Debian Edu Blend

Making Debian the distribution of choice for schools

Andreas Tille

LSM

Bordeaux, July 6, 2010

Overview

1. Debian Edu as a Debian Blend
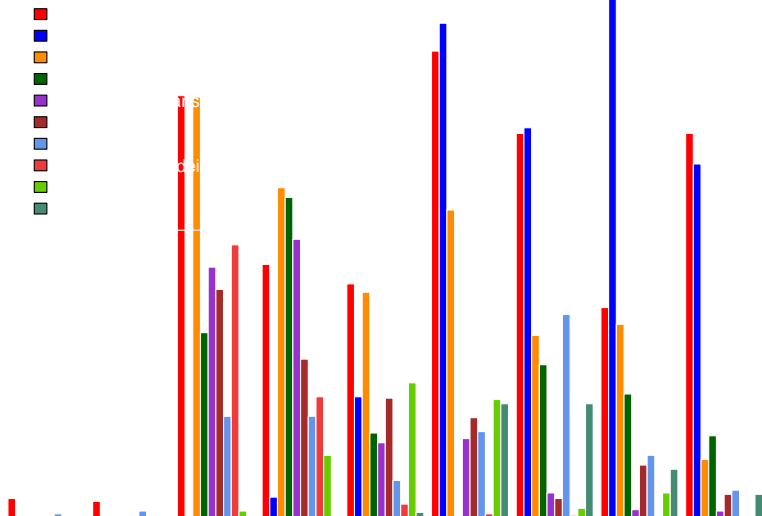
2. Demonstration of Blends tools

3. Future

History: CDD ➜ Debian Pure Blends

- Term Custom Debian Distributions was always misunderstood
- Main misunderstanding: CDD was regarded as "something else than Debian" even if people were told that it is a concept *inside* Debian explicitly
- Dropped the misleading name in favour of a name where you just have to read the docs
- ➜ **Debian Pure Blend (in short Blend)**: a subset of Debian that is configured to support a particular target group out-of-the-box.

History of Debian Edu / SkoleLinux

- SkoleLinux started as a Debian derivative in 2000
- Independently internal project Debian Edu in Debian
- DebConf 2003 Oslo: Debian Edu is dead long live Debian Edu
- SkoleLinux is merging back to Debian
- LinEx: *All* schools of Extremadura are using a Debian derivative
- Educational branch of LinEx joins Debian Edu/SkoleLinux effort
- Merging both projects back to Debian nearly completed

List activity on Debian Edu mailing list

Debian EzGo

- Debian for schools in Taiwan
- Strong cooperation with Debian Edu
- I18n
- Applications for Taiwanese desktop

Other Blends

- Debian Jr
- Debian Med
- Debian Edu
- Debian Science
- Debian EzGo, BrDesktop
- Debian GIS, DebiChem
- Debian Accessibility
- Debian Lex
- Debian Multimedia?
- . . .

Basic goal of Blends

- Debian $>$ 29.000 packages
- Users interested in *subset*
- Groups of specialised users
- Easy installation and configuration
- While Debian stays general support specialists as well
- **No derivative** from Debian

Basic idea: Do not make a separate distribution but make Debian fit for special purpose instead

Goals of Debian Edu

- Provide an easy to use school server
- Simplify management of users (LDAP management)
- Work on old hardware used as thin clients
- Easy access to educational software
- IT security in schools

Using Blends techniques in Debian Edu

Attracting Users

- I18n-ed web pages displaying relevant packages
- Promoting software that builds a complete educational environment
- Rise user interest by providing ready to install educational software

Attracting developers

- Simple way to categorise packages ("tasks files")
- Key documentation feature
- QA pages (Bugs of relevant packages)

Future of Debian Edu

- Become a *pure* Blend
- Needed changes will make Debian more flexible
- Other Blends will profit as well

Enhancing Blends techniques

- Blends techniques need to be enhanced to enable customised installers
- Generalisation of *education-menus* for all Blends
- Live CD generation (using metapackages)

Problems

- Tendency to ignore the 100% inside Debian principle and to derive again for certain implementations
- Reasons
  - Small crew with to few manpower
  - Limited knowledge of Debian and Blends internals
  - Short deadline for release
  - Just deriving and making changes might be faster than changing something at the Debian root
→ We do not need to be fast – we need to be **sustainable**

This talk is available at
http://people.debian.org/˜tille/talks/
Andreas Tille <tille@debian.org>