

New tools for open source developers - and others as well

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The business of software is getting more and more complicated. In your path from coder to developer you might find the need to see if someone out there has already coded what you need, hopefully in an open source project with the right kind of licence for you to be able to reuse it. And, at the same time, with the deep confidence that you are not breaking any copyright...

Well, there's Google to look up for those snippets, but unfortunately it does not index code files in open source projects. And with all the X-forge websites out there (Tigris.org, SourceForge, Novell Forge, GotDotNet Workspaces, etc) it is difficult, if not at all impossible, to find the information needed.

But somebody has finally brought a solution to this problem: **Koders.com** offers a search engine that indexes the most important open source websites and offers an impressive amount of source code in the same repository; Koders.com is definitely worth a look, and if you want to know more about it, here's an article on The Register about it: Open source search engine trawls free code.

Koders.com even provides a quick reference to the most important open source licences available... I would not be surprised if Google ends up eating Koders.com, as it happened with Blogger.com before...

On the other side, when you start up using open source code, you might as well end up using code that you should not touch because of legal reasons. Let's face it, it is not possible to know all the possible patents that you might be violating while copy-pasting code, and if you plan to sell your product, you should take the time to parse your code with **Palamida**. More information about Palamida here: Test your own software code for infringement.

Finally, it is worth noticing that more and more companies are offering open source code written by their internal development staff, so these two tools might become very important in the near future:

- Apple
- Google
- Hewlett-Packard

- IBM
- Novell
- Sun

And Microsoft... well, they have something called “Shared Source”, which is, in a very broad sense, another kind of open source licencing mode. Well, not really; some products (like Windows 2000 source code) are offered only under very special conditions, but for example, the Shared Source CLI (Common Language Infrastructure, aka .NET for Unix) is offered for download without much more than registering using your Passport account.