FINAL REPORT

ANNUAL DEBIAN CONFERENCE 2010

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MAY 2011

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DEBIAN PROJECT LEADER WELCOME

STEFANO ZACCHIROLI
Debian Project Leader

DebConf is the annual world-wide gathering of Debian geeks. While mainly developer-oriented, DebConf attracts all kind of Debian enthusiasts for several days to talk, hack, put faces to IRC nicknames, and have fun discussing Debian and Free Software topics.

It is difficult to explain in prose what DebConf is and it is close to impossible to understand the excitement that being at DebConf induces if you have not attended DebConf at least once. What is certain, though, is that DebConf is immensely beneficial to the Debian community: DebConf creates and strengthens ties among community members; DebConf gives birth to huge amounts of new ideas and hacks that will improve the Debian operating system; DebConf dissipates social problems that might easily arise in communities driven solely by Internet communications. As I wrote in announcing the "DebConf newbies" initiative shortly before DebConf10: "attending DebConf increases the enthusiasm of attendees and ultimately will make them better Debian citizens". That happened to me years ago when I attended my first DebConf and I'm sure it has also happened to DebConf10 participants.

DEBIAN PROJECT LEADER - PICTURE BY AIGARS MAHINOVS

traits will make me remember DebConf10 forever. The first one is the venue. Having been held in New York City, DebConf10 marks the first DebConf held in the USA. That is not a mere historical fact, but rather an important service we have delivered to the local community which got a chance to see the people who make the operating system and Project they love. It is only by

> **"It is difficult to explain in prose what DebConf is and it is close to impossible to understand the excitement that being at DebConf induces if you have not attended DebConf at least once."**

The above considerations being valid in general, every single DebConf has distinguishing traits which make it unique and memorable to its attendees. Two such

having DebConf traveling around the world as much as possible that we will be able to deliver a similar service to other communities.

The second feature of DebConf10 that stuck in my memory is the "contamination" between the conference as regulars know it and the context it was immersed in. We have had more non-DebConf participants to

"Thank you all; I hope you will enjoy reading this report to remember (if you attended) or try to imagine (if you did not) how memorable DebConf10 has been."

the Debian Day than I could remember in the past and the conference program has been enriched by several talks and initiatives from non-Debian people (coming from local universities, hack labs, cultural movement, etc.). Those contaminations have brought us closer to fulfilling the important social role that Debian should play in the free culture ecosystem.

All this has been made possible by more people than could possibly be listed here, from sponsors to the orga team, from participants to speakers, from locals who have been supportive of our presence since the very beginning to everyone else who I forgot to mention. Thank you all; I hope you will enjoy reading this report to remember (if you attended) or try to imagine (if you did not) how memorable DebConf10 has been.

See you next year (... hoping no one else will have to suffer the embarrassment of throwing a first pitch wearing a Debian kilt, regardless of the fact he has never thrown a baseball ball in his whole life!)

Stefano Zacchiroli
Debian Project Leader
January 2011

THE ROLE OF DEBCONF
DEBCONF ORGANIZATION TEAM

AUDIENCE - PICTURE BY AIGARS MAHINOVS

Over the last ten years, DebConf has grown from its origins as a small meeting on the sidelines of another conference to become a large event in its own right. A team of volunteers works all year round, dealing with administrative aspects of the previous DebConf and preparing for the next one. However, it is the conference attendees themselves, rather than the organizing team, who ensure the success of DebConf, with benefits for Debian which go beyond the conference period and beyond the walls of the conference facilities. DebConf enables face-to-face interactions between the attendees, broadcasts its talks live on the web and archives them permanently for future viewing. It also provides focused time when attendees can work uninterrupted on Debian, especially during the DebCamp week before the main conference.

Even brief face-to-face interactions at DebConf can have important effects by improving subsequent communications between project contributors. A short meeting, or even an informal discussion over a meal, often helps to quickly find solutions to issues which had been stuck in long circular discussions on mailing lists. In an international project where most contributors rarely meet, it can be hard for contributors to gauge the tone of others online; the experience of face-to-face interaction with someone makes it much easier to correctly interpret later written communications. Each year we set aside some of the DebConf budget to provide travel bursaries to some project members who it is important to have at the conference, and who would not be able to

HACKLAB - PICTURE BY AIGARS MAHINOVS

attend out of their own resources - it's not only the recipients of the bursaries who benefit, but the whole project.

The talks and discussion sessions at DebConf are important in raising new proposals for development, in letting contributors know about new technical advances they can build on in their own work, and in helping to manage the wide cooperation required for each new Debian release. While they are important in setting the agenda for those attending DebConf, they are also watched by many others, during and after the conference. Those watching talks live during the conference even have the opportunity to submit their own questions to speakers, along with those present in the room. The recordings are viewed for years afterwards by Debian contributors and others anywhere in the world. The live streams and recordings hugely scale up the benefit from money spent to arrange talks at DebConf.

LIGHTNING TALKS - PICTURE BY AIGARS MAHINOVS

Anyone visiting the hacklabs during DebConf, at almost any time of day or night, will find people engrossed in working on Debian - some silently by themselves typing, others peering at computer screens in pairs, and others sat in a ring arguing out the technical details of a design. Many attendees find it hard to find uninterrupted time to work on Debian in their regular schedule, and value DebConf as a period when they can put aside their other usual responsibilities and focus on Debian work. The DebCamp period of DebConf is provided specifically to enable this uninterrupted work - teams may choose to arrange their own meetings, but there are no centrally scheduled conference events on these days except for meals, and fewer people are present than during the main conference, all keen to progress their work. The work done on Debian during DebConf has a far higher value than the amount spent to arrange the conference.

HACKLAB - PICTURE BY AIGARS MAHINOVS

Two other benefits from DebConf are worth pointing out here. First, coming to DebConf motivates Debian contributors. Many attendees find that their enthusiasm for working on Debian is renewed and increased, so that the impact of the conference continues long after everyone has gone home. Secondly, DebConf motivates the local community in the region where the conference is held. Some people attend DebConf because it happens close to them, without having previously worked on Debian at all, and then end up becoming Debian Developers. Some existing contributors attend DebConf for the first time because it is close to them, and end up increasing their level of involvement in the wider Debian project.

DebConf, with all these benefits, is only possible due to the financial support given by our sponsors. DebConf sponsorship is extremely efficient, as the benefits it produces are much greater than the amounts spent, go far beyond the conference venue, and last long after the conference period.

DEBCAMP
WOUTER VERHELST

This is the fifth time I've attended DebConf and DebCamp. While DebConf, the conference proper, is packed with technical and social activities, DebCamp isn't. Therefore, it provides both a quieter environment for working, and an opportunity to explore the surroundings without missing out on the important and interesting technical parts of the conference.

During past years, as a non-sponsored attendee, I've often used DebCamp mainly as a cheap way to visit the conference surroundings, and to meet and talk with people whom I hadn't seen since the last DebConf, or whom I'd never even met before since it was our first DebConf and DebCamp together. However, for the 2009 and 2010 conferences, I've also used the time available to work on several projects for Debian. For instance, during DebCamp 2009, I used the time available to work on installation support for a NAS device that I had on loan, an Intel SS4000-e. The fact that several other Debian-Installer developers were directly available helped tremendously with the speed of development; where I had initially estimated that writing this support would

Hacklab - picture by Aigars Mahinovs

take several weeks, the idea of taking the device with me to DebCamp shortened that time to a number of days.

Similarly, during DebCamp 2010 in New York, I used the time available to make significant improvements to my NBD packages. The fact that a LTSP developer, one of the main users of the package, happened to be in the same room with me allowed us to cooperate much more quickly and closely than would ordinarily be the case with us living in timezones nine hours apart from one another, resulting in several quick and incremental improvements of the package and, ultimately, my unexpected spare time that was used for implementing new features that I had been planning for several years already, without actually finding the time to do so.

Even if, in both cases, I found the time to do significant development work, I did still find the time to explore the surroundings and do what I used to do during past years, although less so.

I can therefore only conclude that DebCamp is an invaluable service to the Debian community, without which development of some important features would not be available today.

Releasing Live Installer during Debcamp - picture by Tiago Bortoletto Vaz

TALK SELECTION

JIMMY KAPLOWITZ

"We have events of all types, from plenary lectures and tutorial sessions to movies and goal-oriented brainstorming sessions."

The talk selection committee is charged with maintaining the high quality standards of the talks at DebConf. This is quite an arduous task, reviewing and scoring countless submissions. Once we are done, a separate team begins the long process of scheduling all of the selected talks, requiring coordination of rooms and speaker schedules, while trying to minimize the conflicts between talks interesting to the same subset of people. Although these duties are time-consuming, we do get a preview of DebConf before DebConf.

Talks are rated based on relevance to Debian, interest to the conference audience, and ability of the speaker to give a useful talk on the proposed topic. Most talks selected by the committee have some relevance to Debian.

