

My Life as a Debian Developer

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In 3 Days, Debian turns 25 years old

(7 more years until a nice round number)

Debian was founded by Ian Murdock on August 16, 1993,
and is one of the oldest Linux distributions

A bit about me

- started programming when I was about 10 years old on a TI-99 4A
- first encountered Linux in the early 90s
- started using Linux full-time in University, starting with Mandrake
- switched to Debian at the recommendation of an acquaintance in Uni
- liked it so much, I started packaging in 2003, and became a Debian Developer (DD) on October 16, 2006

Debian principles and initiatives

Some of the things that make Debian Debian

SC - Social Contract

https://www.debian.org/social_contract

- a commitment to the Free Software community

DFSG - Debian Free Software Guidelines

https://www.debian.org/social_contract#guidelines

The Open Source Definition was based on the Debian Free
Software Guidelines

Debian Policy Manual - a.k.a. "Policy"

<https://www.debian.org/doc/debian-policy/>

- gives details on how to package software for Debian
- ensures that packages work well together
- there are also language-specific policies, e.g. Python, JavaScript

Portability

- Debian officially supports 10 architectures
- support for ~8 others is being worked on, including two non-Linux kernels: GNU Hurd and FreeBSD

Quality

quality checking tools and initiatives:

- lintian
- archive rebuilds
- ports
- piuparts
- reproducible builds
- autopkgtest
- tracker.debian.org
- pbuilder, sbuild, etc
- source-only uploads

Other Debian values

- inclusivity <https://www.debian.org/intro/diversity>
- user choice
- volunteer work

What does a Debian Developer do?

- maintain packages
- maintaining is more than just packaging
 - update software (and make sure upgrades are smooth)
 - communicate with upstream
 - handle bug reports
 - make sure it follows policy
 - work with other developers (e.g. packaging teams, library transitions)

Package lifecycle:

- RFP (maybe)
- ITP (if necessary)
- initial packaging
- upload
- NEW queue (waiting)
- package updates
- migration to testing
- testing freeze
- stable release

- votes in GRs
 - elect Debian Project Leader (DPL)
 - issue/supersede/withdraw nontechnical policy documents and statements
 - override decisions made by DPL/delegate or Technical Committee
 - etc.
 - Debian uses the Condorcet method for voting

How to contribute to Debian

- maintain packages
 - you don't need to be a Debian Developer
 - <https://www.debian.org/devel/wnpp/>
- report bugs
- fix bugs
- translations
- others ways: <https://www.debian.org/intro/help>

Is Debian still relevant?

- How does it compare with different distros?
- Docker, Flatpak, AppImage, etc.

Questions?

or: IAmA DD AMA