One year of pandemie
Lessons learned in Debian Med team

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Back in 2001 at DebConf 1

the first talk about the concept was prepared

Role of Blends to attract specific users
Med-bio task of Debian Med

Debian Med has attracted one developer per year

According to a survey in Wiki

- Debian Med has 45 DDs+DMs (not all active any more)
- 23 DDs because Debian Med exists
- 16 out of the 23 above extended their activity to other fields in Debian
- 13 out of the 23 above are currently active in Debian Med
- 3 DDs and 1 DM are new after the April-Hackathon

Not all tasks are appropriately covered

- Bioinformatics: very good, currently working on Workflows and AI packages
- Medical imaging: good
- Medical practice: there is something (gnumed, just lost freemedforms)
- Epidemiology: several R packages, working on AI packages
- Hospitals: close to nothing (fis-gtm) . . . besides a stable but unspecific OS

Interpreting graphs in certain development cycles

- Some graphs of Debian Med team
- Also R packaging team graphs since lots of Debian Med packages are in pkg-r team
- Considerations about "freeze depression"

Persons committing to Debian Med packages per week

Events
- Hackathon
- Release
- Sprint
Commits to Debian Med packages per week

Interpreting some peaks

- Some peaks related to release process like upcoming freeze and not connected to hackatons or sprints
- All time peak of 716 commits in week starting at 2020-11-30 caused by four very active DDs: Andreas Tille 451, Étienne Mollier 72, Steffen Möller 62 and Niles Patrick 58
- Effort to have up to date packages before freeze
- Next slide: Main activity in pkg-r team is a bit delayed

Commits to pkg-r packages per week

Checking the theory of general “freeze depression”

- Graph over all teams in team metrics
- Start of freeze is marked by transition freeze (if exists)
- Some kind of artificial peaks (for instance in week 2021-04-12 with 3592 commits by pkg-js team)
- There are other peak examples outside freeze (for instance in week 2020-02-17 with 7315 commits by pkg-perl team)

Commits of all teams verifying “freeze depression”
Pre-freeze activity

- Right before the freeze in January 2021 three teams did a lot of uploads right before the freeze (pkg-perl 916, ruby-extras 240, pkg-go 210)
- Similarly in Debian Med team with the all time peak some weeks before the freeze as mentioned above
Communication

- Daily jitsy meeting
- Mailinglist
- IRC
- Telegram
- Established in online sprint February 2021: Matrix

Amazing ftpmaster support in first hackathon

- Tons of kudos to ftpmaster for the great support!
- Many packages in NEW queue were processed in less than 24 h!
- This was the most fun in my whole 22 year of Debian developer life
- It is extremely motivating to get such support
- To quote some understatement of Scott Kitterman:
  <ScottK> I didn’t do anything beyond taking some time off work so I would have more time to pick up the FTP Team end of getting the new packages in.

Different contributions in hackathons

- Former contributors who came back for a certain period of time
- Permanent contributors who increased activity
- Other DDs/DMs (specifically ftpmaster) contributed
- New contributors
  - for a certain period of time
  - who stuck to the project
- Former and new GSoC / Outreachy students
- Non-technical contributors checking licenses, program versions and contacting upstream
- Family members with a lot of patience

Following Hackathons and Online-Sprint

- Two following Hackathons in two months distance not as productive
- Yearly sprint was done online
  - Set of attendees was different than real life sprints
  - Long term attendees with less/no activity
  - More non-european attendees
  - Continuously open Jitsi-room
  - Meeting inside the room every second hour

Long term effect of COVID-19 on the Debian Med project

- The Debian Med project got a totally new drive
- It is even more fun to work in this project
- While the actual spin of the hackathon faded away 4 new DDs/DMs are continuously contributing since then
  - Étienne Mollier HPC, Python, gcc
  - Nilesh Patra Tries hard to beat me in uploads and succeeded
  - Pierre Gruet Java competence
  - Shayan Doust Contributed to teammetrics with R scripts
- Majority of the newcomers is not originated in the field of bioinformatics or medicine
- Everybody is kindly invited to share this fun with us and join the project

Long term effect of COVID-19 on my own work inside the project

- While the hackathon was running my work shifted from packaging way stronger to mentoring and organising
- Later it went back to “normal” - but with support of more developers
- Namely Nilesh Patra is taking over work I previously felt alone with
- Its even more fun than before to see all those skilled developers doing stuff I could never approach myself
- I’m very happy about all those hackathon contributions but I’m wondering how to keep on gathering more contributors.
This talk is available at
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