As an innovation new to DebConf this year, DebConf10's talk selection committee organized some of the talks into coherent tracks based on their subject. Each track had an assigned coordinator, who sought suitable presenters from the relevant Debian community as a supplement to the general call for papers. The talks in a track were scheduled in the same room and in sequence, for the convenience of attendees with deep involvement in a track's topic. Track coordinators introduced and tied together the talks in their tracks.

For DebConf10, the tracks were Enterprise, Java, Community Outreach, Media and Art, and Science. Future years of DebConf may evolve this list in accordance with what makes sense for the state of Debian at that time.

The talk selection process begins many months before DebConf, when speakers draft and submit an abstract. We have events of all types, from plenary lectures and tutorial sessions to movies and goal-oriented brainstorming sessions. Talks are not only presented by current Debian developers; users often propose events to exchange wisdom or explain significant deployments to the Debian community.

The talk selection committee evaluates all the submissions over a period of several weeks, ending in a marathon online meeting to finalize the selections. Reviewing more than 100 submissions is hard work, but it is well worth it for the preview of what is to come.

While not every talk can be selected via the rigorous peer review process we employ, luckily DebConf has the capacity to accommodate many more events than are reviewed ahead of time. This is especially useful since not every event can be planned and submitted in advance.

During the conference, attendees are able to propose ad-hoc talks and request their scheduling via a wiki page. These are scheduled every 24 hours by conference staff in free rooms. This is a heavily used service, and ensures that nobody will be excluded from useful collaboration and communication during DebConf simply due to the decisions and deadlines of the talk selection committee.

SOME HIGHLIGHTS FROM THIS YEAR

EBEN MOGLEN - BY AIGARS MAHINOVS

The chairman of the Software Freedom Law Center, Columbia University law professor Eben Moglen, called for the design and promotion of a "Freedom Box", a proposed consumer appliance running Debian and other free software, which would safeguard the electronic freedom and privacy of its owner. Many attendees were excited enough to organize several spontaneous follow-up conversations, later progressing into a Debian-hosted mailing list, wiki, and

IRC channel to continue the effort after the conference.

A member of the New York City Council, Gale Brewer, presented her efforts to promote free and open access to data generated by the city government, including several proposals that have become reality. Openness of data is an issue near to the hearts of many Debian developers, and is important to making a free operating system like Debian as useful to its users as possible.

MARGA IN MAKING DEBIAN RULE, AGAIN - PICTURE BY BIELLA

The conference had numerous compelling talks, of which a few examples are listed here. An animator showed her award-winning film, Sita Sings the Blues, explaining how unexpected copyright licensing obstacles propelled her into the free culture movement. Several events focused around automatically managing the installation and configuration of Debian systems. Three speakers offered case studies of large Debian installations at their employers, each in a different country. The Debian-Med team presented Debian's increasing usefulness for neuroimaging research.

The talk selection team is proud of the varied program that comprised DebConf10's academic and professional content. We encourage all interested people to consider reviewing talks in future years – if you can't attend them all, at least you can read summaries of them all!

TALKS

Bits from the DPL

Stefano Zacchiroli

The project leader gave his thoughts on how Debian is evolving, addressing topics as the role of Debian in the FLOSS ecosystem, attractiveness for new developers and communication issues, within the project and the external world.

Bits from the Release Team

Adam D. Barratt, Mehdi Dogguy, Philipp Kern, Felipe Augusto van de Wiel

The team presented plans and ideas for Debian future releases.

X in squeeze

Julien Cristau, Cyril Brulebois

The talk covered what is new in X in squeeze, what that means for the Debian packaging, and what we can expect in the future.

News on Debian Autobuilding

Philipp Kern, Kurt Roeckx

An overview of recent changes in the world of Debian Autobuilding.

Stable Release Management and the future of Debian Volatile

Philipp Kern

A discussion on how to get better policies and a better performance.

Making Debian Rule, again.

Margarita Manterola

An exploration into what we are not doing well enough to make Debian the best of the best, and how we could go about making things better.

Debbugs

Don Armstrong

This talk presented new developments in the ongoing struggle against bugs.

Handling Debian bugs with SD

Christine Spang

Simple Defects (SD) is a command-line distributed bugtracker. The speaker presented her work on an SD adaptor to interface with Debbugs, and how it can make Debian contributors more productive when dealing with bugs.

How We Can Be the Silver Lining of the Cloud

Eben Moglen

Freedom and privacy are endangered in the cloud, but we can save them. In this talk, which is the second part of Eben Moglen's analysis of Freedom in the Cloud, he showed how the Debian community can play the central role in changing the future of Net, again.

How Government can Foster Freedom in Technology

Hon. Gale Brewer

The former Chair of the Committee on Technology in Government and current Chair on NYC Council Committee on Governmental Operations discussed the ways that government can foster freedom in technology.

The Challenges of Licensing in Debian

Daniel German

A discussion on some of the major issues affecting both free software developers and Debian package maintainers, and some results that might improve the license compliance of both packages and distributions, such as Debian.

GPLv3: Better Copyleft for Developers and Users

Bradley M. Kuhn

This talk covered in detail the changes in the license, aiming to help developers who are generally familiar with the GPLv2 and LGPLv2 to improve their understanding of GPLv3, LGPLv3, and AGPLv3.

FOSSology and Debian

Matt Taggart

An overview of the FOSSology framework, how Debian can benefit from it and participate in the project, and a short demonstration of FOSSology analysis of Debian.

Debian GNU/Hurd

Michael Banck

The status of the GNU/Hurd OS and of the Debian port, its future, and how one can help it.

Debian/kFreeBSD from the FreeBSD Point of View

Philip Paeps

Debian/kFreeBSD is unique in the FreeBSD distribution "ecosystem" in that it takes only the kernel and replaces the entire userspace, this poses some interesting new problems that we have not seen in the past but also brings new opportunities.

Cross-distro dependency resolution: reusing solvers among distros

Stefano Zacchiroli

This talk presented the CUDF (Common Upgradeability Description Format) that aims to overcome the seclusion of package managers by resolving inter-package relations in a way that is independent from a specific distribution.

State of Debian (based) Linux live systems in 2010

Michael Prokop

An overview of the current state of Linux live systems and introduction of the Grml project's unit test framework which allows automated Q/A testing for a live system and might be of interest to Debian(-live) developers.

Lightning Talks

Micah Anderson

* Emacs Debugger Interface rewrite, Rocky Bernstein
* Debian Tartan, Philip Hands
* Documenting internal workflows in an updatable way, Luciano Bello
* Stop using passwords, Daniel Kahn Gillmor
* runit, Jameson rollins
* Transitioning to a strong key in debian, Gunnar Wolf
* Scraper Wiki, Wookey
* Cheese and wine parties over the years, Christian Perrier
* Aeger project, Antoine Beaupré
* Automatic reverse engineering, Pablo Ariel Duboue
* Lightning!, Benjamin Mako Hill
* Debian port to Minix, Jaldhar Vyas

Interesting network features of your Debian system

Guido Trotter

Some less-known Linux networking features were explored in this talk, building blocks to design a system that would probably make some certified networking people a bit (or a lot) nervous.

Packaging Python modules and applications

Piotr Ożarowski

This talk briefly introduced current and future Python packaging helper tools.

What if.... we could automatically test our textual instructions?

Pablo Ariel Duboue

The talk presented a prototype of a Debian-adapted system to translate human instructions into executable actions with no human intervention based on reinforcement learning. This technology could be used in different parts of the project, especially in d-i and i18n.

Statistical Machine Learning Analysis of Debian Mailing Lists

Hanna Wallach

A discussion on the use of state-of-the-art machine learning techniques to analyze Debian mailing lists in order to discover political, social, and technical patterns that could be used to inform project decisions.

Supporting Debian machines for friends and family

François Marier

How to provide friends and family with reliable Debian-based machines without spending all of your evenings maintaining them.

Swimming upstream

Lars Wirzenius

The talk presented the challenges of packaging Koha for Debian. Because of the sizes of both projects, and the established cultures and policies and habits, things are not always straightforward.

Freeing the Cloud, one (small) service at a time

Francois Marier

Introduction of a new project to provide an open and federated alternative to the centralized Gravatar avatar hosting service.

Free software for replacing Skype

David Alexander Sugar

The GNU Telephony secure calling project, built around GNU SIP Witch and the GNU ZRTP stack, offers the means for anyone to create and deploy network scalable and secure peer-to-peer VoIP collaboration solutions.

The Nexenta Project: OpenSolaris + apt + GNU

Anil Gulecha

The talk presented the history of the Nexenta project, it's relationship with the Debian project, and the opportunities for collaboration.

The Unity Desktop Environment

Mark Shuttleworth

The talk covered work done to improve the experience people have with Linux on small screen laptops, and examine the possibilities for convergence between netbook and large-screen desktop environments.

Why is GNU/Linux Like a Player Piano?

Jon Anderson Hall, Esq.

There are a lot of similarities between Free Software and the Player Piano, and a lot of lessons to be learned about copyrights and patents, including the person who first invented spread-spectrum radio.

