

Giving Back

Contributing to Debian and the New Maintainer Process



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Session 1: The Debian Community and Bugtracker

- What we'll talk about:
 - brief overview of who I am and why the hell you should listen to me
 - Debian community resources: where you can go for information and help
 - the Debian bugtracker!
 - how to use it
 - when to use it
 - how to use it better and not make people hate you

Random Notes

- Today might be a little short
- Tomorrow might be a little long!
 - Debian packaging crash course.
 - In a different room: 1-134
- Questions welcome at any point during the presentation
 - the point of this is not “sit here and listen to me talk”

A Little About Me

- Debian user since fall 2004
- Debian contributor since spring 2005
- Almost through the New Maintainer process!
 - waiting for my account manager to review my app
- I'm new enough to still remember the beginning, but old enough to actually know some stuff!

So You Want to Help Debian

- Lots of different ways to help!
 - many different skillsets needed
 - packaging
 - graphic artists
 - documentation
 - submitting bugs!
 - translators
 - triaging bugs, BTS maintenance
 - coding, of course
 - You don't have to be a hotshot programmer to help Debian. If you are, though, there's nothing wrong with that either...

Community Resource: Mailing Lists

- Lots of them! Lists for everything!
- Read the rules before posting
- Manage subscriptions via web or email
- Major ones to be subscribed to
 - debian-devel-announce
 - debian-devel (beware, high traffic)
 - whatever the list is for what you're interested in helping with
- All lists are publicly archived except debian-private
 - mark spam!

Community Resource: IRC

- nearly every subproject also has an irc channel
- irc.debian.org – maps to the OFTC network
- #debian-devel is main development channel
- most channels are in the form of #debian-foo
- lurk a while if you don't feel comfortable speaking up right away

Community Resource: Alioth

- recent trend in package maintaining: have a team
- if it's a big and/or important package, maybe the package you want to work on has a team you can join
- a good way to get involved in maintaining well-used packages
- you don't have to be a developer to get an alioth account
- best way to join a team is to talk to its leaders

Why Debian Developers Hate Bugzilla

- Debian uses a home-grown bugtracker called debbugs
- all commands are e-mail based
- you don't need an account, or any password to remember
- use reportbug to submit bugs

Submitting Good Bug Reports

- send separate bugs in separate reports
- submit as much information as you can!
- be polite – remember that the person receiving the report is a volunteer
- use a proper severity
- if you can, submit a patch
- don't go overboard!
- don't be ridiculous with wishlist bugs
 - many would better be discussed with upstream

BTS Cleanup/Bug Triage

- keeping the BTS clean is important for keeping problems visible
- large teams like, e.g. the GNOME packaging team get a lot of bugs
- check with a team/maintainer before starting work on their bugs
- if you subscribe to a package's PTS, you'll get its bug reports

Where to Go for Help

- the documentation
 - <http://www.debian.org/devel/>
 - <http://wiki.debian.org/>
 - Google
- #debian-mentors
- debian-mentors@lists.debian.org
- someone you know

We Want YOU!

- it IS possible to go to MIT and still contribute to Debian
- scale back during term
- don't take on more than you can handle
 - (maybe I should remember this myself)

cliché ->

