

Making Things Happen in Debian

Reflections from two DPL terms

Andreas Tille

Hamburg, 2026-05-10



Agenda

- 1 DPL Changelog
- 2 Methods
- 3 Lessons learned



Fun fact: Local media coverage

- It took two days until Sruthi was in Indian media
- It took more than two years until I made it into German media.

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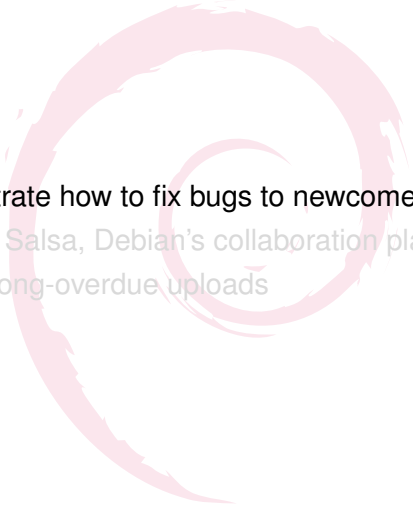
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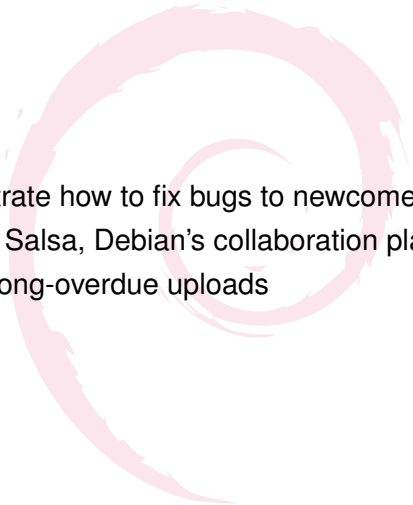
2 Methods

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 - Migrate packages to Salsa, Debian's collaboration platform
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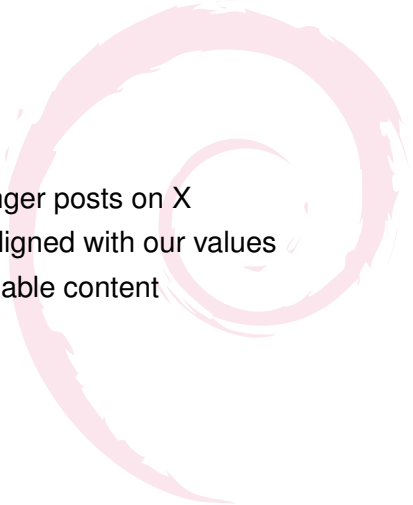
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- **Publicity team no longer posts on X**
- Platform no longer aligned with our values
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2025-10: Creating Archive and DFSG team

- Historically grown situation changed thanks to a hint born inside the team
- Splitting responsibilities of distinct tasks
- Timed to follow the Trixie release
- Faster processing
- Make new processing more transparent
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Collaborative maintenance

