

Re: Switch MDK -> Debian, probably

Source: <http://linux.derkeiler.com/Mailing-Lists/Debian/2004-09/1245.html>

From: Paul Johnson (*baloo_at_ursine.dyndns.org*)

Date: 09/09/04

To: debian-user@lists.debian.org

Date: Wed, 08 Sep 2004 17:20:44 -0700

<#secure method=pgp mode=sign>
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Olaf Marzocchi <olaf_lists@virgilio.it> writes:

> *Hi,*
> *I'm a MDK user and I'm evaluating a switch to Debian mainly because of*
> *the better package management system.*
>
> *To make my mind I need to know few things:*

Well, let's help you make the right choice.

> -> *with MDK, to update the main packages I have to reinstall the OS*
> *every 6 or 12 months. I don't use linux as main OS (I use Mac OS X),*
> *so it's pretty annoying... the time I spend maintaining the OS is too*
> *much. What about Debian? Can I update the whole system (without adding*
> *packages, I mean, only updates) without the need of a complete*
> *reinstall? (MDK main OS installer is not really good in doing*
> *upgrades). I don't want to reconfigure everything every 6 months...*

I've been running the same installation since 1997 (if you count recovering from a backup in 1999 as "not a reinstallation," if not, I've been running the same installation since 1999). Apt is so easy to use that once I learned the basics, I was able to do almost anything a user could ever dream of doing with package management without ever approaching sobriety before drinking lost it's novelty for me (there's a time and a place for everything, it's called college).

> -> *In MDK, when I had to upgrade from KDE 3.1.x to KDE 3.2 (I had*
> *MDK9.2, I tried to update only what I needed), I had to force the*
> *urpmi system to uninstall all the kde packages (I had to force it*
> *because urpmi keeps track of every dependency: a wonderful system, it*
> *always worked beautifully except this time, not like the original*

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> rpm).

So I see RPM only sucks 98% as much as last time I used it...

> → *what about the kernel? Did the 2.4 → 2.6 change require a complete
> os install?*

That's a sound "no." I've gone 2.0→2.2→2.4→2.6 now.

> → *kernels: are they patched? MDK ships a kernel heavily patched as
> standard, in my opinion this is really useful. If debian kernels are
> "clean", can I take a MDK kernel (let's suppose I compile it, but what
> about taking the rpm with the kernel?) and use it in Debian? (I
> suppose yes, but who knows)*

It is patched, but it's never given me trouble, either. Not heavily
patched, IIRC...

> → *rpm packages are everywhere... what about .deb? I'm able to compile
> apps, but, since having a package allow me to uninstall it cleanly and
> simply, I always prefer prepackaged apps. Will I be able to use rpms?*

debs are rare, but when you have them, they just work. Nothing bogus
like having to force dependencies the vast majority of the time.

> → *will I be able to use MDK, SUSE and Fedora (the latter doesn't
> matter that much, I never seen them) configuration tools? AFAIK,
> Debian leave the user alone, there are no "debian" tool to configure
> the OS (I originally chose MDK due to this). Note: this point is a
> must. Without GUI tools to speed up system configuration, I won't
> choose Debian.*

No. Just edit the text files, they're very well documented and have
lots of hints in the comments. This is better than some broken,
distro–specific tool, anyway.

debconf will do some tweaking for you to get you to a default
configuration closest to what you want (and in many cases, exactly
what you want).

> *If you need to know, I'd choose the testing branch, even if don't
> remember the kernel it ships... I hope 2.6. [update: no, it ships
> 2.4.something. What about 2.6? I want it] Last thing: what about
> reiserfs4? will it be among the FS choices? if not I'll choose
> reiserfs, but is a rfs3.6→rfs4 upgrade possible without format?*

2.6 is in testing, IIRC. Though if stable works for you, don't let
the older kernel keep you from running it. You can always go compile
your own...

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