Workshops and Tutorials

ARM porters friendly talk
Steve McIntyre

Batch Queuing Systems BoF
Michael Banck

BoF Debian Publicity
Jeremiah C. Foster

BoF documenting python plans for squeeze+1
Matthias Klose

Bugs, the BOF
Don Armstrong

CUT BoF
Joey Hess

DebConf & Debian
Stefano Zacchiroli, Holger Levsen

Debian Derivatives BoF
Matt Zimmerman

Debian IRC Operators BoF
Michael Banck

Debian Live Team Meeting - picture by Kai Hendry

Debian Live Team Meeting
Daniel Baumann

Debian Merchandise BoF
Luca Capello

Debian Policy BoF
Russ Allbery

Debian Wiki BoF
Franklin Piat

Job Bof - picture by Kai Hendry

Debian for Shy People
Asheesh Laroia

Distributed Bug Tracking BoF
Don Armstrong

Fighting the dependency nightmare
Reinhard Tartler

GPG Key Management Best Practices BoF
Michael Shuler

Integrating new people in packaging teams
Ana Beatriz Guerrero López

Job/Gig Recruiting Session
Jimmy Kaplowitz

Keysigning Information/Discussion Session
Aníbal Monsalve Salazar

Lintian BoF
Russ Allbery

Source package format BoF - picture by Aigars Mahinovs

Making the FreedomBox a Reality
Hans-Christoph Steiner

MariaDB
Kurt von Finck

Monkeysphere
Daniel Kahn Gillmor, Greg Lyle

Multiple repository bootstrapping
Neil Williams

OpenStreetMap BOF
Blars Blarson

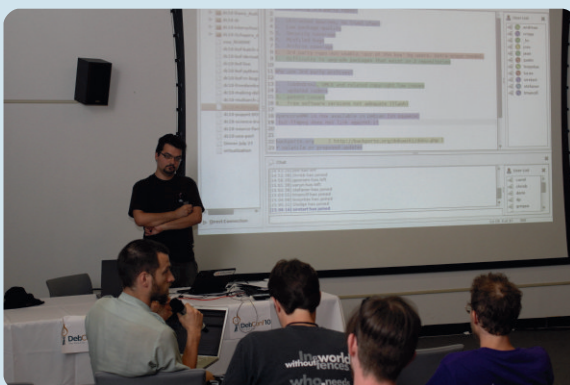**Querying our BTS with python-debianbts**
Bastian Venthur

R Users and Maintainers Bof
Don Armstrong

RC bug fixing + NMU = Fun
Stefano Zacchiroli

Multimedia BoF - picture by Aigars Mahinovs

Rocket BOF
Keith Packard, Bdale Garbee

SPI BOF
Michael Schultheiss

So you want to host DebConf12?
Jimmy Kaplowitz, Gunnar Wolf

Source package formats
Russ Allbery

The Tor Project
Erinn Clark

Travel Sponsorship BoF
Pablo Ariel Duboue

Upstart in Debian
Scott James Remnant

Virtualization and Debian
Michael Schultheiss

Perl BoF - picture by Aigars Mahinovs

What git-buildpackage (hopefully) can do for you.
Guido Günther

notmuch
David Bremner

use Perl;
gregor herrmann

Videoteam Training
Eric Dantan Rzewnicki

Tracks

Media and Art
Coordinator: Adrian Knoth

Conference Video
Eric Dantan Rzewnicki

Hands-On DebConf Video Training
Eric Dantan Rzewnicki

Debian as a home TV etc. management system
Kristoffer H. Rose

Improving Debian's Multimedia Experience
Reinhard Tartler

Brave new Multimedia World
Adrian Knoth, Reinhard Tartler

Enterprise
Coordinator: Russ Allbery

Enterprise Infrastructure BOF
Sam Hartman

Puppet BOF
Matt Taggart

Using Debian for Enterprise Infrastructure
Russ Allbery

Managing Debian Installations
Michael Banck

Using Debian to provide services to thousands
Faidon Liambotis

Moonshot: Federated Authentication beyond the Web
Sam Hartman

Java
Coordinator: Pablo Ariel Duboue

Debian-Java BoF Session
Pablo Ariel Duboue

Debian-java policy changes
Matthew Johnson

Packaging with javahelper
Matthew Johnson

The Java Packaging Nightmare
Torsten Werner

A battle cry for a system-level JVM in Debian
Pablo Ariel Duboue

The Free Java Jigsaw Puzzle
Tom Marble

Science
Coordinator: Michael Banck

Mathematical Software in Debian
David Bremner

Overall presentation of the Debian Science
Sylvestre Ledru, David Bremner

Debian: The ultimate platform for neuroimaging research
Michael Hanke, Yaroslav O. Halchenko

New developments in Science Packaging
Adam C. Powell, IV, Sylvestre Ledru, Yaroslav O. Halchenko

Debian Science Round Table
David Bremner, Hanna Ollila, Adam C. Powell, IV, Michael Banck, Sylvestre Ledru

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

COORDINATORS: FRANK B. BROKKEN, ANDY ORAM

Steps to adopting F/OSS in government

Andy Oram

Pedagogical Freedom

Jonah Bossewitch

Google Summer of Code 2010 at Debian

Obey Arthur Liu

FSF's campaigns for freedom

John Sullivan

Debian at a large Dutch University

Frank B. Brokken

Project Caua: Private Sector, Environmentally Friendly Jobs with Free Software

Jon Anderson Hall, Esq.

Beyond Sharing: Open Source Design

Mushon Zer-Aviv

FLOSS Manuals: A Vibrant Community for Documentation Development

Andy Oram

Collaboration between Ubuntu and Debian

Jorge O. Castro

Antifeatures

Benjamin Mako Hill

SCREENING

Patent Absurdity: How software patents broke the system

John Sullivan

The film, directed by independent filmmaker Luca Lucarini and funded by a grant from the Free Software Foundation, explores the case of software patents, the history of judicial activism that led to their rise, and the harm being done to software developers and the wider economy.

Sita Sings the Blues

Karl Fogel, Nina Paley

A popular film released under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike license. The filmmaker, Nina Paley, consciously chose a Free license in order to achieve the same dynamics for her film as software has in the free software world, and she succeeded. After the screening there was a question & answer session and a talk about how free software methods can work for artists in general.

Debian Day

Moray Allan

BIELLA IN DEBIAN DAY WELCOME TALK - PICTURE BY AIGARS MAHINOVS

Most of DebConf is about internal work on Debian, but each year we also organize a "Debian Day" to present Debian, and free software in general, to people from the area where the conference is happening. At DebConf10, Debian Day was held on Sunday, 1 August, alongside the start of the main conference.

The talks at Debian Day included several by invited speakers from outside of Debian. Andy Oram of O'Reilly Media spoke on "Steps to adopting F/OSS in government", covering the assessment of costs and benefits done for the city of Munich in Germany, the creation of Forge.mil by the Department of Defense, and the process used to choose OpenOffice.org for the state of Massachusetts. Jon "maddog" Hall introduced Project Caua, in his talk on "Private Sector, Environmentally Friendly Jobs with Free Software". Mushon Zer-Aviv spoke on "Beyond Sharing: Open Source Design", discussing the challenges faced in collaborative design to avoid "design by committee".

A particular highlight of Debian Day was a talk by Gale A. Brewer, of the New York City Council, on "How Government can Foster Freedom in Technology". Council member Brewer, former Chair of the Committee on Technology in Government and current Chair of the Committee on Governmental Operations, gave an inspiring description of how she has pushed for freedom in government information systems.

Other talks ranged from François Marier on "Supporting Debian machines for friends and family: Notes and tricks from an amateur sysadmin" and Debian Project Leader Stefano Zacchiroli on "RC bug fixing + NMU = Fun: how to have fun via NMU campaigns and RC bug fixing" to Asheesh Laroia on "Debian for Shy People" and John Sullivan on "The FSF's campaigns for freedom: Activism, development, and education". A panel discussion looked at use Debian in educational institutions, and Frank B. Brokker presented a case study on the use of Debian at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands.

Debconf social events
Gunnar Wolf, Marco Túlio Gontijo e Silva

PICTURE BY AIGARS MAHINOVS

People have a lot of fun at DebConf - and this is entirely by design. Debian development is done by hundreds of people spread around the globe. This online community does not stick together by just email and Internet Relay Chat. Face to face activities like DebConf, where developers really get to know each other, are what has allowed Debian to last so long and produce such excellent work.

This is by design. DebConf social events are not just for fun. A few days of interaction at DebConf will help a team's

DEBCONFERS PLAYING DURING THE DAYTRIP - PICTURE BY TIAGO BORTOLETTO VAZ

members to really get to know each other, and thus help the team work better together for a long time to come. Simply getting to know each other can help defuse many tense situations. Conflicts that may seem impossible to solve online can disappear easily once people can meet face to face. Also, social events create a good environment to meet new people, which may result in new partnerships that can generate new projects or make future online communication easier and more enjoyable, since you are not talking to a complete stranger.

This had an even greater than usual importance this year: One of the reasons for having DebConf in the USA is the number of Debian Developers and contributors living in this country who had never attended a DebConf. Social activities were a key for their integration into the already closely-knit Debian social fabric. And they were a huge success.

