.6.1 is not GPL-compatible,

because its license has a choice of law clause. According to

CNRI, however, Stallman's lawyer has told CNRI's lawyer that 1.6.1

is "not incompatible" with the GPL.

Thanks to the many outside volunteers who have worked under Guido's

direction to make these releases possible.

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