

Re: Debian, Arch or Gentoo?

Source: <http://linux.derkeiler.com/Newsgroups/comp.os.linux.misc/2005-07/0176.html>

From: Christopher Browne (cbbrowne_at_acm.org)

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In an attempt to throw the authorities off his trail, Jon Harrop <usenet@jdh30.plus.com> transmitted:

> *I have found Debian to be excellent. I switched from Red Hat about 5 years
> ago and never looked back.*
>
> *Justin wrote:*
> *[Gentoo]*
>> *It is a massive waste of time.*
>
> *I've heard that from other people.*
>
>> *Compiling from source offers*
>> *virtually no performance increase over pre-compiled binaries;*
>
> *Ironically, I'm going to have to disagree with you there. You can sometimes*
> *get substantial performance improvements exactly where you want them by*
> *compiling from source.*
>
> *I did this with ghostscript by fetching the Debian package source using*
> *"apt-get source", altering it to compile with optimisation flags for my CPU*
> *and then installing the replacement package. As ghostscript uses a lot of*
> *tight array loops with integer and floating point maths, it sped up*
> *considerably when switching to CPU-specific code.*

There will be cases where this is the case.

But there are plenty of "Gentoo Ricers" out there looking for the mystical set of CFLAGS options to let them maximize performance on everything when they'd be *WAY* better off having 98% of their packages brought in as binaries that were compiled by some competent person that knew what they were doing.

I'd guess that there are likely to be 5% of packages where there would be merit to compiling from source in order to take advantage of CPU-specific flags. Examples would include:

- Possibly LIBC, although there's GREAT danger there...
- XFree86 (someday)
- Mathematical libraries (e.g. - if you're using NETLIB)

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- Sound rendering libs
- Some graphical libraries (particularly for anything "chromey")

It surprises me a bit that Ghostscript would be an example of such, but only a bit.

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(format nil "~S@~S" "cbbrowne" "gmail.com")

<http://linuxdatabases.info/info/slony.html>

Pound for pound, the amoeba is the most vicious animal on earth.