NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE
Humanities

OFFICE OF **THE CHAIRMAN**

October 18, 2016

FROM: Brett Bobley, Chief Information Officer *BB*
TO: NEH Staff
SUBJECT: Agency Wide Policy on Software Development

As required by M-16-21, "Federal Source Code Policy: Achieving Efficiency, Transparency, and Innovation through Reusable and Open Source Software," I issue this policy for sharing software that has been custom-developed by the NEH. This policy summarizes the essential requirements set forth in M-16-21. That document should be consulted for more details. Note that these policies do not apply retroactively – that is, they don't apply that existing custom-code be made available.

Three-Step Software Solutions Analysis[1]

When the NEH is considering a need for software, prior to making any purchasing decision, we will perform a three-step analysis:

1) Conduct a strategic analysis to determine if existing government software will meet our needs.
2) If not, we will explore whether there is commercial software that meets our needs.
3) If not, we will consider developing custom software.

Government-Wide Code Reuse[2]

1) When the NEH enters into a contract to have custom code developed, we must acquire sufficient rights to ensure we may freely distribute it to other government agencies for reuse.
2) NEH shall create a "code inventory" of our custom-developed code and post it on www.code.gov. This inventory will list code that other agencies can obtain from us.
3) NEH shall keep our code in a repository with appropriate version control. (Note that code.gov is not a repository – it is just an inventory that will describe our software and point to the repository.)

Open Source Software[3]

1) Under the terms of a three-year pilot program led by OMB, the NEH shall release at least 20% of the code we develop as OSS.
2) This requires the NEH to place the code on a publically-accessible repository and engage with the software community to use the software and contribute new code.
3) NEH must also ensure that the code has an appropriate OSS license attached.

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[1] See M-16-21, page 5.
[2] See M-16-21, page 7.
[3] See M-16-21, page 8.