The Debian GNU/Linux FAQ

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1 What is Debian GNU/Linux?

Debian GNU/Linux is the result of a volunteer effort to create a high-quality non-commercial Linux distribution.

A complete explanation of the Debian GNU/Linux project and its goals can be found in the Debian GNU/Linux Manifesto by Ian A. Murdock, which can be found on `sunsite.unc.edu` as `sunsite.unc.edu:/pub/Linux/distributions/debian/info`.

1.1 Ok, now I know what Debian is...what's Linux!?

In short, Linux is a Unix clone for 386/486/Pentium PCs - ports to other systems are under development. It is written by Linus Torvalds and many other hackers and aims towards POSIX compliance.

For more information, (see Section B.1 [See A Linux Primer], page 43).

1.2 What's the difference between Debian and other Linux distributions?

Most Linux distributions are developed by individuals or small, closed groups. Debian GNU/Linux is developed in the open, by many people. Furthermore it is supported by the Free Software Foundation. (see Section 1.3 [See the next question], page 2).

Each developer is responsible for maintaining one or more 'packages'. Packages generally contain all of the files necessary to implement a set of related commands or features. Packages come in two flavors, binary and source. Binary packages contain: pre- compiled executables, configuration files, man/info pages, copyright information, and other documentation. Source packages contain all of the files necessary to create the comparable binary package.

Debian comes with a set of package manipulation tools, as well as tools for system setup and the installation of Debian itself. This allows individual users or administrators to install, update, or remove specific programs or features.

1.3 Are there any organizations formally supporting Debian GNU/Linux?

Yes, there are two organizations that support the Debian GNU/Linux project: Debian Association, Inc. and The Free Software Foundation (FSF).

1.3.1 Debian Association, Inc.

Debian Association, Inc. (formerly known as the Debian Linux Association (DLA)) is an organization that has been formed to serve as the official maintainer and central supporter of Debian. Please note that Debian Association, Inc., while legally a business entity does not exist for profit's sake. Its primary objective is to advance the cause of free software by making a system based entirely upon free software available to everyone who wants it and by further developing and improving it.

Debian Association, Inc. can be reached at:

Email: `info@debian.org`
Postal address:
Debian Association, Inc.
Station 11
P.O. Box 3121
West Lafayette, IN USA 47906

It's webserver is at http://www.debian.org/

1.3.2 Free Software Foundation

The Free Software Foundation can be reached at:

E-mail address: `gnu@prep.ai.mit.edu`
Postal address:
Free Software Foundation,
59 Temple Place - Suite 330
Boston, MA 02111-1307
USA

Phone number: +1-617-542-5942

Fax (including Japan): +1-617-542-2652

Free Dial Fax (in Japan): 0031-13-2473 (KDD), 0066-3382-0158 (IDC)

2 On what architectures/systems does Debian GNU/Linux run?

The Debian GNU/Linux distribution includes complete source-code for all of the included programs, so it should work on all systems which are supported by the Linux Kernel; see the Linux FAQ for details.

The current Debian GNU/Linux distribution also contains a complete, binary distribution for Intel-based PC's.

3 What software is included in Debian GNU/Linux?

The list of software available for Debian is too long to include in this FAQ. A complete list is available from the following sources:

`sunsite.unc.edu/pub/Linux/distributions/Debian/?`

DLA

...

4 What Debian specific documentation exists?

This FAQ

The Debian GNU/Linux installation manual by Ian Murdock. This document will be available very soon.

Bruce Perens' "Getting an Early Start with the Debian 0.93 Pre-Release System", on WWW as `http://www.rahul.net:80/perens/Debian/InstallationNotes.html`

5 What's the latest version of Debian?

Debian 0.93R6 is the first official release.

Version 0.93 was in development for longer than anticipated. The delays were largely due to the desire to have Debian be totally upgradable.

6 Where do I get Debian?

Due to overload on `sunsite.unc.edu`, the primary distribution site for Debian 0.93 has been moved to `ftp.debian.org/pub/debian`. No FTP site is known to have Debian 0.91 still available.

