# Open core licensing

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# 1. Growing standardization of business models

- Multi-licensing business model is increasingly becoming the standard model, for example to:
  - offer asymmetrical feature sets
  - segment user bases
  - avoid "contamination" issues encountered by users
  - ensure wider legal compatibility of licenses
- Multi-licensing is accepted by most members of the open source community, if it is balanced
  - "segment by user base, not by features"

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# What is "open core" licensing?
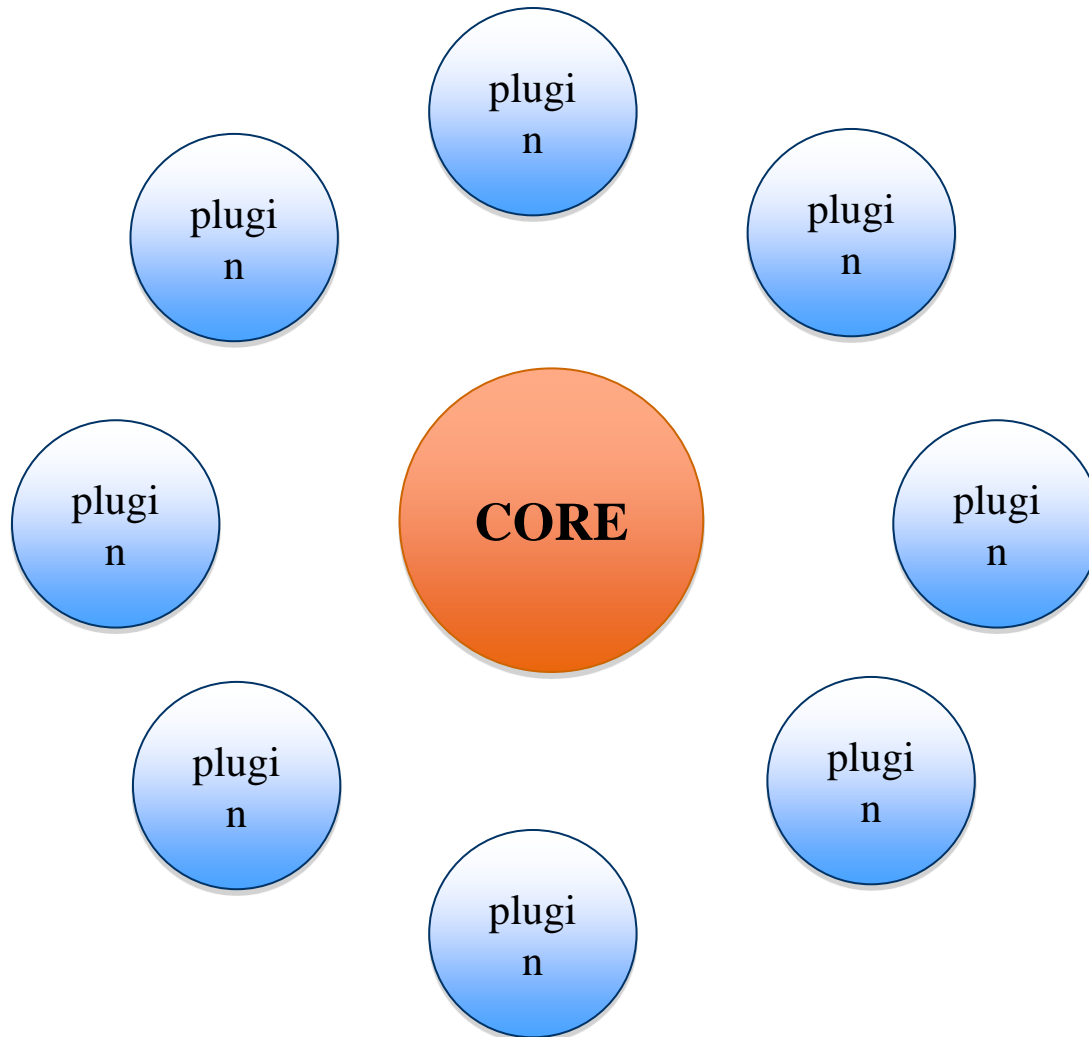


- specific kind of dual licence

- core software is open source or dual licensed

- plugins are open source or proprietary

- Also called "split licensing"

# Characteristics

- Easier to find a balance between "giving away" and "making money"

- Closed-source plugins created by core developer (together with support services), or by third parties

- Examples: Jaspersoft (BI), SugarCRM, xTuple (ERP)

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# Criticism

- Please venture capitalists instead of customers?

- Legal difficulties GPL ⇔ plugins

- Is an "open core" developer really different from a proprietary developer?

- Split of plugin worlds

- Only plugins owned by the core developer can "bridge the worlds"

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# Case study: popular GPL v2 CMS system

- Issue: commercial plugins must release source code

- Core of CMS re-written from scratch

  - with identical API as the original CMS

  - dual-licensed: AGPL and (paid) proprietary

- Goal: developers using the proprietary license can develop closed-source plugins

- Issues:

  - transition / beta period

  - viability of the AGPL?

  - "two separate plugin worlds"

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