

# How to get involved in Debian and Open Source

**EVERYONE counts!**

**And if they don't take what you do - kick them until they do.**

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# Outline I

- 1 About Debian
- 2 Why contribute?
- 3 Contribute to Debian
- 4 How to get involved?
- 5 Tips

# About myself

- Debian Developer since April 2002 (started Debian work 2001)
- FTPTeam member since 2004, FTPMaster since 2008
- Debian Account Manager since 2005
- One of the Debian Conference Organizers since 2006
- Software in the Public Interest, Inc. (SPI) Vice President

# What is Debian?

Internet! Is that thing still around?

Debian is

- ... a universal operating system
- ... a project of more than 1000 volunteers
- ... a community of many more people and companies
- ... the base for a lot of other works  
(simple example: No Ubuntu without Debian)
- ... the largest free software pool integrated to work with each other

# What is Debian?

Debian is

- ... the only Distribution that runs on 12 architectures  
2 of them not based on the Linux kernel
- ... completely Free Software and committed to stay so  
(DFSG/Social Contract)
- ... independent of any company and their commercial interests
- ... focused on quality, not any time constraints set by external factors

# What is Debian?

Debian is

- ...NOT driven by someone with money
- ...driven by YOU (maybe in the future, just start / keep working)
- Yes, I mean YOU (and you over there) in the audience
- Become a Debian Developer?

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# Why contribute and not just consume?

Why should I contribute and not just consume other people's work?

# Why contribute?

I can't believe it! Reading and writing actually paid off!

- Because I say so!
- You work on stuff you like. Not on something you get paid for.
- Collaborate with smart people
- Learn something new
- It's fun
- Build a reputation
- Give something back (and it doesn't have to be code)

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# Ways to contribute

Money, Money, Money, must be funny, in the rich mens world

## Donations

- donations: <http://www.debian.org/donations>
- partners program: <http://www.debian.org/partners>
- Sponsor Hardware for Debian services
- Sponsor Hardware-related services (hosting, shipment, warranty, ...)
- Sponsor Debian Conferences, Developer meetings
- Pay a developer to work on a Free Software Project

# Ways to contribute

If something's hard to do, then it's not worth doing.

- Test software
- Find, report and fix bugs
- Translation
- Documentation
- Join existing packaging teams and help them
- Package new software
- Join Debian (or whichever project you favor)

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# How to get involved

Trying is the first step towards failure.

- 1 Find something you like
- 2 Find something in it that is broken/missing/suboptimal
- 3 Fix it
- 4 Send it upstream
- 5 Go back to step 1
- 6 You are done, You are contributing.  
Now, let's go get some pizza.

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# Something you like

- Piece of software
- Webpage
- Documentation for users
- Howtos
- User support (IRC, Mailinglists, ...)
- Artwork

# Piece of Software

## 1 You are a user of it, correct?

## 2 Find and report Bugs

- ▶ Debian provides `reportbug` and <http://bugs.debian.org/>
- ▶ Use a correct severity (but don't stress yourself too much)
- ▶ Be as detailed as possible - but don't bore the maintainer
- ▶ How to reproduce?
- ▶ Fix / Workaround known?

## 3 Manage the Bugs

- ▶ Proper severity / tags
- ▶ Good subject (short description)
- ▶ Close invalid or already fixed ones
- ▶ Gather information (keep in contact with reporter)
- ▶ Find / Develop fixes

Want to do more?

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Want to do more?

# Piece of Software - Packaging

- Join existing teams/maintainers
  - ▶ Mailinglist
  - ▶ IRC
  - ▶ Bugtracker
  - ▶ VCS (svn, git, bzz, ...)

# Piece of Software - Packaging

- Start a new packaging team
  - ▶ Debian related (packaging), use Alioth
  - ▶ gitorious, savannah, sourceforge, ...
  - ▶ Create the package
    - ★ dh-make gives a good start
    - ★ debian-policy and developers-reference
    - ★ Debian New Maintainer's Guide  
<http://www.debian.org/doc/maint-guide/>
  - ▶ make it perfect
    - ★ use lintian
    - ★ use pbuilder / cowbuilder / sbuild / ...
  - ▶ ask debian-mentors@lists.debian.org to review
  - ▶ No error? Someone most probably will upload it...

# Webpage / Documentation / Howtos

- Documentation tends to be missing
- Especially user-oriented documentation
- Similar for Howtos
- Websites go stale and never receive updates

- Good coding skills don't always mean good design skills
- We have some nice designs, but could use way more
- Project logos
- Web banners
- CD / DVD Artwork
- Posters for events
- ...

# Translation

## Translate

- ... software (including things like the installer)
- ... webpages
- ... documentation / howtos
- ... Debian Project News

# User support is important

- IRC
- Mailing list
- Web forum
- Booth at an event

# Tips

- Don't be shy and silent
- Don't give up just because someone is an ass
- SPEAK up, say what you think
- Keep in mind: Everyone is a volunteer
- Treat others the same way you want them to treat you
  - ▶ Yes, even if they somehow seem to be missing their brain

- Bad english? Does not matter
- Really, you should have seen what I wrote when I started.

YUCK

# More tips

- You want to be part of a community? So be it
  - ▶ Join the lists
  - ▶ Join IRC ([irc.debian.org](http://irc.debian.org), #debian-devel / #debian-mentors)
  - ▶ Don't be scared of Jargon. People do use shorthands
    - ★ ... which you won't understand first.
    - ★ ... which you soon also use.
- Noone will pester you to do stuff - you have to bring in yourself.
- When you ask something - mention your goal.

# Packaging related Tips

- Follow the `debian-mentors@lists.debian.org` list
- Whenever someone asks for review - review yourself
- Read the reviews of other packages
- Whenever a mentor says “I found this”, like lintian
  - ▶ Use the tools yourself
  - ▶ Learn them this way

## Still more tips

**Communication is the key, communication is the first step and never gets unimportant.**

A cite (from <http://lists.debian.org/debian-mentors/2010/10/msg00219.html>)

### Citation

Communication is great, but I don't want to disturb.  
I would like to learn how Debian works and be helpful at the same time,  
I don't know if it's possible...

Good intention to learn - **bad part to think “Newbies disturb”**

## Still more tips

- Yes, Newbies asking questions are not productive - **NOW**
- No, that is not a reason to not ask
- Without asking you will not learn
- Without learning you will not be able to help later
- -> Much bigger loss

# Thank you for sleeping through this talk

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## Thanks

Fragments of these slides are borrowed from various other people's talks, namely Alexander Reichle-Schmehl's "Payback" and Stefano Zacchiroli's Debian: "17 years of Free Software, "do-ocracy", and democracy". Additionally a number of ideas from Asheesh Laroia found their way into here.