Debian is also available from several Linux distributions. (Note that Debian may be contained in a distribution that has the complete Linux tree from any of the FTP sites.)

A friend, or co-worker, off a BBS or from school. Since Debian is freely distributable, you can make as many copies as you have machines. (Debian is freely distributable, provided you follow a few, very simple rules.)

For more information, (see Appendix B [See The GNU Public License], page 43).

Bruce Perens (`Perens@Hams.com`) offers a Debian CD-ROM. A WWW order form is available.

Pacific HiTech includes Linux on its Linux Monthly CD-ROM Telephone: inside of the US: 1-800-765-8369, outside of the US: +1-801-261-1024; Fax: +1-801-261-0310; email info@pht.com

The only FTP site known to export Debian via NFS oficially, is located at Leiden University, the Netherlands. Site: `ftp.leidenuniv.nl`, directory `/mnta/ftp/pub/linux`. If this is not an option for you, make a request to the debian-user mailing list.

7 On what media, and in which formats is Debian available?

Debian is currently available on:

Formatted floppy disks: For floppy disk based installations, Debian packages must be copied onto floppy disk (perhaps from a FTP site) that has been formatted with a file system recognized by the Linux kernel. (i.e.. minix, ms-dos or ext2)

CD-ROM: Some Debian Distributors sell CD-ROMs with Debian on them. Debian can be installed from those CD-ROMs, since Linux supports the ISO 9660 (CD-ROM) file system.

Debian can be installed from:

NFS mounted drive: Debian packages can be installed via NFS; e.g.. using a SLIP, PPP, PLIP or Ethernet connection. SLIP and PPP require the netbase and netstd packages. See Q.xx on NFS based installations.

Removable hard-drive or RAM-disk: If your system's BIOS and the kernel support the device, and it has a file system that is recognized by the Linux kernel, then that file system can be mounted on the root drive and the packages would be installed from there.

Other media:

Tape: Tape install is currently under development. However, you can tar the packages onto a tape and then tar them up onto your local system for installation from there.

Tar formatted diskettes: The same goes for tarred diskettes as with tapes. The files would have to be tarred onto a formatted drive, and then installed.

8 How do I install from a NFS mounted drive?

From: `tobias@server.et-inf.fho-emden.de` (Peter Tobias) From: `tim@derwent.co.uk` (Tim Morley)

It is no problem to use NFS for an installation. The only things you need to mount a remote NFS filesystem are: ifconfig, route, mount and a kernel with network support enabled. The kernel handles all of the stuff necessary to get the mount working; its only if you need to export a file system over NFS that things get big.

1. Install the rootdisk and bootdisks from the floppy drive and reboot. 2. Setup your networking device with ifconfig. 3. Setup a route to your NFS server 4, mount the remote directory with something like this: mount hostname:/remote/path/to/debian/archive /mnt 5. install the Debian packages ...

9 Are there any on-line resources for discussing Debian?

There are several Debian-related mailing lists:

The announce list `debian-announce@pixar.com` (moderated)

The packages announcements list `debian-changes@pixar.com`

The user questions list `debian-user@pixar.com`

The developers list `debian-devel@pixar.com` (closed membership)

The bugs list `debian-bugs@pixar.com` (for reporting bugs only)

Archives of these lists are available on WWW at `http://thorplus.lib.purdue.edu/mdickey/debian-archives/` The lists are managed by Bruce Perens (`Bruce@Pixar.com`).

To subscribe to debian-X (for X in user,changes,announce), send mail to `debian-X-REQUEST@pixar.com` with the word "subscribe" in the message body.

To subscribe to debian-devel, send a message to `Bruce@Pixar.com` with a one-line explanation of what you would like to test or develop.

10 Are there other on-line resource dealing with Debian GNU/Linux?

Several other on-line resources provide information provide information about Debian GNU/Linux.