- Salsa: our main collaboration platform:
1910 out of 40558 source packages missing (4.71%)
- Professionalism in process is what makes volunteer projects scale
- Strict maintainership: historically sensible, increasingly a source of friction
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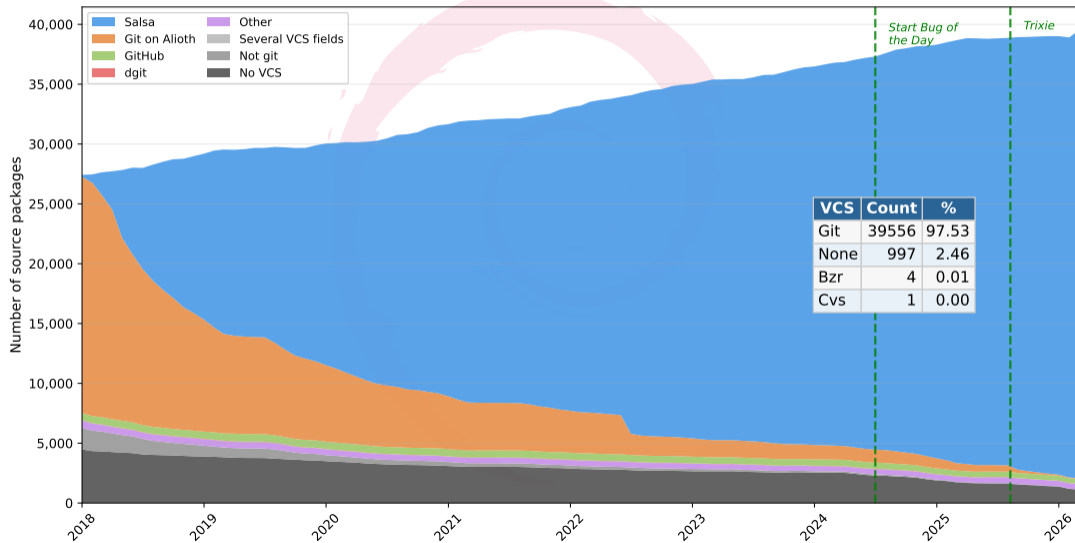
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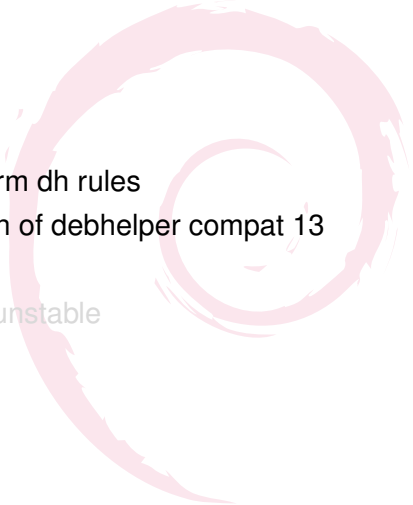
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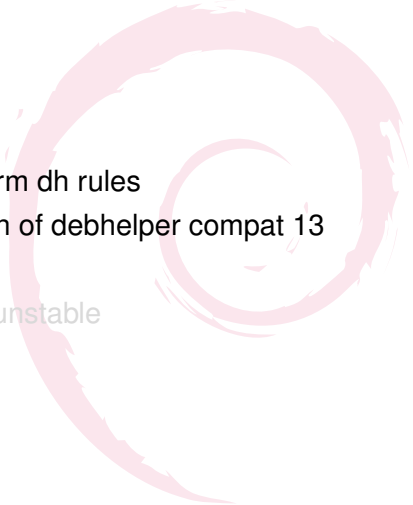
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- Migration to short-form dh rules
 - Widespread adoption of debhelper compat 13
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 - cdb_s removed from unstable
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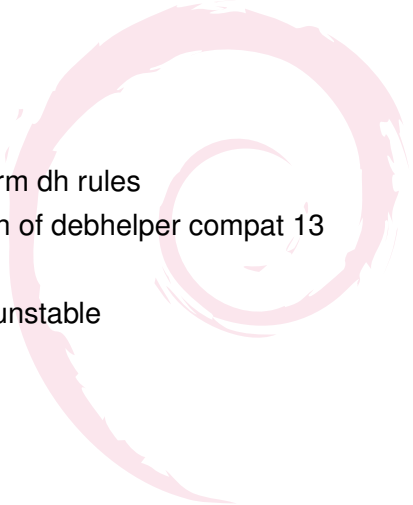
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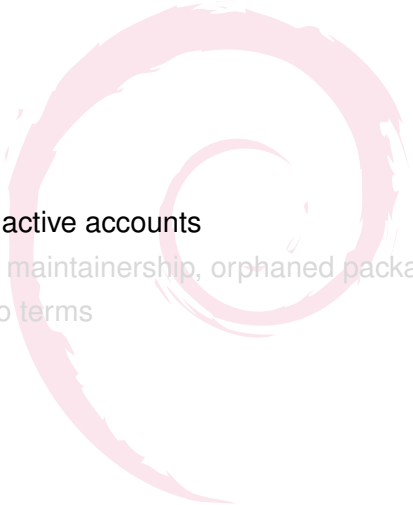
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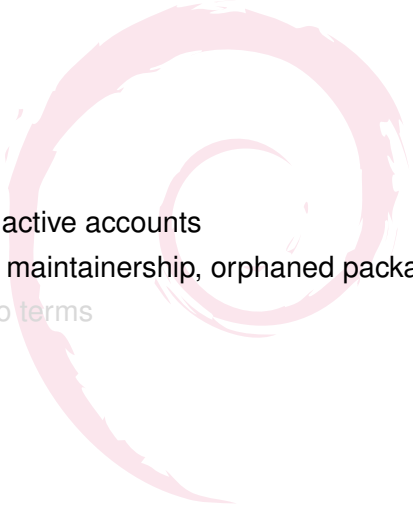
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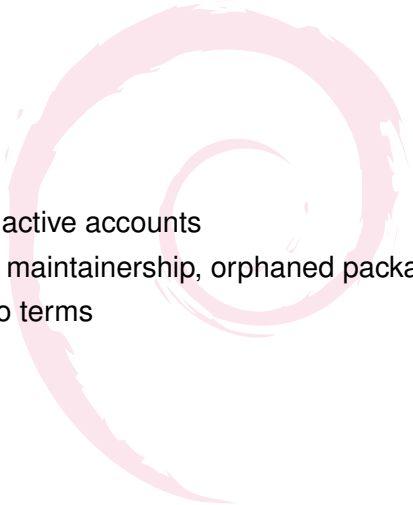
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- Talk to other DDs
- Ask for review




