

Dealing with Dormant Packages

Ensuring Debian's High Standards

Andreas Tille

Debian

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Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

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Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD

Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

Anybody can upload
+ opt-out

Less invasive
processes

Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité

This is a BoF

Please interrupt me at any time

... I'll need your help with two topics in parallel.

1 Experiences from Bug of the Day

- Intro BotD
- Conclusions of BotD

2 Existing procedures to touch other maintainers packages

- ## 3 Suggestions
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 - Less invasive processes

Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

Andreas Tille

Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD

Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

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processes

Intention Attracting newcomers

- Practical demonstration
- Limited time frame

Outcome Fixed lots of QA issues

- Reported potentially MIA maintainers
- Fixed lots of packages not touched by maintainers
- Removal of orphaned / orphaned / untraced packages
- Packages not touched were migrated to

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Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

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Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD

Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

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+ opt-out

Less invasive
processes

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Outcome Fixed lots of QA issues

- Reported potentially MIA maintainers
- 100% of bugs in `unmaintained` not touched by maintainers in 1 year
- 100% of bugs in `unmaintained` orphaned / unmaintained
- 100% of bugs in `unmaintained` were migrated to `unmaintained`

Intention Attracting newcomers

- Practical demonstration
- Limited time frame

Outcome Fixed lots of QA issues

- Reported potentially MIA maintainers
- Fixed lots of packages not touched by maintainer for >5 years
- Removal of lowpopcon / orphaned / unneeded packages
- Packages we touched were migrated to Salsa

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- Open bug (not tagged wontfix or pending)
 - Standards-Version < 4
 - not uploaded last 5 years by the maintainer of the package
 - Not on Salsa (No Vcs, Alioth, SVN, CVS, somewhere else)
- Five candidates, (at least) one will be manually picked
- <http://blends.debian.net/botd/botd.html>

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Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

Andreas Tille

Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD

Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

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- Quite some packages with
 - Lots of bugs (even very simple ones) unanswered
 - Homepage, watch file not up to date
 - Outdated packaging standards
 - Outdated copyright (format)
 - Not on Salsa for "no good reason"
- Issues not addressed for several years

Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

Andreas Tille

Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD

Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

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Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

Andreas Tille

Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD

Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

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Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

Andreas Tille

Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD

Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

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Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

Andreas Tille

Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD

Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

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Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

Andreas Tille

Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD

Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

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Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

Andreas Tille

Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD

Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

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Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

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Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD

Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

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+ opt-out

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- Ownership-Based Maintenance

- Made perfectly sense historically since experts were responsible
- No technical means enforcing this - just a social rule
- Debian has evolved over >30 years
- Enhancements since team maintenance using Open Maintenance Model
- Volunteers have never subscribed to signal leaving

Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

Andreas Tille

Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD

Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

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+ opt-out

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Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

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Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD

Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

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Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

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Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD
Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

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Less invasive
processes

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Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

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Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD

Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

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Less invasive
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Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

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Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD

Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

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+ opt-out

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- Intro BotD
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- No response from about 80% of Maintainers
- Fix Homepage / watch file of 80% of packages
- DEP5 for 80% of packages
- Only 80% of packages worth keeping in Debian
- 80% of the bugs are really simple
- More than 80% have at least one smell (besides not on Salsa)

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Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

Andreas Tille

Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD

Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

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+ opt-out

Less invasive
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Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

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Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD

Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

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+ opt-out

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- There are no efficient procedures to modernise packages
- Only few volunteers to work on this due to
 - lack of non-frustrating procedures
 - abandonment of most DUs

Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

Andreas Tille

Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD

Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

Anybody can upload
+ opt-out

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Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

Andreas Tille

Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD

Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

Anybody can upload
+ opt-out

Less invasive
processes

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Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

Andreas Tille

Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD

Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

Anybody can upload
+ opt-out

Less invasive
processes

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Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

Andreas Tille

Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD
Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

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+ opt-out

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- Formerly only dedicated changes permitted
- Recently relaxed to fix package smells
- Does not solve the problem of inactive maintainer

Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

Andreas Tille

Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD
Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

Anybody can upload
+ opt-out

Less invasive
processes

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Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

Andreas Tille

Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD
Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

Anybody can upload
+ opt-out

Less invasive
processes

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Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

Andreas Tille

Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD
Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

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+ opt-out

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processes

- Find a new team
- Working on all smells is fine
- New Uploader is required

Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

Andreas Tille

Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD
Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

