

Forked Communities: Project Re-licensing and Community Impact



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Some Data ...

Elasticsearch (Elastic relicensed 2021-02-03)

- 1 yr before: 67 Employees >96% adds / deletes. 3 non-employees <1% adds / deletes.
- 1 yr after: similar results

OpenSearch (Amazon launched fork 2021-04-12)

- 1 yr after fork: 7 Employees / >80% adds / deletes. 2 non-employees <7% adds / deletes.
- 1 yr before LF: 40 Employees / >63% adds / deletes. 6 non-employees <13% adds / deletes.

Terraform (HashiCorp relicensed 2023-08-10)

- 1 yr before: 21 employees, > 93% adds / deletes. 2 non-employees: < 1% of adds / deletes.
- 1 yr after: similar results

OpenTofu (LF launched fork 2023-09-05)

- 1 yr after fork: 31 people at 11 companies: Spacelift, Env0, Scalr, Harness, Red Hat ...
- None previously contributed to Terraform

Redis (Redis relicensed 2024-03-20)

- 1 yr before: 6 employees 28% commits, > 74% adds / deletes. 12 non-employees 54% commits, 12% additions, 15% deletions
- 6 mos after: 0 non-employees with 5+ commits

Valkey (Linux Foundation launched fork 2024-03-28)

- 6 mo after fork: 29 people at 10 companies: Amazon, Tencent, Huawei, Ericsson, Google, others
- 18 previously contributed to Redis

Primary project repo. Elasticsearch / OpenSearch: 10+ commits, Other projects: 5+ commits. Data: <https://github.com/chaoss/wg-data-science/tree/main/publications>

Related Links and More Reading

<https://medium.com/@stephenwalli/forked-communities-whose-property-is-it-anyway-2ddee71f2ef1>

<https://github.com/chaoss/wg-data-science/tree/main/publications>

<https://voxpupuli.org/blog/2025/01/21/openvox-release>

<https://voxpupuli.org/openvox>

<https://redmonk.com/rstephens/2024/08/26/software-licensing-changes-and-their-impact-on-financial-outcomes>

<https://thenewstack.io/why-open-source-forking-is-a-hot-button-issue>

<https://thenewstack.io/what-happens-to-relicensed-open-source-projects-and-their-forks>