Google moves to open source version of Oracle's JDK

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Google is moving away from its implementation of Java application programming interfaces (APIs) in Android N, the next version, and to OpenJDK, the open source version of Oracle's Java Development Kit (JDK). *ReadWrite* is one of numerous tech-watching sites that reported the Google development.

The OpenJDK community describes OpenJDK as an open-source implementation of the Java platform.

The move was confirmed to *VentureBeat*. Emil Protalinski, news editor for *VentureBeat*, said "the news first came by a 'mysterious Android codebase commit' from last month submitted to Hacker News," and Google confirmed to *VentureBeat* that Android N will rely on the OpenJDK implementation. In Google wording, they are moving Android's Java language libraries to the open source OpenJDK approach.

Protalinski quoted a Google spokesperson:

"In our upcoming release of Android, we plan to move Android's Java language libraries to an OpenJDK-based approach, creating a common code base for developers to build apps and services. Google has long worked with and contributed to the OpenJDK community, and we look forward to making even more contributions to the OpenJDK project in the future."

VentureBeat said Google has committed several hundreds of changes to the open-source repository regarding the adoption of OpenJDK. Cate Lawrence in *ReadWrite* referred to an article in Hacker News about a code commit showing 8,902 files committed with OpenJDK instead of the proprietary JDK version.

Does any of this now matter to consumers who own or will soon buy handheld devices running Android? The move and associated press theories about its tie-up to the Oracle and Google legal issue might be difficult to sort out, leave alone appreciate, but it does carry interest for Android developers. Specifically, developers may appreciate the change because it simplifies the code on which they build the apps.

Simplifying code, however, was not the only reason that tech watchers called up as behind the move. "Google wants to put more resources into OpenJDK where the team can have a bigger impact on new features and improvements," said *VentureBeat*. Another reason for the move may be

the legal battle going on for some time between Oracle and Google.

Emil Protalinski talked about this in his report: "Hacker News users are rightly wondering whether the code commit means the legal dispute between Oracle and Google has been settled out of court, or whether Google has decided to protect itself with regards to future Android versions in the event it loses. It's a good question, but because the Oracle lawsuit is ongoing, Google declined to comment whether this code commit is related."

Similarly, Michael Crider assessed the impact of this matter in *Android Police*: "Android's rapid [rise](#) to the top of the mobile market was accompanied by a number of legal battles, and perhaps none of them was so central and so contentious as Oracle versus Google. The fight over the legality of patents and copyrights in some of the portions of Android that used allegedly proprietary Oracle-owned Java software has been raging since 2010," he wrote. "Apparently Google is as tired of dealing with the legal headache as we are of writing about it, because the company has confirmed that Android will do away with the remaining Java APIs starting with Android N," he said.

Readers' comments on the matter sought to clarify further:

"Android is still using the exact same Java API that is supposedly owned by Oracle. But the implementation is switching from Google's own version, which was based on Apache Harmony (a now dead open source project) to Oracle's own open source implementation, which is OpenJDK," said a reader in *VentureBeat*.

A comment in *Engadget*: "Since Java 7 the OpenJDK has become the official Java [implementation](#), which is primarily developed by Oracle itself. What they are doing is getting rid of Apache Harmony, which is the Java implementation they were previously using. Harmony was

retired after Java 6, when Java officially went open source."

In a follow-up, the *VentureBeat* article said, "While Google is moving away from its own implementation (using Apache Harmony-based libraries) to use OpenJDK libraries as its foundation for the standard Java libraries, the company is still making changes to OpenJDK to make it work on [Android](). As a result, future versions of Android will continue to contain parts of Google's 'own implementation,' just based on OpenJDK."