Social events are both planned, like the day trip, and spontaneous, such as simply providing space for attendees to hang out near each other. Below are some of the many stories of DebConf10. We should note that this occasion was unique even in the long history of DebConf in the sheer number of social activities.

Cheese and wine party

A fine and hallowed Debian tradition is the Cheese and Wine party - a tradition that has been with us for many years, and is among the most cherished and

looked-forward-to items in the heart of many participants. This party, which always happens near the beginning of the conference (of course, as we don't want our fine cheeses to become any smellier than their natural state!), is one of the best and finest demonstrations of how multicultural the conference is.

CHEESE AND WINE PARTY - PICTURE BY BERALDO LEAL

Of course, the meaning of "cheese and wine" has expanded over the years to mean *anything delicious or amazing that can be eaten or drunk that you can share from your country* - a wonderful display of flavors (and smells, of course) thoroughly labeled, each dish regularly checked by the person who brought it, proud to explain what it is and how to enjoy it. This year there was a homebrew Debian beer, made with water from the Amazon River.

THE DAY TRIP

DebConf and DebCamp take place over two whole weeks, without even taking the weekends off. Reserving a whole day

for a completely non-technical, purely social activity is needed and warranted, and we have long carried out this tradition by going to a nearby leisure area, devoting the whole day to once again tightening the social bonds that make the Debian community what it is.

" Of course, the meaning of "cheese and wine" has expanded over the years to mean anything delicious or amazing that can be eaten or drunk that you can share from your country"

This year, we went to the south of New York City, to the famous Coney Island beach. En route to Brooklyn, part of the contingent stopped by to visit the "Opus 1" organ in the Trinity Church. Some Debian folks could play with the different timbres that this organ produced and echoed through the whole church, and experienced organ players like Keith Packard showed the group some of their talent. And although most of the group took the subway, 20 of us enjoyed riding the 40km from the Columbia campus to Coney Island by bike.

Coney Island is very popular among New Yorkers during summer. Sun, sand and sea, rollercoasters and bars, made for a nice and relaxing day. The famous amusement park could be visited and local Russian food could be tasted. And for an appropriate finish, we were taken to one of the traditions best identified with American culture: A baseball game! The Debian Project Leader, Stefano Zacchiroli, threw the first pitch for the Batavia Muckdogs vs. Brooklyn Cyclones game, resulting in an image that has already become part of Debian history.

IMPRESSIONS FROM THE DAY TRIP

GREGOR HERRMANN

One of the goals of DebConf is to enable face-to-face communication between contributors. Means to this end include the various social events that happen during the week.

A highlight of each year's conference is the so-called "Day Trip", a day of escaping the conference venue, leaving laptops behind, spending time with each other, and discovering the host country a bit. Doing some touristy things is of course always highly attractive for participants - even geeks like to explore the physical world around them.

During DebConf 10 we spent a day at Coney Island. Arriving in several small groups (one even by bike!) we had the chance to relax at the beach, ride the famous "Cyclone" roller-coaster, eat (maybe unhealthy but nevertheless delicious) hot dogs at "Nathan's", and discover the other attractions at this fun place.

The highlight of the excursion was an introduction to the U.S. leisure culture in the form of a baseball game. After the first climax - when our DPL threw the first pitch - the crowd was able to watch the game (with or without understanding the rules) or to observe the local sports enthusiasts during the game and its many breaks.

I really enjoyed this day at this nice spot; I learned a bit more about the USA and had the chance for relaxed talks with my peers.

Thanks a lot to the conference organizers for providing this opportunity!

VIDEO BY LUKE FARAONE

DEBCONF ~~RUNNERS~~ CYCLERS - PICTURE BY KAI HENDRY

RUNNING CLUB

New York City has probably the most famous running landmarks in the world. And although the "geeky" population which makes Debian is seldom seen associated with physical activities, we also have a true group of joggers in our ranks!

Over ten people gathered regularly to run in the early mornings, before the heat of the New York summer was too much to bear. And although running is often an activity done solo, this was also a great social activity: People with very different running skills often ran together, displaying a very nice solidarity.

A group of DebConf attendees even took part in an organized race! On August 5, ten DebConf participants took part in the Van Cortland Track Club Summer Series of cross-country running, in the Bronx. In this race, we had two important highlights: Noèl Köthe was among the best runners, finishing 17th scratch and second in his age/gender category, and Luca Capello grabbed everybody's attention by running with the Debian tartan kilt! (note from the editor: as we could not find a picture of

Debconf runners, we attached one from Debconf cyclists, but yes, we believe that runners exist in Debian as well :)

DEBCAMP PARTY

At the end of DebCamp there was a party in a local hacker collective called NYC Resistor. Besides being yet another event for Debian folks to socialize, it was a good oportunity to get to know some local hackers and to visit Brooklyn and cross Manhattan Bridge by subway. The party featured a local beer, produced only a couple of kilometers from NYC Resistor.

NYC RESISTOR PARTY - PICTURE BY AIGARS MAHINOVS

PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS

MICHAEL BANCK
August 8th, 2010

So, DebConf is over and it was a blast. I wanted to blog about my talks for a couple of days, but the conference was so great that I did not get around to it until now. The unique thing about this year's conference were the outstanding contributions by non-Debian FLOSS people from the east coast. I am really glad the organizers decided to reach out to the community and take this opportunity when a lot of great minds were just a couple of hours away. Also, discussing and hanging out with the local team people was so much fun and interesting that it was worth the visit alone.

The venue was just perfect, the dorms were on campus, the cafeteria had an all-you-can-eat buffet, everything was in short walking distance and the Columbia campus is beautiful. I would have liked to go to a couple more places in the evenings, but hanging out in the Carman basement lounge with awesome people was just as good. A big thanks to Richard Darst, Biella, Micah and the rest of the crew.

JOHN GOERZEN
August 16th, 2010

DebConf10 ended a week ago, and I'm only now finding some time to write about it. Funny how it works that way sometimes.

Anyhow, the summary of DebConf has to be: this is one amazing conference. Despite being involved with Debian for years, this was my first DebConf. I often go to one conference a year that my employer sends me to. In the past, it's often been OSCon, which was very good, but DebConf was much better than that even. For those of you considering DebConf11 next year, perhaps this post will help you make your decision.

First of all, as might be expected from a technical conference, DebConf was of course informative. I particularly appreciated the enterprise track, which was very relevant to me. Unlike many other conferences, DebConf has some rooms specifically set aside for BoFs. With a day or two warning, you can get your event in one of those rooms on the official schedule. That exact thing happened with a virtualization BoF — I thought the topic was interesting, given the recent shifts in various virtualization options. So I emailed the conference mailing list, and we got an event on the schedule a short while later — and had a fairly large group turn out to discuss it.

The "hallway track" — conversations struck up with others in hallways or hacklabs — also was better at DebConf than other conferences. Partly that may be because, although there were fewer people at DebConf, they very much tended to be technical people whose interests aligned with my own. Partly it's probably also because the keysigning party, which went throughout the conference, encouraged meeting random people. That was a great success, by the way.

So DebConf succeeded at informing, which

is perhaps why many people go to these things. But it also inspired, especially Eben Moglen's lecture. Who would have thought I'd come away from a conference enthused about the very real potential we have to alter the dynamics of some of the largest companies in the world today by using Free Software to it's greatest potential?

And, of course, I had fun at Debconf. Meeting new people — or, more commonly, finally meeting in person people I'd known for years — was great. I got a real sense of the tremendously positive aspect of Debian's community, which I must admit I have sometimes overlooked during certain mailing list discussions. This was a community of people, not just a bunch of folks attending a random conference for a week, and that point underlined a lot of things that happened.

Of course, it wasn't 100% perfect, and it won't ever be. But still, my thanks to everyone that organized, volunteered, and attended DebConf. I'm now wishing I'd been to more of them, and hope to attend next year's.

ADNAN HODZIC
August 21th, 2010

DebConf10 ended 2 weeks ago, I'm back in Bosnia and I needed some time to "recalculate" everything that happened to me in last month.

This was my third time in NYC, and NYC as a city never left me empty handed, in every possible sense! And am seriously considering option of moving back one day, whether to get my Masters/PhD or just do work. We'll see what future holds for me.

Of course, I'd also like to thank DebConf10 team for their superb work, perfect Venue selection, their hospitality and being incredibly friendly and helpful to all of us. As I said in one of my lectures, it's kinda unwritten rule that every next DebConf has to top the previous one, and that being said it's going to be almost impossible to compete with this year bid, but being Bosnians we're up for the challenge ;)

MATT ZIMMERMAN
August 25, 2010

I enjoyed this DebConf very much. This was the first DebConf to be hosted in the US, and there were many familiar faces that I hadn't seen in some time. Columbia University offered an excellent location, and the presentation content was thought-provoking. There seemed to be a positive attitude toward Ubuntu, which was very good to see. Although there is always more work to do, it feels like we re making progress in improving cooperation between Debian and Ubuntu. I was a bit sad to leave, but was fortunate enough to meet up with Debian folk during my subsequent stay in the Boston area as well. It felt good to reconnect with this circle of friends again, and I hope to see you again soon. Looking forward to next year's DebConf in Bosnia.

