Debian Release Management
Debconf 5

Andreas Barth

July, 11th. 2005

Distributions

- Packages are usually uploaded into unstable
- They enter testing after some rough testing
- Testing is released as stable from time to time
- Experimental for packages not suitable for next release

Release Management

- Ensure testing meets the release targets
- Ensure testing is not and gets not broken
- Keep the strings together
- Collect and distribute information

Release Team

- Release Managers: Steve Langasek (vorlon), Colin Watson (Kamion)
- Release Assistants: Joey Hess (joeyh), Frank Lichtenheld (djig), Andi Barth (aba)
- Role Account: debian-release@lists.debian.org
- http://release.debian.org/

Tools

- Testing migration: britney + hints
- Release critical bugs:
  http://bugs.debian.org/release-critical and
  http://bts.turmzimmer.net/details.php
- Security status:
  http://merkel.debian.org/~joeyh/testing-security.html
- small scripts and lots of usual tools like madison, grep-dctrl, ...

debian GNU/Linux

How packages go into testing

- Preferred way via unstable, even in the deep freeze
- Via testing-proposed-updates, only minimal fixes
- Britney runs shortly after dinstall - results are only visible in dists/ after next dinstall
- Testing output and excuses are published directly
- Britney can be re-run during the day

What worked well with sarge

- Debian installer
- Decent management tools during the freeze (granular hints, d)
- Decent bug squashing tools
- Partial freeze (first base+standard, later all)
- Release updates via debian-devel-announce
- Timeplaning with N+...-dates
- Use of experimental as staging area
- NMU policy
- Managing the release in large

What developers could have done better

- Don't second-guess your own freeze guidelines!
- Don't upload packages not for the next stable release to unstable
- Don't upload packages if you break transitions
- Read debian-devel-announce before uploading packages
- . . .

debian GNU/Linux

What could have worked better

- Release team shouldn't be crushed under unfreeze requests in the final stage
- Shorter base-freeze
- Fewer packages in base-freeze
- Freezing also development-packages earlier?
- Version-tracking on bugs.debian.org
- More padding at the end (no "sorry, one week later mail")
- Prevent CD download madness on Monday
- Better way for final QA of release and CDs
- Build CDs from final official archive state
- Use code-names when you mean the release
- Even more hints
- Security after release

Further improvements in etch

- Time-based release: December 2006
- Only few blockers: toolchain, X.org, docs-in-main, firmware-in-main, ports.d.o, AMD64, secure apt
- Other issues are only pet release goals
- Lesser dependency between shlib bumps, transitions, . . .
- More QA: automatic package install tests, . . .
- Less pain with specific archs
- Better interaction kernel and installer
- Better udeb-handling in britney
- Checklist with dependencies; no out-of-order processing
- Pseudo-package for release notes
- More uptodate information on `release.debian.org`

debian GNU/Linux