

Free Software In Biology Using Debian-Med

A Resource For Information Agents and Computational Grids

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Debian

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Overview

1 Debian-Med

2 Realisation

3 Conclusions

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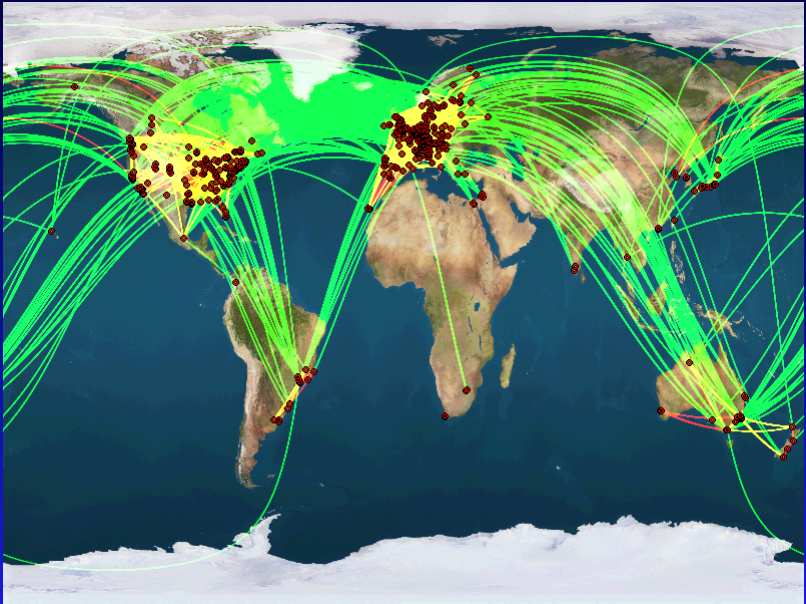
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Debian



Debian-Med



Differences to commercial distributions

Commercial distributor

Debian



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Company

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Oracle, SAP, etc.

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Preferred by

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Market	Customisation	Do-O-Cracy

Customising Debian

- Debian > 10000 packages
- Focus on *medical subset* of those packages
- Packaging and integrating other medical software
- Easy installation and configuration
- Maintaining a general infrastructure for medical users
- General overview about free medical software
- Propagate the idea of Free Software in medicine
- Completely integrated into Debian - **no fork**

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Basic ideas

*Do not make a separate distribution but make
Debian fit for medical care*

*No development of medical software - just
smooth integration of third-party software*

*Debian-Developer = missing link between
upstream author and user*

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Debian - adaptable for any purpose?

- **Developed by about 1000 volunteers**
- Flexible, not bound on commercial interest
- Strict rules (policy) glue all things together
- Common interest of each individual developer:
Get the best operating system for himself.
- Some developers work in the field of medicine
- In contrast to employees of companies every single Debian developer has the freedom and ability to realize his vision
- Every developer is able to influence the development of Debian - he just has to *do* it.

Do-O-Cracy = "The doer decides"

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Road map to come closer to Debian-Med

- 1 Join Debian-Med mailing list
- 2 Visit Debian-Med web site
- 3 Check what is missing
 - Ask for official inclusion
 - Sponsoring program
 - No point in keeping good quality softwares outside of Debian.
- 4 Special configuration
 - Possibilities of Custom Debian Distributions
 - More than collecting software
 - Bringing software to target user
 - Preconfiguration
- 5 Any DFSG compatible software can be included
 - Everyday package building tasks can be saved
 - Share workload with other people following the same road

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What are packages

- Main part of the work of a distributor
- Contains
 - Executable programs
 - configuration
 - `{pre/post}install + {pre/post}remove` scripts
 - Relations to other packages

→ More than just an archive of files
- Enables easy handling
 - Ensures compliance of all dependencies
 - Clean upgrades
 - Easy handling of security updates

→ Basis of modern GNU/Linux distributions

Problem: Increasing number of packages

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Meta-Packages

- ① Relations on other Debian packages (essential)
 - "Depends" for necessary packages
 - "Recommends" for interesting packages
 - "Suggests" for not so important or non-free packages
- ② Menu entries (recommended)
 - Customisation of default entries possible
 - Documentation entry if useful
- ③ Adapted configuration (optional)
 - *debconf* questions or pre-seeding
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Role based user menus



Group effort

- **Heterogeneous shape of Free Software in biology**
- Continuous updates & novel tools
- Several maintainers
- Adherence to a policy
- Inter-institutional software projects as in computational grids and mobile agent technology

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Features of Debian-Med

- **Dedication to software in computational biology**
- Comfortable technical infrastructure
- Support of every high quality biological project
- Build a community based on technical matters

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Debian for Information Agents & Computational Grids?

- Popular, solid, well tested base system
- Includes several interesting applications, more to come
- Great internationalisation support
- Interesting tools
 - FAI (Fully Automatic Installation)
 - *debootstrap*
- Do-O-Cracy

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- Includes several interesting applications, more to come
- Great internationalisation support
- Interesting tools
 - FAI (Fully Automatic Installation)
 - *debootstrap*
- Do-O-Cracy

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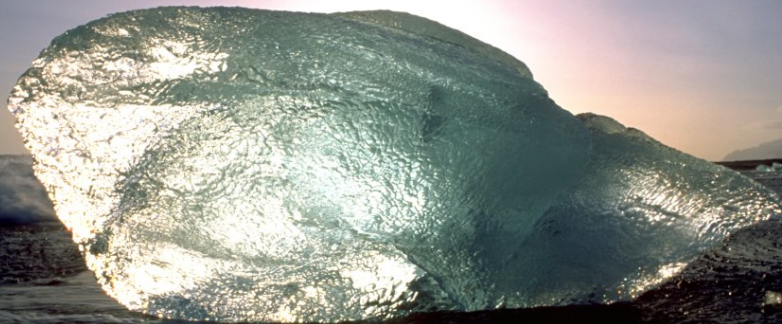
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This talk is available at



<http://people.debian.org/~tille/talks/>

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