OBEY ARTHUR LIU
September 19, 2010

The highlight this year has been getting almost all of our Google Summer of Code students to DebConf10. Thanks again this year to generous Travel Grants from the Google Open Source Team, we managed to fly in 7 of our students (up from 3!). You certainly saw them, presenting during DebianDay, hacking on the grass of Columbia, backing our Debian Project Leader throwing the inaugural pitch of a professional baseball game or hacking on the très kitsch Coney Island beach.

STEVE MCINTYRE
August 6th, 2010

Nearly at the end of the week already - time flies! As always, it's been a great

event. The orga folks have done a wonderful job, and New York is a cool place. Well, rather more of a hot place at the moment with the weather... :-)

The highlight for me, as always, has been meeting up with people during the conference. Old friends like Lars, Joey, Marga, Bdale (and many more than I can mention here!). And finally getting to say hi to people whom I feel I know well from their blogs via Planet, and their Debian work that I benefit from every day. It was great to see John Goerzen at the baseball on Wednesday night and thank him in person for his offlineimap development, even if I didn't recognise him directly, but via the photos of his two sons that he's been posting over the last few years *grin*.

CHRISTIAN PERRIER
August 25, 2010

D ebconf 10 was...

...awesome.

OK, I'm writing this while I'm still in USA, but there are so many things to say about these weeks that I can't write them in only one blog post. And, still, this one will be quite long as it will talk about hacking, running and sightseeing...:)

Let's start about hacking: after all, this is the first reason for being there in US, isn't it?

I came to DebConf with a very long TODO list and, for the first time in seven DebConfs, I'm pretty happy with what I achieved from it.

As one can see, a lot of planned work happened while I still could maintain the usual flow of recurrent work with localization (Smith reviews, l10n NMUs). Some asked me why I didn't propose l10n

sessions this year. Indeed, I wasn't feeling I could sustain animating them and I had no clear idea about which topic I could bring to be discussed. Last year, these sessions slightly killed my free time and I wanted to keep some this year for "impromptu" things.

I didn't attend many talks, sorry for the speakers. The most I attended were during Debian Day, which I found highly interesting and motivating, just like Eben Moglen's talk. Marga's talk was also one I wanted to attend, though I regretted that things went mostly out of control during the talk (too many comments from the audience to allow Marga to push her important points).

As usual, I invested a big part of my time in "social" activities, the most prominent being, of course, the Cheese and Wine party, which turned out to be a great success. The help of my son Jean-Baptiste and the tremendous support of Michelle Lynn Hall helped a lot, though I still regret that we screwed up with accessibility.

I also ran a lot... :-) ...that may be counted as social activities as I organized several group runs. The one I'm proud of has been participating in a local race, namely the Van Cortland Track Club Summer Series of cross-country running, in Bronx. We went there with no less than 10 DebConf participants and 1 kilt (hey, Luca!). All of us completed the race (that had 170 runners for 5 kilometers) and Noèl Köthe even finished 17th scratch and 2nd in his age/gender category.

Besides that, we had a great run/sightseeing to Georges Washington Bridge (that links New Jersey and Washington Heights and offers an unusual view of Manhattan "from behind"). All this with a 17km run. We also ran several times in Central Park, and Noèl and I happened to go to Coney Island for

the Day Trip by doing half of the trip by running (all around Manhattan and over the Brooklyn Bridge), for about 20km. Then we "showered" in the Atlantic Ocean....:). At the end of DebConf, I think that I had my record broken with 112km run in 10 days and only one day *without* running.

What about sightseeing? Well, this blog post is too long and we reach the end of Interstate-90, close to Albany, so that will be for an upcoming blog post.

JONATHAN WILTSHIRE
August 18th, 2010

Since I didn't actually come directly home from DebConf, but instead took a further week's holiday and lazed around by the beach, I haven't sat down to write anything about it yet.
Most importantly, I should say thank you to Joey Hess, Steve McIntyre and Stefano Zacchiroli for arranging the DebConf Newbies programme, without which I would have been stuck at work watching the videos again (though this does have the advantage of seeing three talks at once). Every year I am astounded at the generosity of certain companies who sponsor the conference, since I've experienced for myself the difficulty of trying to put a corporate price on free software – even more so to specifically sponsor newbies, who by definition probably aren't as active in ways that interest sponsors as more established developers.

Right up to the day I flew I was nervous (as in any social situation) at meeting so many new people in one go, on my own, and long way from home – after all, it's not really easy to back out and go home after that… But in fact, everybody I met was warm and friendly, and very supportive in all sorts of ways.

I got to see and hear many talks; in the first two days alone:

* Supporting Debian machines for friends and family
* Debian at a large Dutch university
* Why is GNU/Linux Like a Player Piano?
* Bits from the DPL
* Packaging Python modules and applications
* The Unity desktop environment
* Collaboration between Debian and Ubuntu

Of course, there were many social events, like the Cheese and Wine party, Keysigning (handy for putting faces to names), many nights in the third hacklab, a day trip to Coney Island, a privileged viewing of the most nerdy organ in the world, and a trip up the Empire State building.

The campus was ideally suited to such a conference, and apart from the mugginess we had excellent weather. I discovered that I rather enjoy watching baseball and that one should repeat the application of sunblock after paddling. But what I enjoyed most of all was being in the same area as so many eminent Debian people, and being so inspired by them to be even more involved – technically and socially. I hope to see you all again soon!

JOEY HESS
August 13th, 2010

Long before I took the train up to New York for DebConf10, I was sure that Eben Moglen's talk, the followup to his earlier, excellent "Freedom in the Cloud", would be a highlight of the conference. Even though it was scheduled for an ugly 9 am slot the morning after that other certain highlight, the wine and cheese party, I was not disappointed.

The amazing DebConf video team has already put up the video of "How We Can Be the Silver Lining of the Cloud", embedded below for those with html5. If you watch one video from DebConf, this should be it.

In this talk, Eben goes far past the earlier "Freedom in the Cloud" talk, changing the focus from scraping Facebook, to laying down a concrete, detailed vision of the "FreedomBox", and how it could be a game changer.

After the first standing ovation I can remember at a DebConf, given to the first speaker in a suit I can remember at a DebConf, many of us ended up in this huddle in the hall...
...which turned into an impromptu BoF in a nearby room, which led to this wiki page, which was followed by seemingly everyone buzzing about it for the rest of the conference, and a second BoF that probably exceeded its room's occupancy limit.

GUNNAR WOLF
August 10th, 2010

So, DebConf time is over once again. The two weeks worth of fifty weeks waiting are left behind once again, and it's time to get back to normal. DebConf was great. Yes, it always is, and that's what we are all saying, but hey - Seriously! Being in the same building than 300 crazed developers is always fun, and it's always better than last year's fun. A good highlight this year is that, given the number of Free Software and Free Culture groups that exist in USA's north-eastern coast, we had the opportunity to join a large crowd which has never been part of DebConf. Also, I must agree that the USA bid for DebConf was aiming to attract as many Debian people (developers, maintainers, or just happy users) which had not yet been to a DebConf before as possible. And it was a great success! I finally met several people I have long read in the mailing lists, in blogs or in IRC. A much higher proportion than usual, I'd venture to say. Another interesting phenomenon /methinks is that this year's DebCamp started much more staffed than usual: I arrived on the first day, Sunday 25, and there were ~40 people there already; I

don't have the actual numbers, but we quickly grew, and the number started to stabilize past mid-week, only to (sharply) rise in the weekend, in time for DebianDay and DebConf start. Great time!

DebConf is great. Always great. Always a success. I cannot even thank specific teams. Debian Rules, and DebConf Rocks!

KUMAR APPAIAH
August 8th, 2010

So, I have finally visited my first Debconf, and it was a phenomenal experience. To meet persons who have guided you, persons work with, and persons you respect face-to-face and have conversations with them about several topics ranging from their vision for Debian to their views on topics totally unrelated to software is something truly great. I am now convinced that events like this, which provide the right environment to socialize and discuss various issues concerning Debian, will go a long way into getting several aspects of the project moving along in the right directions, as well as create awareness to the outside world about what the project is about and how it benefits users.

In terms of discussions, the Debian Science track was a nice way to see how contributors are putting Debian to good use for scientific research, and it was a nice opportunity to list out the things to be done to fill in the gaps and take Debian as a science platform forward. The Debian Python BoF was also a good place to meet many contributors face-to-face, and learn more about the technical concerns which people have in regard to the future of Python in Debian.

While I didn't hack much during the conference, Christian's presence made me finish the Hindi translation of the Debian Installer. We can now shift focus to other

aspects, such as getting packages in order for a short freeze-to-release cycle.

Columbia University provides for a very nice venue, with easy access while maintaining a quaint environment within itself. Since this is my second visit to New York City, I had an idea of the common tourist locations, so I did not go around much during the conference. However, since I have a buffer day, I might try my hand at some photography around the place.

