

Re: Debian has turned unusable.

Source: <http://linux.derkeiler.com/Mailing-Lists/Debian/2004-04/1849.html>

From: Monique Y. Mudama (spam_at_bounceswoosh.org)

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To: debian-user@lists.debian.org

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On 2004-04-12, Trollcollect penned:

- > *Hello list,*
- >
- > *after 3 days of twiddling with a "recent" copy of debians woody*
- > *release i need to vent a bit of the anger and frustration that this*
- > *distribution has caused.*

Now, now; take a deep breath, count to ten, and read the rest of this post before blaming Debian for your problems.

- > *I want to start with saying that i was a strong advocate of debian*
- > *compared to distributions such as RedHat and SuSE. Being a UNIX admin*
- > *professionally (Solaris mainly), i felt home on a debian system pretty*
- > *quick, and the packaging method was unique among all linux derivatives*
- > *i have seen. Also i used to like debians approach of stability before*
- > *bleeding-edge stuff.*
- >
- > *However as i have to install a small network now (7 WS's and one*
- > *server), i have to reconsider this assessment. I downloaded woody (2*
- > *failed attempts to get an installation CD with the new jigdo method).*
- > *What i got after installation was – a 2.2 Kernel without ext3 support*
- > *– a KDE 2.0 overall totally outdated and useless versions of libraries*
- > *and software.*
- >
- > *I then tried to figure out how to update those packages i need in*
- > *recent versions. As i know KDE from Solaris, i trust enough in their*
- > *own QA procedure to consider their 3.2.1 stable enough for usage. Why*
- > *debian believes KDE 2.0 is more stable, or even usable at all, is*
- > *beyond my understanding.*

Actually, what you're not understanding is Debian's release system.

Now, as I'm sure you know, Woody is the current stable incarnation of Debian. What you may not know is that "stable" refers to the whole distribution, not just one package. The debian developers test the hell out of a bunch of packages, and when everything is solid enough and works together, that set is released as the current stable version. New

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versions aren't added to stable; instead, the entire testing (sarge) set of packages is beat to death, then becomes the new stable distribution. The only changes to a stable distribution are patches to fix security issues. Thus, right now, shortly before a new stable release, Woody actually contains packages that are several years old.

The contents of the stable distribution are **not** a commentary on the latest version of a package to be trustworthy. They are rather a set of packages that have been fully tested with one another and are known to be solid and work well together. Bear in mind, it's not just the upstream software that's at issue; it's also the package itself. If the debian package was not constructed properly, all sorts of trouble ensues.

*> However it turned out that i could not update only selected packages
> easily. In fact neither of dselect or apt–get seemed to have a method
> to do this in a sensible way.*

I think you need to research apt pinning. Here's my first hit on google:

<http://jaqqe.sbih.org/kplug/apt–pinning.html>

Also, you may find that you prefer aptitude to dselect. Worth looking at, anyway.

*> Now it MAY well be that i am just an idiot who is not capable of doing
> this, however i asked in a few linux related channels and also at
> work, noone could tell me how to set up a half–way decent debian
> without compromising the pkg system. Sure many told me to build it all
> by hand but then, without the packaging system what good is debian?*

Why did you ask in general linux channels about debian–specific issues? Seems to me that you didn't go to the people most suited to helping you. Debian–user, on the other hand, is the right place.

If you'd come here first, I think you could have saved yourself a lot of frustration.

*> I hope that whoever is responsible for the direction debian is
> steering to currently thinks about the target of the whole
> distribution, which is to provide users with a decent linux system
> that comes stable, yet with all necessary parts to be competitive
> among other distributions.*

This paragraph suggests to me that you haven't done your research about Debian. We engage in these sorts of discussions all the time. Try to understand the reasons behind the current system before accusing Debian of being poorly planned or executed. In particular, I don't recall your "mission statement" to be related at all to the goals of Debian. Perhaps you should look here for a hint of why Debian exists:

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http://www.debian.org/social_contract

You praise the packaging system and how smoothly all the pieces interact, but you condemn the practices that allow this packaging system to do its job properly. Please take some time to understand how the system works. Once you really do understand it, we can talk about its possible shortcomings.

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monique

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