Debian Pure Blends
How to work with the Blends framework

Andreas Tille

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Overview

1. How to start a Blend
   - Subsetting Debian
   - Forming a team

2. Used techniques
   - Metapackages
   - Web sentinel

3. Future
Debian Pure Blends

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Why creating a Debian Pure Blend

- Focussing users to subset of packages
- Adapting system and user interface to specific needs (working environment, user language, etc.)
- 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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Attracting people to use Blends

Users

- I18n-ed web pages displaying relevant packages
- Promoting software that builds a complete working environment
- Rise user interest by providing ready to install software in the context of their work field

Developers

- Simple way to categorise packages
- Basic documentation feature
- QA pages (Bugs of relevant packages)
- Acceptance of new methods higher if the techniques provided are convincing enough
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A Blend is more than just technique

- Choose an interesting topic for a large user group
- Try to get people involved
  - developers
  - users
- Invite maintainers of applications fitting the scope of the Blend
- Involve upstream maintainers and active users of interesting applications (and possibly turn them into DDs)
- Example: Debian has now at least five more developers because they joined via Debian Med involvement
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Special applications
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Define set of dependency relations in tasks files

blends-dev does the following automatically:

- Verify availability of Depends / Recommends
- Packages unavailable in main will be turned into Suggests
- Create proper debian/control file to build valid metapackages
- Create tasksel control file <blend>-tasks.desc
Define set of dependency relations in *tasks* files

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Building metapackages using \textit{blends-dev}

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Using `blends-dev`

```
#!/usr/bin/make -f
include /usr/share/blends-dev/rules
```

debian/control.stub

- debian/control will be autogenerated
- Only information for source package is in stub
- See
  - /usr/share/doc/blends-dev/examples/debian
  - `/usr/share/doc/blends-dev/examples/tasks/*`

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See
  - /usr/share/doc/blends-dev/examples/tasks/*
  - or other Blends for working examples
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Using *blends-dev*

**debian/rules**

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### tasks/*

See `/usr/share/doc/blends-dev/examples/tasks` or other Blends for working examples
Tasks files

Similar to `debian/control`

Task: `taskname`

Description: *Shortdescription*
  *Longdescription*

Depends: *some dependant packages*

Recommends: *some recommended packages*

Suggests: *some suggested packages*
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**Currently tasks and bugs pages**

- Providing information about packages of interest
- Created by reading tasks files from Blends SVN containing
  - Dependency relations of packages inside Debian
  - Preliminary package information / WNPP
- Gathering all available information about the package dependencies defined in the tasks file from
  - Ultimate Debian Database (UDD): (translated) descriptions, versions and architectures, screenshot URLs, bugs, etc.
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- Key entry point for users
- Quick overview about what’s inside Debian regarding their specific work field
- Turned out to be QA tool for developers as well
- Meta information like
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  - Maintainer and VCS of Debian packaging
  - Screenshot (http://screenshots.debian.net)
  - DEHS, versions and architectures
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→ Demo http://blends.alioth.debian.org
Prospective packages

- **Depends:** *not yet existing package name*
- **Homepage:** *Homepage of project*
- **Responsible:** *Future maintainer (optional)*
- **License:** *License of software to package*
- **WNPP:** *Bug number (optional)*
- **Vcs-vcstype:** *Vcs URI (optional)*
- **Vcs-Browser:** *Vcs URL (optional)*
- **Pkg-URL:** *URL to unofficial package*
- **Pkg-Description:** *Description of prospective package*
Configuration of web sentinel

svn://svn.debian.org/blends/blends/blends/trunk/webtools/webconf/

Blend: debian-med
ProjectName: Debian Med
ProjectUrl: http://debian-med.alioth.debian.org/
Homepage: http://www.debian.org/devel/deb...
AliothUrl: http://alioth.debian.org/projectc...
ProjectList: debian-med@lists.debian.org
LogoUrl: http://debian-med.alioth.debian.org/
OutputDir: /var/lib/gforge/chroot/home/gro...
DataDir: /var/lib/gforge/chroot/home/gro...
VcsDir: /svn/blends/projects/med/trunk/...
CSS: ../inc/style.css
Advertising: _('Help us to see Debian used by...'
PkgList: debian-med-packaging@lists.alio...
Weighting bugs

- Try to find a measure for bugs of dependant packages

- Currently not normalised to the number of dependencies but rather regarding absolute number of bugs

- Weighting numbers for the different severities ranging from 10 for the RC bugs until 0 for wishlist bugs

Example calculation

1 serious bug in dependent pkg: \(1 \times 10 \times 3 = 30\)
2 important bugs in dependent pkg: \(2 \times 5 \times 3 = 30\)
1 important bug in suggested pkg: \(1 \times 5 \times 1 = 5\)
1 normal bug in dependent pkg: \(1 \times 3 \times 3 = 9\)
1 minor bug in dependent pkg: \(1 \times 1 \times 3 = 3\)

weighted sum = 77
Weighting bugs

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**Example calculation**

1. 1 serious bug in dependent pkg: $1 \times 10 \times 3 = 30$
2. 2 important bugs in dependent pkg: $2 \times 5 \times 3 = 30$
3. 1 important bug in suggested pkg: $1 \times 5 \times 1 = 5$
4. 1 normal bug in dependent pkg: $1 \times 3 \times 3 = 9$
5. 1 minor bug in dependent pkg: $1 \times 1 \times 3 = 3$

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<th>Weighting</th>
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Weighted sum = 77
Colouring according bugs weight

- Metapackage can not be in status "good" if there is at least serious (or higher) bug in a dependant package
- Not "very good" if there is a RC bug in a suggested package
- Two RC bugs in suggested packages might qualify for "good" - if there are only a very view other bugs
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Planned features for web sentinel

More QA overviews

- Lintian report overview
- Adding Ubuntu bugs
- I18n information of applications
- Upstream metadata like
  - Please cite
  - Link to donation page
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Planned features for web sentinel

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Build metapackages based on UDD information

Thus enabling `architecture=any` metapackages

Include tasks file information into UDD
Make `blends-dev` use UDD

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Further enhancements

- Rewrite *blends-dev* to use UDD
- Make even more projects like DebiChem and Debian-GIS actively using the framework
- Try to bring back external projects to Debian by providing attractive tools
Try to establish technique

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This talk can be found at

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

Andreas Tille <tille@debian.org>