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My usage of LLMs

- **Communication in foreign language**
 - Communication in different cultures
 - Controlling emotions
 - Focusing on topic
 - Neutral interpretation of ambiguous responses
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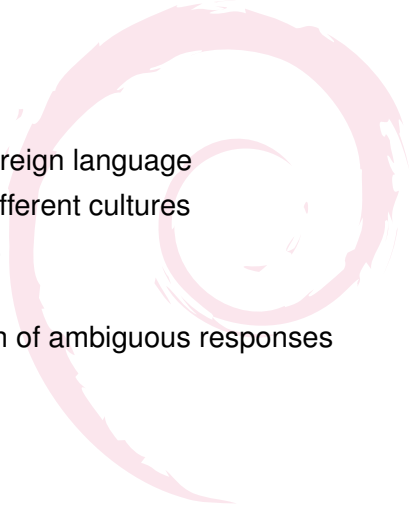
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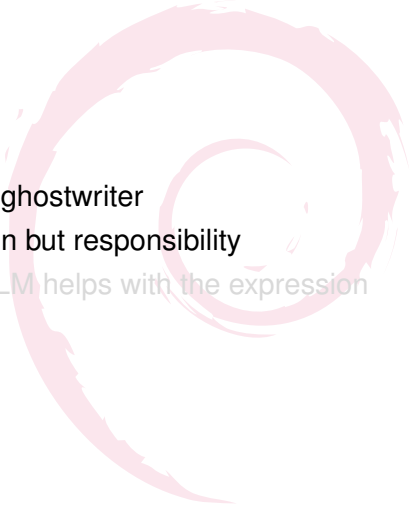
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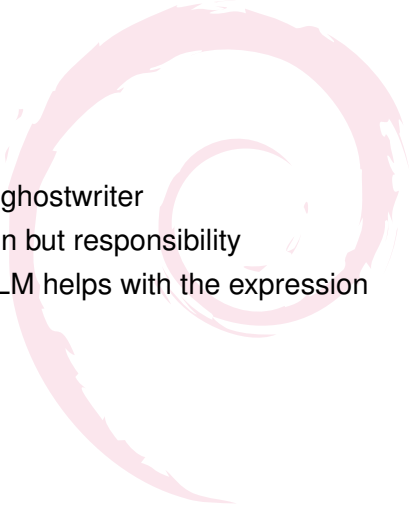
LLMs — a legitimate tool