Have a safe trip home, and a wonderful time ahead!

CHRISTINE SPANG
August 22, 2010

DebConf launched with a bang - the day I arrived by bike I was up until 3am meeting and greeting in the basement lounge of the Carman Columbia dormitory, where I was staying. No idea how I managed to be so awake for that. The rest of the week alternated between hacking like crazy on code for my talk and spending a lot of time socializing with Debian folks new and old. For the day trip to Coney Island, I joined the dkg-led bike expedition which ended up running to nearly 30 miles, which was a bit more than expected. The fact that this was all in actual dense city really drove home the scale difference between Boston and New York (I'd never been to NYC before this). We took several breaks to lounge around and eat and drink, so it took quite a long time even given the distance. I hadn't planned on seeing the baseball game that was a part of the trip, but I ended up going anyway and it turns out that a bunch of geeks at a minor league game is actually quite a lot of fun! I hope someone else will put some pictures from the bike ride and game online soon, since I didn't really take any myself.

This was the first DebConf where I gave a talk, which resulted in me skipping almost all of the other talks, because my talk was on the last day and I reaaally wasn't ready at the start of the conference due to the rest of life being pretty crazy this summer. I missed some things I would have liked to see because of this, but ultimately I think it was worth it. The good news is: it went well! I was nervous until I actually started talking (never given a talk at a conference before), and then it was fine. If you missed it, the talk video is on the web in low and high quality; slides are here.

The audience was great - there were excellent questions and people were excited and interested in the project. I couldn't have asked for a better reception. After the talk finished I spent some time aisle-chatting with some folks, and totally failed to recognize Joey despite having met him before, because he'd shaved off his hair.

DebConf was, like usual, both inspiring and exhausting.

PAUL WISE
January 7th, 2011

At DebConf10 in New York City, by far the highlight was Eben Moglen's vision of the FreedomBox. Negotiating the hot rickety subways was fun, the party at the NYC Resistor space was most excellent, Coney Island was hot and the water a bit yuck, zack threw a ball, the food and campus was really nice. Really enjoyed the lintian BoF, ARM discussions, shy folks, GPLv3 question time, paulproteus' comments & insights, wiki BoF, puppet BoF, derivatives BoF, Sita, astronomy rooftop, cheese, virt BoF, Libravatar, DebConf11, Brave new Multimedia World, bagels for breakfast, CUT, OpenStreetMap & lightning talks.

THE DEBCONF VIDEO TEAM

Marco Túlio Gontijo e Silva
Tássia Camões Araújo

DebConf is one of the most productive times for Debian development throughout the year. Even though the majority of code is not necessarily written during those days, many team meetings take place and it is a great opportunity for people to share ideas and plan what to do after the end of the conference. So much is discussed and achieved during Debconf that those who want to take part in Debian but are unable to attend may feel like they are missing out.

Videoteam in action - picture by Beraldo Leadl

Thanks to the video team, DebConf is not limited to those who are able to be away from home and work for one or two weeks. Two talk rooms were broadcast to the entire world during all of DebConf10, and the footage was archived for future access. During the talks, those who wanted to take part in a discussion, ask questions or give feedback could use the IRC channels for each talk room and someone at the venue would act as a communication relay.
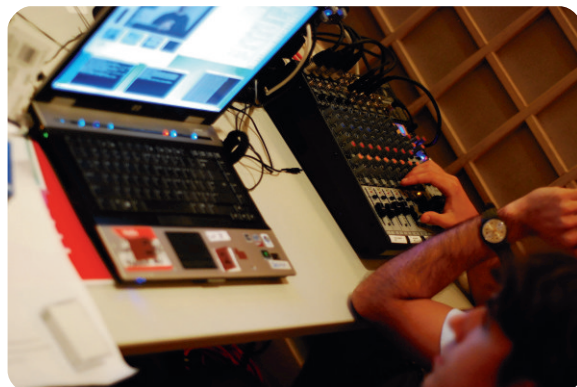
Countless ideas have been proposed during Debconf talks and BOFs, discussed by the audience (both at the venue and remotely) and worked on afterwards. For example, Joey Hess' Constantly Usable Testing proposal would probably have had less impact if it had not been properly introduced to other developers. Furthermore, the talk was archived, enabling prospective contributors to access it in the future.

SETUP

The video setup consists largely of software components rather than expensive proprietary hardware. Not surprisingly, all the software used by the video team is free software, so it is possible to make use of the team's expertise without great expense. Typically, there are cameras pointing to the speaker and audience, microphones to get audio from the speaker, audience and ambiance, as well as a slide capturing device. The video is grabbed via firewire and transferred to the central mixer through an ethernet link. Using the DVswitch mixer, the director in charge mixes the video in real time, switching between different video and audio inputs, and is even able to do picture-in-picture displays.

"The video setup consists largely of software components rather than expensive proprietary hardware."

Videoteam mixing - picture by Beraldo Leadl

From the mixer machine, there is an uplink to the encoding server which then broadcasts to a worldwide network of streaming servers. The resulting mixed stream is saved for later archival encodings, along with redundant DV tape recordings from the main cameras.

VIDEOTEAM - PICTURE BY AIGARS MAHINOVS

"I think enabling people to attend talks remotely to participate in discussions is essential for a project like Debian. So, the work you do is indispensable, and I am one of many who have benefited from it. Kudos to you for doing this"

KUMAR APPAIAH

The DebConf videoteam has existed since DebConf5. Its tools and workflows have been used at numerous free software conferences, such as FOSDEM, LCA2011, PyCon and various other events.

The Debconf10 video team consisted of the 42 members (plus 4 honorary members). This collective work resulted in the production of 76 videos during the conference, making up 45 GB of processed data (out of roughly a terabyte unprocessed). All 455 recorded videos from past Debconfs (starting from Debconf5) are available for download at http://video.debian.net.

All in all, people have been grateful for the video team's efforts, as shown at http://wiki.debconf.org/wiki/DebConf10/Videoteam/Thanks. Thanks to those who put their appreciation in words there - much appreciated! :)

SOME THANKS MESSAGES

"I thank you all for your amazing work and look forward to watching the talks I missed"

PAUL WISE

"For bringing DebConf to the rest of us and for recording the great talks for posterity, thank you! You rock!"

JOSÉ CANELAS, PORTUGAL

"Thanks from Poland! On behalf of Polish Debian Community I want to thank everyone of you for streams and — in advance — for records to download. Personally, as not DebConf participant in person, I find streams and IRC talks essential in making Debian truly global and universal. Keep up the good work and see you on DC11 (or sooner)!"

PAWEŁ "AZHAG" SADKOWSKI

SELECTING NEW YORK CITY
DEBCONF10 TEAM

NYC - PICTURE BY AIGARS MAHINOVS

New York was fortunate to host DebConf10, but first there was a very demanding bid process in order to be selected. The New York City team would like to thank all of the other bid teams for their hard work - and making us be so well prepared.

Boston, USA, prepared a very convincing bid hosted at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the historic birthplace of the Free Software movement. Quito, Ecuador produced a nice bid in their city center, and Margarita Island, Venezuela began a bid on the Caribbean island.

New York may not be the first thing that comes to people's minds when they think about technology, but New York has plenty of it. From start-ups to major corporations, freelancers to universities, there is a huge technology base in New York, one which we were very eager to tap. This community was essential to our volunteering and fundraising base.

All of our venue options were centered in the Upper West Side/Morningside Heights neighborhoods. These areas are relatively quiet and away from the hustle and bustle of typical tourist NYC. There were plenty of places around for attendees to find a quiet place to relax or a park to run in. Nevertheless, the full New York experience was only a train ride away, and many attendees took advantage of the chance to visit before and after DebConf. This produced even more opportunity for the NYC community to interact with the Debian community around the globe.

DebConf has re-energized the Debian-NYC community, and brought many more people into it. Debian-NYC now holds regular workshops and novice nights which all are invited to - for more information, see http://wiki.debian.org/DebianNYC.

SELECTING THE VENUE
DEBCONF10 LOCAL TEAM

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY - PICTURE BY BERALDO LEAL

New York City may be expensive, but those who know it can find things affordably. The New York team, in the span of a few months, was able to produce two independent, affordable venues.
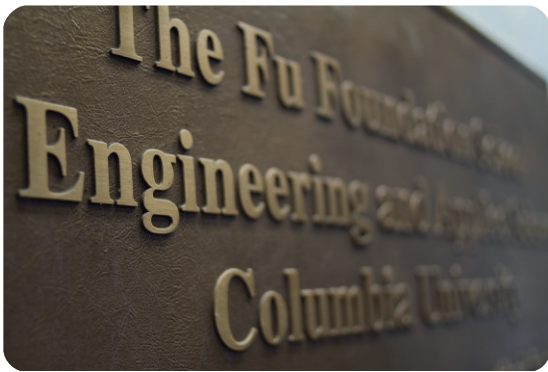
Our first venue was at Hostelling International, on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. This historic building could hold over 600 guests, and had various meeting rooms. They had a friendly staff and were excited to host our very international group. They had plenty of places for attendees to relax around their building and outside. However, their meeting rooms may not have had quite enough capacity, and we would have had to bring in our own DebConf-strength Internet connections.

