

Re: Automatix?

Source: <http://linux.derkeiler.com/Mailing-Lists/Ubuntu/2006-03/msg02987.html>

- *From:* Reinhard Tartler <siretart@xxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Tue, 28 Mar 2006 07:22:47 +0000 (UTC)
-

Forum Post wrote: (I suspect this was someone who calls himself 'arnieboy')

its not just a great idea, its also a superb implementation. It has single-handedly drawn hundreds of thousands of windows users to Ubuntu.

It has had bugs (still probably has a few) and they have been ironed out when I have been approached in an appropriate manner.

I will not attempt to give you any links except one. If you really wish to know more, explore this thread:

<http://ubuntuforums.org/showthread.php?t=138405>

Ok, I took a look at this package in order to check what automatix is technically about:

http://beerorkid.com/automatix/automatix_5.7-3_i386.deb

First of all, I don't see a source package. This means that no one else than you can easily modify it. Since I assume that you licence the package under the same licence as your script, the GPL, you are **REQUIRED** to provide a source package, which was not linked from the 'download' site (here, ubuntuforums.org).

The binary package itself violates our packaging policy in several severe ways. First of all, there is no `/usr/share/doc/automatix/copyright`. Second, it installs its stuff in `/usr/local/`. This is broken in several ways. On some machines, `/usr/local/` might be nfs mounted without write access for the root user. This makes the package uninstallable. Another thing is that no other package installs stuff there. This means `dpkg` will happily remove `/usr/local` on removal of `automatix`.

I didn't get why the package distributes an empty file `/usr/local/automatix/install.log`, seems quite pointless to me.

All the main work seems to be done by the script `/usr/local/automatix`. There is a heap of stuff in `/usr/local/automatix/conf`, which could be

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easily integrated into our packages, if bugs were filed and this files were attached. Sadly, you didn't choose to go that way, causing even more work for us developers.

Automatix looks to me as a severe security risk. In function 'repositories', the following keys are added by apt-key without even checking of the corresponding/expected fingerprints: 437D05B5, DD4D5088, 70188C3B. there is absolutely NO explanation to the user why this should be safe, nor why he should trust those keys. The main reason for this seems to me to deactivate apt security checks. VERY BAD!

Almost all packages are installed using '--assume-yes' instead of '--force-all' or '--force-depends'. While this is an improvement, in case of dependencies trouble due to external repositories, which automatix adds, the user is left alone when dependency trouble arises. I don't see you provide some sort of support/bug reporting interface, (e.g. malone, or any other bugtracker), so that I have to assume that you leave your users in the cold in case of problems.

Several configuration files are written over the local config like here:

```
sudo cp -rf /usr/local/automatix/conf/timidity.cfg /etc/timidity/timidity.cfg
sudo cp -rf /usr/local/automatix/conf/timidity /etc/init.d/timidity
sudo cp -rf /usr/local/automatix/conf/def_timidity /etc/default/timidity
```

Besides being clumsy, this will cause unwanted dpkg prompts due to conffile changes when upgrading to dapper, which I don't expect your target audience to be able to solve. Again, you leave your users in the cold.

the installation of java 1.5 is, well, questionable. Why don't you offer your users to use java1.4 by installing the package j2sdk1.4 from universe and get browser plugin installation for free? The way you implement the installation violates Sun Microsystems redistribution terms. (again, something you don't seem to care)

I get tired listing other faults and design errors in automatix.

Now, given this list of technical problems (espc. the security breaches!), please tell me again what's so 'superb' about your implementation? (just to quote YOUR words)

If you do not have the time or patience, then just give up and stop reading further.

I think I have proven that I have some patience in going through your script.

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Automatix is a supreme culmination of one man's efforts combined with the never-ending enthusiasm of the community to make a linux distribution truly usable to the masses.

While your intentions are honorable, the implementation has severe design issues. I suggest working together with others to solve the problems you intended to solve.

Currently I see that users of automatix will have a bad time upgrading to the Ubuntu 6.06, and we, the ubuntu developers, cannot support them.

I have clearly mentioned that I will not support Automatix for Dapper because of paucity of time and I have also expressed the interest to transfer the much sought after copyright of Automatix to responsible hands. Even as I speak, atleast 10 guys are voting every hour on the main Automatix thread that they took up Ubuntu solely because of Automatix. You guys can keep ranting and flaming me down for no really good and well-informed reason.. but trust me.. whatever I have done in my time constraints.. very few have achieved.

Does this mean that you don't intend to adapt your work for use with Ubuntu 6.06? Will you at least provide some mechanism so that your users can safely upgrade from an breezy+automatix install? You could look at the system-upgrader Michael Vogt has written. Perhaps you can extend it to repair at least some systems broken by automatix.

In case that 'arniboy' (I don't have his real name, he doesn't seem to provide any email adress) doesn't read this, could please somebody forward him this email? My contact address are in the Headers of this email.

Greetings,
Reinhard

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ubuntu-users@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
<https://lists.ubuntu.com/mailman/listinfo/ubuntu-users>