- Tool for clarity, not a ghostwriter
 - Not depersonalisation but responsibility
 - I own the intent — LLM helps with the expression
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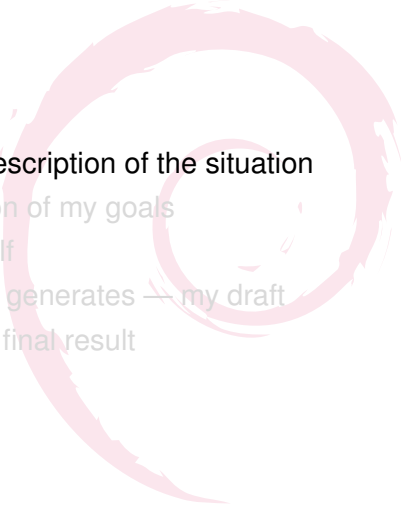
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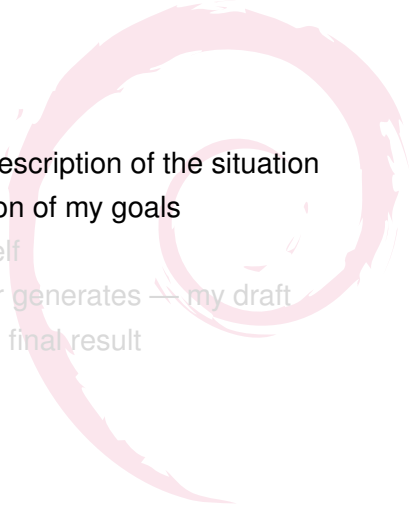
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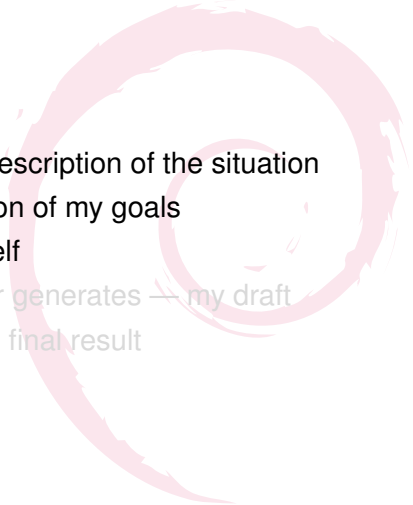
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 - I give a clear definition of my goals
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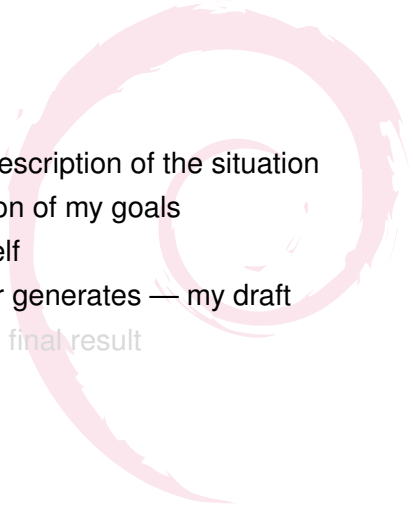
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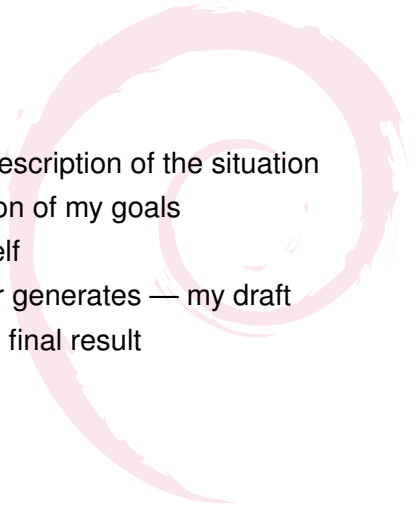
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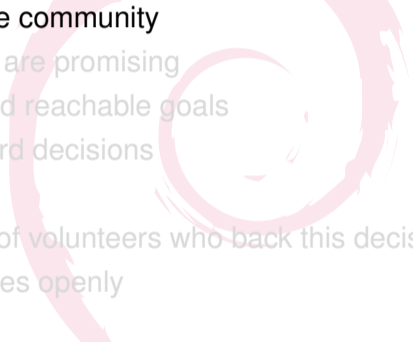
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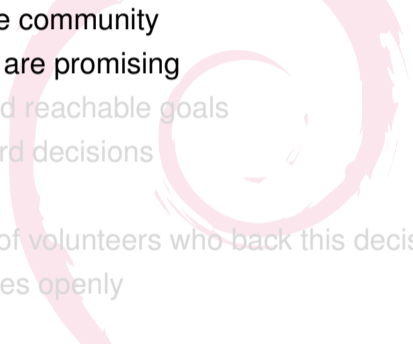
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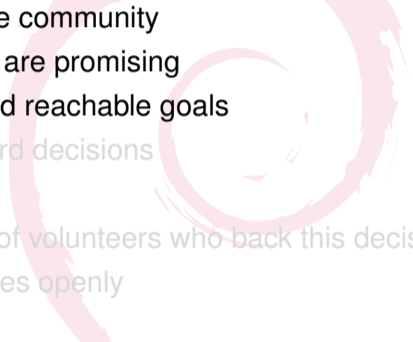
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 - Select the parts that are promising
