

This web site use MySQL as it's core database. MySQL is open source software and as such is free to organisations like Littleham and Landcross Community Web Site Association. This situation is now threatened by the prospect of Oracle Corporation's intent to buy Sun Corporation the owners (and preservers) of MySQL. If Oracle buys MySQL as part of Sun, database customers will pay the bill. It could possibly mean that LLCWS may have to pay licence fees for the use of the product in future.

In April 2009, Oracle announced that it had agreed to acquire Sun. Since Sun had acquired MySQL the previous year, this would mean that Oracle, the market leader for closed source databases, would get to own MySQL, the most popular open source database.

If Oracle acquired MySQL on that basis, it would have as much control over MySQL as money can possibly buy over an open source project. In fact, for most open source projects (such as Linux or Apache) there isn't any comparable way for a competitor to buy even one tenth as much influence. But MySQL's success has always depended on the company behind it that develops, sells and promotes it. That company (initially MySQL AB, then Sun) has always owned the important intellectual property rights (IPRs), most notably the trademark, copyright and (so far only for defensive purposes) patents. It has used the IPRs to produce income and has reinvested a large part of those revenues in development, getting not only bigger but also better with time.

If those IPRs fall into the hands of MySQL's primary competitor, then MySQL immediately ceases to be an alternative to Oracle's own high-priced products. So far, customers had the choice to use MySQL in new projects instead of Oracle's products. Some large companies even migrated (switched) from Oracle to MySQL for existing software solutions. And every one could credibly threaten Oracle's salespeople with using MySQL unless a major discount was granted. If Oracle owns MySQL, it will only laugh when customers try this. Getting rid of this problem is easily worth one billion dollars a year to Oracle, if not more.

You can help raise the profile of this potentially catastrophic development, with the world's competition authorities by signing the petition at:

<http://www.helpmysql.org/en/petition>

You will then be helping preserve the independence and free availability of this long revered open source product. Please sign the petition and help secure LLCWS's future.

David Hogan
Administrator

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