

## Re: "apt-get" says file a bug report – Should I?

**Source:** <http://linux.derkeiler.com/Mailing-Lists/Debian/2004-07/2181.html>

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**From:** Chris Metzler (*cmetzler\_at\_speakeasy.net*)

**Date:** 07/15/04

Date: Wed, 14 Jul 2004 18:22:22 -0400

To: debian-user@lists.debian.org

On Wed, 14 Jul 2004 14:05:35 -0700

listcomm@m11.net wrote:

>

> *Here's the transaction...*

>

> *floozy:~# apt-get install firestarter*

*[ snip ]*

> *Sorry, but the following packages have unmet dependencies:*

> *firestarter: Depends: libbonoboui2-0 (>= 2.5.4) but it is not going to be installed*

> *Depends: libgnome2-0 (>= 2.6.0) but it is not going to be installed*

> *Depends: libgnomeui-0 (>= 2.6.0) but it is not going to be installed*

> *E: Sorry, broken packages*

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> *floozy:~#*

>

> *I'm running stable Woody and I have the Woody version*

> *of Firestarter running. It does work (sort of) but it's written for*

> *Gnome and I'm running KDM and it scribbles error messages to the*

> *invoking shell constantly, whining about various (probably*

> *Gnome-related)*

> *incompatibilities. I've verified (trust me) that "apt-get"*

> *really is trying to go get the upgraded ("testing") version of*

> *Firestarter.*

OK, to make sure I'm understanding you, you're running stable, and you want to install firestarter out of testing. Is that right?

If so, there is no problem with firestarter. The problem is simply that you're trying to do something that is generally considered a Bad Idea, and in this particular case isn't possible.

As the documentation (that you've read, right??) at [www.debian.org](http://www.debian.org) makes clear, mixing software from testing and/or unstable into a system with stable installed is a Bad Idea. The software in testing

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and unstable were built using libraries in testing and unstable; they need those libraries, in the versions in testing/unstable, to work. Your attempt to install firestarter out of testing failed because the firestarter in testing needed libraries that *\*are\** present in testing, but aren't present in stable. That's not a bug. That's not a problem with apt-get. That's not a problem with the packaging system. The only problem is that you're trying to do something that makes no sense -- install a program without also installing the other software/libraries that it depends upon to work.

So what do you do? You could install those libraries out of testing, as well. But as I've indicated, this is a Bad Idea. Those libraries themselves have dependencies, so you'll have to get those, too. Sooner or later, you'll run into a conflict between stuff you want to install, and stuff out of stable that you have installed currently, and your attempt to install the new stuff will cause apt-get to want to remove your stuff from stable. If the stuff out of testing you want to install absolutely depends on a version of the general C libraries in testing (that is, if the version of the C libraries in stable isn't sufficient), then there's no way to install the stuff out of testing without removing the C libraries from stable -- and thus, all the software in stable built against them.

Don't try this. It's a Bad Idea. It is a highway to a broken system. The documentation (which you've read, right?!) makes this very clear.

> *My usual net trolling has failed to turn up anything about "firestarter"*  
> *having install problems of this sort.*

Because it's not a problem.

> *(1) If this isn't a package install bug, what is it?*

An attempt by the sysadmin to do something that he/she should not do.

> *and how do I get*  
> *apt-get/dpkg/dselect/whoever to cough up the facts of the case?*

It did. It told you that you need libraries that aren't installed on your system.

> *(2) If it's actually some sort of dependency problem, how can I fix*  
> *the dependencies that apt-get doesn't like,*

You could try the procedure I noted above; but I really don't recommend it.

> *and (since APT generally*  
> *doesn't seem to like the situation, and therefore there's likely to*  
> *be something ominous afoot) how can I be sure that whatever I'm*  
> *"fixing" doesn't cause more problems elsewhere?*

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By not doing it.

- > (2) *I can't believe I'm the first person to encounter this... so why*
- > *can't*
- > *I find \*anything\* about either the "apt-get" error message generally or*
- > *the*
- > *Firestarter install problem? (Yeah, I know, I'm braindamaged and don't*
- > *know how to use a search engine, etc. etc...)*

Because there *is no* Firestarter install problem. If you search the archives of this mailing list, though, you'll see plenty of people wondering why they run into problems installing various packages from testing/unstable into a stable system. You're certainly not the first person to encounter this. And if you continue down this road, and get a broken system, you won't be the first person to end up there, either.

- > (3) *Is it possible that I need to do a complete upgrade to the "sarge"*
- > *Kernel, in order to get this new "firestarter" to work,*

Upgrading to sarge or sid is one option. Another is getting sources and backporting to woody. Still another is continuing down the road you've started, and trying to get a working mixed system. Good luck.

- > *and if so how*
- > *do I make that determination*

There's no determination to be made.

- > *(and why doesn't "apt-get" see fit to*
- > *inform me thereof... etc...)?*

Because it cannot read minds. It told you what you needed to know: that in order to install this package, other packages are needed which you don't have and which it cannot install as-is. Perhaps your gripe is that it's not sufficiently user-friendly in so doing? That's not the purpose of apt-get. Other package management software (aptitude, synaptic, etc.) may be more your style in that regard.

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(remove "snip-me." to email)

"As a child I understood how to give; I have forgotten this grace since I have become civilized." - Chief Luther Standing Bear

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