Removing obsolete packages for fun and profit

Eric Dorland eric@debian.org

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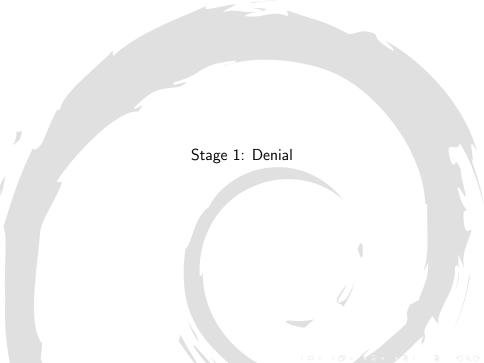
automake in Debian

- I started maintaining this around the automake 1.6 era. (First upload 11 Jun 2002)
- New releases of automake usually have some backwards compatibility problems.
- automake 1.5 broke tons of packages and had to be moved to its own package.
- Older versions get moved to their own package.
- The automake package tends to track the latest release, which is conveninient.
- Warning: depending on automake directly can be risky
- Alternatives let you pick your /usr/bin/automake.

automake problems

- Because of backwards compatibility issues, we package new versions in different packages.
- Proliferation of automake packages in Debian: automake1.4, automake1.5, automake1.6, automake1.7, automake1.8, automake1.9, automake1.10, automake1.11, automake1.12 (only seen in experimental) automake-1.13 and automake-1.14.
- At the wheezy release we had automake1.4, automake1.9, automake1.10 and automake (1.11)
- 4 automake1.4 was last released in 2002.
- on sid we have automake-1.14 on top. 5 automake packages.





Denial

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Denial

- "If I just send mail debian-devel asking for updates to a newer automake everyone will just do it, right?"
- Figure out which packages are at fault using grep-dctrl over the Sources file. (automake has only build dependents)
- 169 source packages.
- use ddlist to make this into a maintainer sorted list.
- Send email to debian-devel (May 27, 2013)



Anger

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- Modified lintian to warn about the dependency via the build-depends-on-obsolete-package tag.
- Filed wishlist bugs with a simple script to just mail the BTS. Hurray email! (September 22, 2013)
- 117 bugs filed. 52 were fixed just by emailing debian-devel and waiting 4 months.
- Used the usertag automake-cleanup-2013

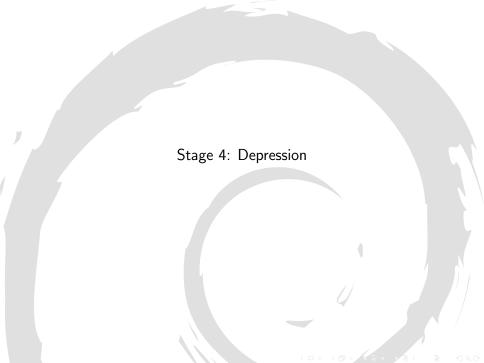


Bargaining

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- 34 packages fixed without supplying a patch.
- Began in late October 2013.
- This is the hard part, tough to automate.
- Frequently just changing the build-deps was enough.
- Sometimes more elaborate patching of the build system was required.
- Used pbuilder to test for build success.
- Mailed it off to BTS and flipped the patch tag.



Depression

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Depression

- "I guess I'm on my own here"
- Uploading NMUs
- Between January and April 2014 uploaded 63 NMUs to delayed upload
- Only 7 were overriden before the delay.
- Applied my patches from the BTS and created changelogs with debchange.
- Built with pbuilder and signed using gnupg-agent.
- Uploaded to DELAYED/10 and used nmudiff to update the bug.

Depression II

While many people thanked me, one maintainer wasn't happy:

- > I've prepared an NMU for <redacted> and
- > uploaded it to DELAYED/10.

NMUing for a wishlist bug???

> Please feel free to tell me if I should delay it longer. Yes, please. inedefinitely. (Or until is is at

least important/RC)

(author redacted to protect the guilty)



Acceptance

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- "In the end it's all in God's W FTP Master's hands."
- automake1.4 and automake1.10 are gone!
- automake1.9 is still in the archive: three FTBFS packages still depend on it.
- Hope to sort that out here and get it out before the freeze.

Open Questions

- Should we just patch & NMU at the same time?
- What tools did I miss?
- What tools would make this easier?
- 4 How can we go faster?
- Where is the fun and/or profit?