Our second option, Columbia University, was the one we ended up going with. We were fortunate to have the support of the Columbia Computer Science department, which allowed us to reserve auditoriums and rooms at low cost. We used residence halls at Columbia to accommodate our attendees. At first, we considered using the Hostelling International accommodations for sleeping since they cost less, but ended up using the Columbia halls to keep everyone close together and contained on the very relaxing, oasis-like campus.

DEBCONF10, WEEKEND LUNCH TIME - PICTURE BY AIGARS MAHINOVS

room, and occasionally other rooms for talks and meetings. Our main hacklab was a cafeteria, seating about a hundred people. A second hacklab and adjoining courtyard opened once DebConf proper began. Both of our residence halls had a lounge for overnight hacking and socializing.

The DebConf team would like to thank the Columbia University Computer Science department, CU-CS Computer Research Facilities, Columbia University Information

"Our Computer Science sponsors have invited DebConf, and Debian-NYC, back with open arms - a success for everyone involved."

Choosing Columbia as a venue gave us a lot of infrastructure and an incredible Internet connection, but produced a lot of new challenges in integrating with the classes and research ongoing through DebConf. The Columbia staff were not used to working with a group as technically skilled as DebConf, especially the Video Team. Any time DebConf uses existing infrastructure at a venue, it is critical to maintain wide-open communication channels with those managing the technology in order to keep things running smoothly.

Columbia was a great venue. While not everything was in one building, we were all contained on one campus with plenty of outdoor space to relax and work. Our Computer Science sponsors have invited DebConf, and Debian-NYC, back with open arms - a success for everyone involved.

We used one 200 person auditorium and one 50-person seminar room, with the Video Team covering events in both of these. There was another 30 person BOF

Technology, and the CU School of Engineering and Applied Sciences for their generous support of DebConf10 - we couldn't have done it without them.

Sponsorship and registration

Ana Guerrero

The registration team and the sponsorship team are two teams who work closely together to help to bring attendees to DebConf. There are three main types of sponsorship DebConf attendees can request: accommodation, food and travel reimbursement.

> **"We have a lot of different amounts that attendees need to or want to pay - despite what you may think, this requires a lot of manual attention."**

Accommodation (a bed to sleep in throughout DebConf) and food is what we call "basic" sponsorship and we usually aim to cover all requests for this. Both accommodation and food sponsorship can be requested independently before the "sponsorship deadline", well in advance of the conference. Requests for this type of sponsorship are specifically *not* limited to Debian members - we want to encourage others with an interest in contributing to Debian to attend, so that they will soon become Debian members! However we check to make sure people have some connection to Free Software so that people don't come just for a free vacation.

When the conference dates are closer, we ask tentative attendees for a reconfirmation. Once the reconfirmation phase is finished, we have a first "final" number of attendees requesting sponsorship and after checking our budget, we try to calculate how many of those requests we can fulfill. All of this process is handled by the registration team. The team also usually do some manual work checking all the data users put in the system is consistent, to make sure there are no surprises. Of course, attendees who are paying food and accommodation themselves can register after the sponsorship deadlines, assuming we have

sufficient accommodation capacity. We still encourage registration in our conference web system as soon as possible to help the registration team planning how much space the conference will need.

The second kind of available sponsorship is travel reimbursement. This is targeted towards those already active in the project and needing help in paying their travel costs in order to be able to attend. Debian contributors come from all kind of backgrounds and places, so it is not uncommon that some people are unable to afford to travel to DebConf. The DebConf venue changes every year and sometimes this means attendees must travel to another continent, which is not cheap. Those applying for travel reimbursement specify an amount requested, and an external committee allocates it before the conference based on merit and need. Depending on the final budget of the conference and the number of requests, we fulfill as many requests as possible.

The registration team is in charge of keeping track of who is attending and what they need. DebConf is run for the benefit of its attendees; the registration team tries

"The second kind of available sponsorship is travel reimbursement. This is targeted towards those already active in the project and needing help in paying their travel costs in order to be able to attend."

to be accommodating of requests when possible. Every year, there is a huge number of combinations of attendance dates (not everybody attends the whole conference), accommodation, and food requests (very different food preferences, people's allergies). We have a lot of different amounts that attendees need to or want to pay - despite what you may think, this requires a lot of manual attention. Attendees also have a lot of questions and special cases that need to be tracked.

The work of the registration team is of vital importance for the work of other teams within DebConf, for example, the talks team need to know when a speaker is arriving/departing and the people in charge of food need to know how many people will need a meal every day. This work begins months before the conference, and extends to the very last day - and beyond.

BUDGETING
MICHAEL SCHULTHEISS

B udgeting for DebConf can be a very nerve-wracking experience. DebConf is supplied in a great part through contributions from its sponsors, and could hardly go on without them. However, DebConf must make arrangements before fundraising starts in earnest, and thus before the total amount of money available is known. The number of sponsored attendees is also hard to predict, further increasing the uncertainty.

Thus, budgeting is a constant balancing game - as fundraising numbers go up, we can slowly increase the amenities we can afford - or sometimes decrease amenities if fundraising falls short! It is hard to emphasize enough how important our sponsors are to DebConf. Every contribution goes directly to allowing developers to come and more community building activities to take place - there are no administrative overheads or staff salaries. Generally, we will start by agreeing to pay the bare minimum of venue costs and sponsored food and accommodation, and add sponsored day trips, conference dinners, and goodies as we can afford to.

ILUSTRATION BY VALESSIO BRITO

Year	Venue	People	Budget (USD)
2000	Bordeaux, France	30	0.00
2001	Bordeaux, France	50	0.00
2002	Toronto, Canada	90	5,000.00
2003	Oslo, Norway	130	25,000.00
2004	Porto Alegre, Brazil	150	75,000.00
2005	Helsinki, Finland	300	130,000.00
2006	Oaxtepec, Mexico	310	150,000.00
2007	Edinburgh, Scotland	394	180,000.00
2008	Mar del Plata, Argentina	223	160,000.00
2009	Caceres, Spain	246	75,000.00
2010	New York, USA	301	185,000.00

As you know, DebConf is free to all, and thanks to our sponsors those registering early can get accommodation and food paid for. This helps to ensure that *all* Debian members, regardless of age, income, or employment, have an opportunity to take part in the in-person development and community-building. Those registering late can choose to pay their actual costs for food and accommodation, the "professional" fee, to stay with the group.

While not required, there is a way for attendees to help defray most of their costs if, for example, they can get their employer to reimburse their registration cost. This is the "professional" registration fee. Those wanting to support DebConf even more, beyond just paying their actual costs, can pay the corporate registration fee. We should re-emphasize that anyone can register for free and attend talks and

activities; payments are only required for those registering late *and* wanting our specific food and accommodations.

Account	Income (USD)	Expense (USD)
Accommodation		97,255.00
Bank fees		1,671.32
Daytrip		3,317.00
Food		35,435.11
Insurance		3,090.00
Travell reimbursments		23,106.12
T-shirts		3,482.22
Venue		14,537.00
Video equipment		1,217.19
Video shipping		845.36
General expenses		1,851.00
Attendee	40,367.15	
Donnations	2,994.00	
Sponsors	90,804.61	
Others	1,703.40	
Total	**135,869.16**	**184,961.96**

DebConf receives donations and makes payments in many different currencies. Transferring this money and doing these exchanges adds an extra level of complexity to budgeting. We would like to thank Software in the Public Interest (SPI) for being our primary legal entity in the USA, and Förderung Freier Informationen & Software (FFIS) for being our money holder in the EU. These organizations collect donations from sponsors and make payments and reimbursements at our request.

DebConf10 ran a deficit, due to our expensive location. However, DebConf passes a surplus from year to year to assist in costs, and therefore one expensive year does not make DebConf insolvent. Thus, DebConf10 must be analyzed in the context of the previous DebConfs. The raw deficit for DebConf10 was $49,000.

DebConf8 produced a surplus of 18,000 USD, which was not used in DebConf9. DebConf8 also gave a surplus of $630 to DebConf10 in cash. DebConf9 produced a surplus of $64,000, and used $14,000 from Debian.

Last conferences balance (USD)	Income	Expense	Net
Total for DC10	135,869.16	184,961.96	-49,092.80
Surplus from DebConf8 in 2008	18,000.00		
Surplus from DebConf8 in 2010	630.00		
Surplus from DebConf9	63,835.70		
Debian contribution to DebConf9		14,138.47	
Surplus passed on to DebConf11			**19,234.43**

Adding all of these numbers, we find that the net DebConf surplus passed on to DebConf11 is approximately $19,000, which is a fairly standard amount. $19,000 is considered repayment of any amount borrowed from Debian during the DebConf9 or DebConf10 cycles. Exact numbers can be found in the table above.