Debian Association, Inc. has a WWW-server at `http://www.debian.org/`

11 What is the code of conduct for the mailing lists?

When using the Debian mailing lists, please follow these rules:

Don't flame; it's not polite. Besides the people developing Debian are all volunteers, donating their time, energy and money in an attempt to bring the Debian project together.

Don't use four-letter words, some people receive the lists via packet radio, where swear words are illegal.

Make sure that you're using the proper list.

See Chapter 13 [ReportingBugs], page 27 on reporting bugs.

11.1 Mailing list advertising policy

The Debian Linux mailing lists accept commercial advertising for payment. We offer a fee waiver if you can show us the cancelled check for a $1000 (U.S.) or more donation to the Free Software Foundation earmarked for "Debian". One donation per advertisement, please. If you don't wish to donate, simply post your advertisement to the list, and the operator of the mailing lists will bill $1999 (U.S). The list operator will donate this amount, minus the expense of collecting it, to FSF.

By the act of posting your advertisement you agree to accept responsibility for the fee, you agree to indemnify the mailing-list operator against any legal claims from you or others in connection with your advertisement, and you agree to pay any legal and business expenses incurred in collecting late payment. Our liability to you is limited to a good-faith effort to deliver your message.

Reduced rates and/or waiver of fee are available for Debian-related advertisements. You must consult the mailing-list operator in advance of posting for any reduction or fee waiver.

11.2 Further mailing list info

In order to keep the mailing list useable, it was neccessary to turn on the "only-subscribers-can-post" mode on the Debian mailing lists. This means that only postings from email addresses matching those of a subscriber are accepted. If you often post from other addresses than the one you subscribe with, mail `Bruce@Pixar.com` with the subject "please add subscriber alias".

12 How do I get support for Debian Linux?

The 'man' and 'info' pages are a great place to start if you're having problems with a particular command or function. Also check `/usr/doc/debian/*` for Debian specific information.

The mailing lists are quite useful: use the User List (`debian-user@pixar.com`) for general questions on Debian and `debian-bugs@pixar.com` to report bugs in a Debian Package.

The package maintainer(s).

The `comp.os.linux.*` Usenet groups

13 How do I report a bug in Debian?

If you have found a bug in Debian, please read the instructions for reporting a bug in Debian.

These can be found as `/usr/doc/bug-reporting.txt` on a Debian GNU/Linux system.

They are available on WWW as `http://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/users/iwj10/debian-bugs/Reporting.html`

13.1 Are there logs of known bugs?

The bug reports index is on WWW as `http://www.cl.cam.ac.uk:/users/iwj10/debian-bugs/` and is mirrored at `http://www.debian.org/Bugs/`

Both plain-text

and hypertext versions are available by FTP from `ftp.debian.org` in `/debian/debian-bugs/`.

A mailserver is available; send a message with *subject* “help” to `streeter@debian.cps.cmich.edu`

14 How can I contribute to Debian GNU/Linux?

15 About this document

15.1 Feedback welcome!

Comments on this document are welcome. Please use the email-address `jdassen@wi.LeidenUniv.nl` or `stick@richnet.net`.

15.2 Formats in which this document is available

This document was written using Texinfo, the GNU documentation system. The Texinfo system can be used to create GNU info files, HTML files as well as TeX .dvi files, for which printing software exists. The .dvi files can also be converted to PostScript (TM).

The Texinfo to HTML conversion was done using texi2html , a script from CERN.

15.3 Sources for the information and acknowledgements

This document was made by Ray Dassen (`jdassen@wi.LeidenUniv.nl`), and Chuck Stickelman (`stick@richnet.net`).

Parts of the information came from

The Linux FAQ by Ian Jackson (`ijackson@nyx.cs.du.edu`).

The Debian GNU/Linux Developers FAQ by Ted Hajek (`tedhajek@boombox.micro.uwm.edu`).

Various other Debian documents and the Debian mailing list archives.

The many developers, volunteers, and BETA testers.

The flaky memory of its authors.

