Healthy CDDs
Strategies for building a Custom Debian Distribution

Andreas Tille

Debian Conference 8

Mar del Plata, August 12, 2008
1 History

2 Development
   - Measures for development
   - Growth of Metapackages
   - Activity of members

3 Comparison of CDDs
   - Graphing activity
   - Conclusion
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Libre Software Meeting (DebConf 1) - Bordeaux 2001
There is a laptop open
Who are the others?

- **Debian Junior** (2000)
- **Debian Med** (2002)
- **Debian Edu (SkoleLinux)** (2002)
- DebConf 3 Oslo “Custom Debian Distributions”
- **Debian** Accessibility (2003)
- **Debian** Desktop (2003)
- **Debian** Lex (2003)
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Considering some numbers ...

- **Number of users?**
  - Popularity contest?
  - Specific software has usually low popcon numbers
  - Usage of metapackages might give some hints but popcon works bad for these - the “content” is not actually used

- **Number of developers**
  - Number of Vcs commits → not every CDD uses common Vcs
  - Number of mailing list subscribers → people tend to stay subscribed
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Debian Med

Debian Edu

Debian Junior

Debian Lex

Healthy CDDs

Mar del Plata, August 12, 2008
Signal, noise, artefacts

- Not only SPAM is noise
- (Un)subscribe
- Debian Junior list peak in October 2003:
  - Replacement for Abiword: LyX? Openoffice? → 43 postings
  - Philosophy (was Re: Replacement for Abiword: LyX? Openoffice?) → 33 postings
  - Future replacement for Abiword: Tux Writer? → 3 postings
  - 79 postings about specific topic out of 89 non-SPAM

- Intended and unintended robots
  - December 2005: 92 messages by gentoo-\w+\+help@gentoo.org about subscription status to debian-desktop@lists.debian.org
  - Messages by Debian Installer, bugzilla-skolelinux, Archive Administrator,...
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Dependency of metapackages

- Technical output - number of metapackages and their dependencies
- Probably good measure
- Hard to obtain because not everything is in Vcs
- Querying `snapshot.debian.net` possible but really time consuming

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Selected metapackages of Debian Med

Number of dependencies of selected Debian Med metapackages

- Microbiology
- Imaging
- Practice

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Number of subscribers?
Activity of communication measure

- Intensity and quality of communication
- Every CDD has a mailing list
- Who are the active posters (except robots)
- Influence of SPAM, noise, flames, etc. is reduced
- Mind the run-over-by-bus factor
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Top 10 posters on debian-med@lists.debian.org

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Top 10 posters on debian-edu@lists.debian.org

Petter.Reinholdtsen
Ralf.Gesellensetter
Holger.Levsen
Jonas.Smedegaard
Finn.Arne.Johansen
Knut.Yrvin
Andreas.Tille
Andreas.Schuldei
Steffen.Joeris
Klaus.Ade.Johnstad

Andreas Tille (Debian Conference 8) Healthy CDDs Mar del Plata, August 12, 2008
Top 10 posters on debian-jr@lists.debian.org

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Mar del Plata, August 12, 2008
Top 10 posters on debian-accessibility@lists.d.o

- Mario.Lang
- Samuel.Thibault
- Kenny.Hitt
- Jason.White
- Veli.Pekka.Tatila
- Sebastian.Dellit
- Andor.Demarteau
- Nath
- Frans.Pop
- Petra.Ritter

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Top 10 posters on debian-lex@lists.debian.org

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Successfull SPAM protection: in 2008 this list gathered only SPAM

Peak in November 2007:

- Debian-Lex Rebirth? 23
- Debian-Lex Rebirth? - wiki 8
- Rebirth 1
- Rebirth of Debian-lex 2

Good example for “vanished leader”
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Top 10 posters on debian-nonprofit@lists.debian.org
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Top 10 posters on debian-custom@lists.debian.org

Andreas Tille
Otavio Salvador
Sergio Talens Oliag
Free Ekanayaka
Ben Armstrong
Jonas Smedegaard
Vagrant Cascadian
Tzafrir Cohen
Vagrant
C..Gatzemeier

2004 2005 2006 2007 2008
0 50 100 150 200

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Most CDDs depend from single person

- Debian Edu has a really healthy crew
- Debian Med has at least run-over-by-bus factor two
- Others seem to depend from single person
- Need of better management
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This talk is available at

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

Andreas Tille <tille@debian.org>