Debian Pure Blends

Andreas Tille

LinuxTag Berlin 2010

Berlin, June 11, 2010
Overview

1. Introduction

2. Derivative or Blend?

3. Future
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.
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Examples of Blends

- Debian Jr
  - Debian Med
  - Debian Edu
  - Debian Science
  - Debian EzGo, BrDesktop
  - Debian Accessibility, DebiChem
  - Debian Lex, Debian GIS
  - Debian Multimedia?
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Basic goal of Blends

- Debian flat pool of $> 29,000$ 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*
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Upstream - Debian Developer - User

- Tie a solid network of Debian developers, upstream developers ("developing experts") and users
- Rationale: Experts in this field need help in build system / packaging
- Upstream anticipates enhancements of build system and security audit
- Finally support upstream developers to become Debian maintainers
- Penetrating specific work fields with Linux makes it even more acceptable in general
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Reasons for deriving

- Do you feel a need to derive from Debian?
- Define your problem why you can not stick to pure Debian!
- Have you contacted Debian about this problem?
- Do you think other people might have the same problem?
- Is the number of these people large enough to form a team?
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Successfully “competing” Debian?

- Extra distribution costs extra effort
- Are you sure you can maintain all QA means of Debian?
- Are you able to cope with innovations inside Debian?
- Infrastructure (BTS, Mirrors)
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Number of derivatives

**Old distrowatch.com statistics (pre-Ubuntu times)**

- Based on Debian GNU/Linux: 129 Distributions
- Based on Fedora Core/Red Hat Linux: 63 Distributions
- Based on Knoppix: 50 Distributions
- Other bases: <30 Distributions

- Something to be proud about?
- Diversion and confusion of users is growing for no reason
- Ubuntu now *shares the same problem*
  - growing number of *buntus*, or distribution derived from – and named after – Ubuntu, rather ridiculous
  - Trademark and logo misuse issues
  - Suggested procedure: Remix
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Why not rather working together???

- Isn’t it more clever to fix the problem at the root?
- Could you imagine to do the adaptation inside Debian?
- If any needs for deriving might remain this will be simplified drastically
- Are you aware of the Do-O-Cracy principle inside Debian?
- The doer decides - just be the doer yourself and enhance Debian
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Cover more workfields

- Find more supporters for different workfields
- Enhance Blends framework techniques to make its usage more attractive
- Try to bring back external projects to Debian by providing attractive tools
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This talk is available at
http://people.debian.org/~tille/talks/
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