The authors would like to thank all those who helped make this document possible.

Appendix A The GNU Public License

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Version 2, June 1991

Preamble

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```
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```
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to redistribute it under certain conditions; type `show c'
for details.
```

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```
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Appendix B A Linux Primer

B.1 Linux

Here is more information on Linux, in general. Have fun!

B.2 What documentation is available for Linux?

A lot of information about the Linux operating system is available; large parts of this information are freetexts, like this one. The documents listed here are not specific to Debian GNU/Linux. See Chapter 4 [DebianDocs], page 9 for Debian GNU/Linux specific documentation.

B.2.1 The Linux FAQ

The Linux FAQ by Ian Jackson, is posted regularly in the Usenet group `comp.os.linux.announce`. Like many FAQs it is also available via anonymous FTP at `rtfm.mit.edu` in directory `pub/usenet/news.answers/linux/faq/` and via WWW as

B.2.2 The HOWTO's and other Linux documentation

The Linux HOWTO documents are compilations of information pertaining to one specific aspect of Linux. HOWTOs cover such things as: Networking, Mail, News, and UUCP. The HOWTO's are available at `sunsite.unc.edu` in the directory `/pub/Linux/docs/HOWTO/`. The INFO-SHEET, the META-FAQ, and other documents can be found in `/pub/Linux/docs/` on the same site.

See the Linux FAQ for additional availability information.

B.2.3 Books of the Linux Documentation Project.

There are several books made by the Linux Documentation Project, such as a System Administrator's Manual and a Kernel Hackers' Guide. These books are available in several formats at `sunsite.unc.edu/pub/LDP` .

B.3 E-Mail lists.

There are many e-mail lists available for Linux. Most are spefic to a particular aspect of Linux, others are more general. The lists are served by `Majordomo@vger.rutgers.edu`. Send a message with the word "help" in the body to learn how to subscribe/unsubscribe from any of the lists.

B.3.1 Short list of Lists

Sending an e-mail message to `majordomo@vger.rutgers.edu` with the word "lists" in the body will result in a responce something like:

`Majordomo@vger.rutgers.edu` serves the following lists:

linux-680x0 linux-admin linux-alpha linux-announce linux-apps linux-atm linux-bbs linux-c-programming linux-config linux-diald linux-doc linux-fido linux-fsf linux-ftp linux-gcc linux-gcc-digest linux-hams linux-hppa linux-ibcs2 linux-interviews linux-ipx linux-japanese linux-kernel linux-kernel-digest linux-kernel-patch linux-laptop linux-linuxbsd linux-linuxss linux-localbus linux-lugnuts linux-mca linux-mgr linux-mips linux-msdos linux-msdos-digest linux-net linux-new-lists linux-newbie linux-normal linux-nys linux-oasg linux-oi Using the Object Interface toolkit linux-pkg Making package installaion easier linux-ppc The Power-PC port of Linux linux-ppp Using PPP networking under Linux linux-pro Discussion about the Linux PRO distribution linux-qag Linux Quality Assurance Group linux-raid linux-scsi Scsi drive development and usage linux-serial Using serial devices under linux linux-seyon Talk about Seyon the X-windows terminal program linux-sound Using sound cards and utilities under Linux linux-standards Standardizing various aspects of Linux linux-svgalib SVGA library discussion linux-tape Using Tape storage devices under Linux linux-term Talk about using the Term suite of programs linux-uucp Using UUCP under Linux linux-wabi Linux Windows App Binary Interface emulation discussion linux-word Discussion about the Linux-Word project. linux-x11 Using the X-window system under Linux ...

B.4 News groups

There are also several news-groups specifically for Linux:

alt.os.linux alt.os.linux.caldera alt.uu.comp.os.linux.questions comp.os.linux.advocacy comp.os.linux.announce comp.os.linux.answers comp.os.linux.development.apps comp.os.linux.development.system comp.os.linux.hardware comp.os.linux.misc comp.os.linux.networking comp.os.linux.setup comp.os.linux.x