FOOD

MORAY ALLAN

The New York local team spent a long time researching possible food options for DebConf, with much hard work going into checking menus and tasting the output of possible suppliers. In the end we decided to go for most meals with a student canteen on the Columbia campus, as this would make the logistics much simpler - it wasn't easy to arrange another space where we could eat without being in the way of other users of the campus, or without using space that we wanted to use for other purposes.

DEBCONF10 LUNCH TIME - PICTURE BY KAI HENDRY

At the student canteen we paid a fixed price per meal, for which attendees could eat as much as they wanted, including meat and vegetarian options, salads, and desserts. The costs here were USD 12.95 for lunch and USD 14.95 for dinner, higher than normally desired for a DebConf. The canteen issued us with single-use tickets for access, but since DebConf attendees often eat out in groups for some meals, we didn't issue these directly. Instead we handed out our own tickets, each only valid for a specific mealtime, and attendees traded these in for an official ticket at the entrance to the canteen. While this added extra

DEBCONF10 DINNER TIME - PICTURE BY AIGARS MAHINOVS

work, it saved a significant amount of money across the DebConf period.

The canteen wasn't open for the weekend meals, so we had to make alternative arrangements for these. However, as the campus was also quieter then, we were able to use some outside space to eat, rather than having to convert space back and forth from another use. We used a deli from downtown Manhattan who could cater meals meeting our diverse dietary requirements. This deli was well known to one of our local team members, and we were happy to support a local business this way. This caterer delivered meals as a hot and cold buffet, ready to eat, so we only needed to lay out the boxes for attendees to serve themselves, then clear up the mess after they had all finished eating.

PICTURE BY AIGARS MAHINOVS

"At the student canteen we paid a fixed price per meal, for which attendees could eat as much as they wanted, including meat and vegetarian options, salads, and desserts."

NETWORKING
DEBCONF TEAM

etworking for DebConf is always a monumental task. We have hundreds of developers who expect fast access to the rest of the Internet, wireless for many concurrent users, and complete reliability.

Since DebConf10 was held at a major research university, we had nearly 3 Gbps of Internet uplink - more than any DebConf before. NYSERNet, Columbia's Internet2 provider, increased Columbia's bandwidth quota for DebConf as in-kind sponsorship. We were able to colocate servers in a Computer Science department server room with gigabit connectivity to the campus backbone. Many

NETWORKING - PICTURE BY AIGARS MAHINOVS

of the individual ports in rooms were limited to 100 Mbit, though this was not a major obstacle. With the help of the campus Network Operations Center, we were able to adjust VLANs to suit our needs.

We wired hacklabs with miniswitches going from table to table, with extra DebConf wireless access points around the room. For our primary hacklab, we got an additional six 20-amp circuits of mains power. Our secondary hacklab was a CS study lounge so already had excellent power and wifi coverage - we just added

some extra miniswitches and APs. The vast majority of this equipment was generously loaned by the CS department Computer Research Facilities group, who were also integral to accomplishing all of our other networking related tasks.

Networking between buildings and rooms was handled by the existing Columbia infrastructure. The Columbia backbone between buildings had plenty of capacity for us, but certain rooms were limited to

> "Since DebConf10 was held at a major research university, we had nearly 3 Gbps of Internet uplink - more than any DebConf before."

several 100 Mbit ports. This was only a problem for one video team room, but was solvable since we could use gigabit connections within the room and fit our uplinks to encoding and streaming servers within 100 Mbit.
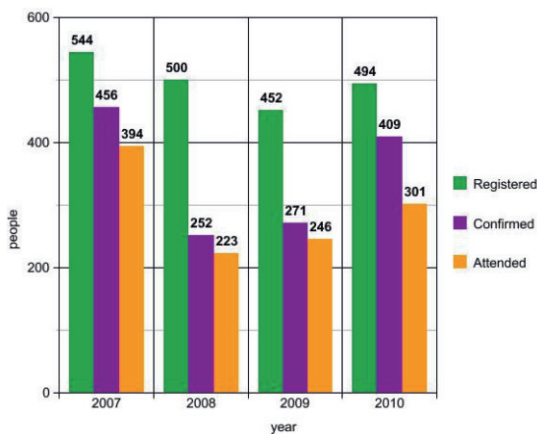
Columbia University Information Technology already had a Debian mirror, and they and the Debian ftpmasters were more than happy to add all architectures and add it to the push-primary rotation.

We must emphasize again that when working with an existing network infrastructure, open communications with the facilities managers is a must. The Columbia networking operations center had to debug various non-DebConf related problems, and their activities had adverse affects on the video team. More open communication would have helped here greatly.

DEBCONF10 IN NUMBERS
TÁSSIA CAMÕES ARAÚJO

DebConf attendance seems to have finally overcome the global recession, which has affected the past two conferences, as shown in the graph below. In 2010, 494 people registered for the conference, 409 reconfirmed their attendance and 301 people actually participated (22% more than last year).

Out of those 301 attendees, 82 also attended DebCamp. Since the attendees' status is based on registration data, people who joined the organization team or acted as volunteers afterwards were not counted as set. The credits session of this document brings the final list.

According to registration data, there were participants from 27 countries and 5 continents (people per continent): Europe (94), North America (94), South America (16), Asia (5) and Oceania (10). Nevertheless, many attendees did not specify a country.

ATTENDEES' STATUS

	[DebCamp - DebConf]
Debian Developer	54 - 122
Otherwise involved in Debian	12 - 92
Not involved but interested	5 - 43
DebConf Volunteer	5 - 16
DebConf Organizer	6 - 12
Accompanying participant	0 - 12
Sponsor	0 - 1
Press	0 - 1
Unspecified	0 - 2

ATTENDEES PER COUNTRY

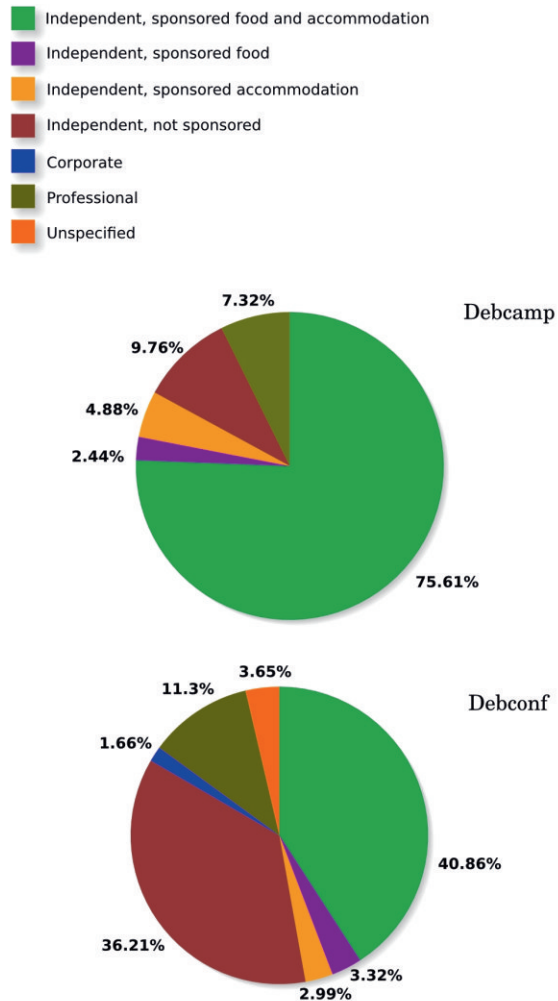|	
85	United States of America
21	United Kingdom
20	Germany
17	France
12	Brazil
7	Australia
6	Bosnia and Herzegovina
6	Switzerland
5	Canada
5	Spain
4	Denmark
4	Mexico
3	Argentina
3	Austria
3	New Zealand
2	Belgium
2	Czech Republic
2	Japan
2	Poland
2	Sweden
2	Taiwan
1	China
1	Finland
1	Greece
1	Latvia
1	Netherlands
1	Venezuela
82	Unspecified

At registration time, attendees could ask for sponsorship regarding travel costs, food and accommodation during the conference. While travel sponsorship was decided on a case-by-case basis, the organization team made the best effort to guarantee food and accomodation sponsorship during DebConf for everyone who asked for it before the registration deadline. And it finally happened that way. The same occurred for DebCamp, provided that the attendee had registered a work plan for those days.

Independent individuals were encouraged to pay for some or all of their expenses if they could afford. Therefore DebConf money could be better used with those who really needed. The Professional category was dedicated for those who were able to pay 650 USD per full or partial week, and individuals registered as Corporate were sponsored by their companies, who paid 1,300 USD per full or partial week. The distribution of attendees among these categories for DebCamp and DebConf are shown in the following charts.

As already noticed in previous years, the percentage of vegetarians among the attendees is much higher than that of the general population. At Debconf10 there were 32 vegetarian and 12 vegan (strict vegetarian) people, comprising nearly 15% of attendees.

Another distinctive characteristic of DebConf population is the percentage of female attendees (11% in Debconf10) which is much higher than in other Debian related activities (according to Debian Women statistics, 1.5% of packaging activities are performed by women). Kudos to DebConf participants and organization who make it a welcoming environment for everyone, helping to diversify the Debian Project.

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