Anybody can upload
+ opt-out

Less invasive
processes

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Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

Andreas Tille

Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD
Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

Anybody can upload
+ opt-out

Less invasive
processes

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Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

Andreas Tille

Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD
Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

Anybody can upload
+ opt-out

Less invasive
processes

- Most teams permit uploads from contributors not mentioned as Uploader
- Special team on Salsa: Debian
- Several packages migrated from collab-maint on Alioth

Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

Andreas Tille

Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD
Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

Anybody can upload
+ opt-out

Less invasive
processes

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Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

Andreas Tille

Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD
Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

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+ opt-out

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processes

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Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

Andreas Tille

Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD
Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

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+ opt-out

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- Tracking down inactive maintainers is also a security issue
- More than 30 potential MIA maintainers reported
- The MIA team is actively working on improving the process.

Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

Andreas Tille

Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD
Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

Anybody can upload
+ opt-out

Less invasive
processes

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Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

Andreas Tille

Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD
Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

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+ opt-out

Less invasive
processes

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- 1 Experiences from Bug of the Day
 - Intro BotD
 - Conclusions of BotD
- 2 Existing procedures to touch other maintainers packages
- 3 **Suggestions**
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- *No barriers between packages and other people*

Our current policy is effectively restricting the freedom of a DD who is not mentioned as Maintainer / Uploader.

- *Seeking mechanism for shared, collective, diffused responsibility:* "If this package is in bad shape, the whole Debian project should be held responsible. Either it gets fixed by someone or it gets RM'd by someone."
- Lets do some brain storming about possible options

(please take notes in the pad)

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- Introduce a file, such as `debian/dont_touch_my_package`
- Maintainers can document their reasons for discouraging others from uploading the package
- File should include timestamp
Problem: refreshing time stamp without upload
- *No changes of workflow, should be discussed separately*
- Refinements:

● *Approved or not: introducing the opt-outing the statement?*

● *Shouldn't we have a way to mark packages as "Closed for touch" or "Closed for upload"?*

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Maintainer: Debian developers <debian-devel@lists.debian.org>

- Same as "Debian QA team" but it signals active maintainance by at least one of the named uploaders
- Rather use collab-maint-devel mailing list as explained in CollaborativeMaintenance Wiki
- Responsibility of Uploaders

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Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

Andreas Tille

Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD
Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

Anybody can upload
+ opt-out

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- Using `README.source` and agree to some machine-readable template
- New update-policy field in `d/control` featuring `DONT_TOUCH`, `FEEL_FREE_TO_UPDATE`, `NMU_WELCOME`, `ASK_ME_FIRST`, `FREE_FOR_ADOPTION`, ...
- Documenting reasons for discouraging others from uploading

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Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

Andreas Tille

Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD

Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

Anybody can upload
+ opt-out

Less invasive
processes

- Changes with such heavy consequences certainly require GR
- First finding some consensus
- For the moment collecting feedback + more suggestions
- Volunteers to work on promising suggestions please contact me

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Intro BotD

Conclusions of BotD

Existing
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the Day

Intro BotD

Conclusions of BotD

Existing
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Packages

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Experiences
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the Day

Intro BotD

Conclusions of BotD

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procedures to
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- 1 Experiences from Bug of the Day
 - Intro BotD
 - Conclusions of BotD
- 2 Existing procedures to touch other maintainers packages
- 3 **Suggestions**
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 - **Less invasive processes**

Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

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Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD
Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
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Less invasive
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- Send an email to the maintainer and wait a defined period (e.g. 21 days)
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Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

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Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD
Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
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Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

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Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD
Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
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Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

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Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD
Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

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- *Positive summary about intention to NMU*
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- ITN name is a bit redundant
- Slightly expanding the NMU process
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- Just offering a bigger one-off help to the maintainer

Dealing with
Dormant
Packages

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Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD
Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

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Dormant
Packages

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Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD

Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

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Dormant
Packages

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Experiences
from Bug of
the Day

Intro BotD

Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
maintainers
packages

Suggestions

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Dormant
Packages

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Experiences
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the Day

Intro BotD

Conclusions of BotD

Existing
procedures to
touch other
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Dormant
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Experiences
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Intro BotD

Conclusions of BotD

Existing
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More ideas, volunteers?



Slides available at
<https://people.debian.org/~tille/talks/>
Andreas Tille <tille@debian.org>