 - Focus on specific and reachable goals
 - Courage to make hard decisions
 - Don't fear pushback
 - Ensure cooperation of volunteers who back this decision
 - Acknowledge mistakes openly
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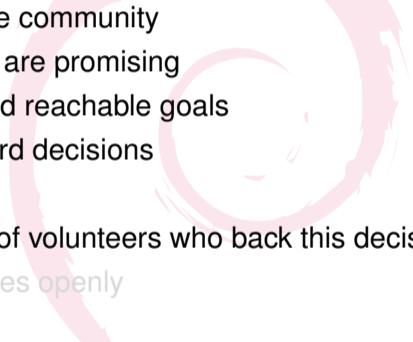
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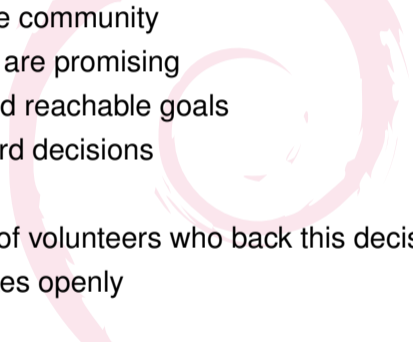
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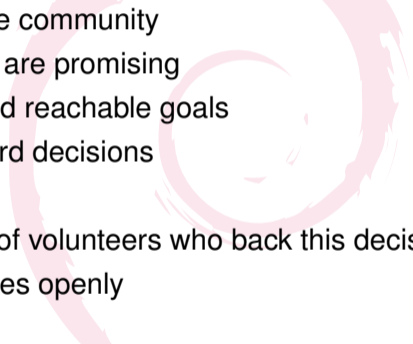
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Lessons learned about Debian culture

- Someone steps up and picks up tasks that need doing
- Everyone benefits, we assume the task will be done
- Stepping back gracefully is harder than stepping up
- Positive exception: Data Protection team

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- Whatever I said, the interpretation was “DPL has said”
- It took one year to understand things and another year to change things.

“Everything must change so that everything can stay the same.”

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