



debian

14th Annual Conference

DebConf13 Vaumarcus

Final Report





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Welcome Message

Didier 'OdyX' Raboud, DebConf13 team member

DebConf is the Debian project's biggest annual event. By making it possible for the Debian community to gather in person for a full week, DebConf is a lasting motivator for attendees. With its combination of formal talks; an intense hallway track; and dedicated space for hacking, working, and discussing, DebConf provides rich face-to-face interactions with peers from the Debian community.



DebConf13 group picture in Le Camp

The fourteenth DebConf took place in 2013, in Vaumarcus, on the shore of Lake Neuchâtel in the north-west of Switzerland. A unique aspect this year was the bold choice of an "all-included" venue. *Le Camp* included accommodation, catering and conference facilities for most attendees in a quite idyllic location with a stunning view of Lake Neuchâtel. This geographically-remote venue provided several challenges for the organizing team, but as evident from the attendees' impressions (see page 13 on), the team rose to the challenge. This venue will be remembered as an excellent place for hacking, meeting, discussing, beersigning, designing new tools or simply enjoying the strong community feeling over a shared Swiss beer.

One highlight this year was a number of presentations from notable upstream authors including Lennart Poettering and Kay Sievers, *systemd*; Michael "Monty" Widenius, *MariaDB*; Harald Hoyer, *dracut*; and others.

The DebConf13 schedule featured talks organized in ten different topic tracks, ranging from *Community Outreach* to *Debian in Education* and from *Debian in the Cloud* to *Real-Time Communications*. Special attention was given to the schedule for the afternoon of Debian's 20th birthday as the public was invited to the venue for the party. This was an awesome party with an enormous cake and a bonfire!

On behalf of the full organizing team, I would like to thank everyone who made it to *Le Camp*. Every speaker, attendee, community member, accompanying partner, child and cat who came to Vaumarcus made this DebConf awesome. This DebConf would have never been the success it was without the enormous work, faith and enthusiasm of the whole DebConf Team, both international and Swiss. Special thanks also go to the great video team who managed to stream video from the two talk rooms for all talks, making it possible for the wider community to interact with the audience and follow the talks, whether live or after the fact.

Finally, I would like to thank our sponsors, without whose generosity DebConf would not be possible. We hope that you appreciate the progress in Debian which came out of DebConf13!

Words from the Debian Project Leader

Lucas Nussbaum

Debian is a fully distributed project. Contributors are spread over the world, and interact on a daily basis via many mailing lists and IRC channels. The typical Debian team gathers people from various geographical locations and very different cultures who often have been working together for a long time before first meeting. (On my arrival at DebConf13, I finally met a member of the Ruby team with whom I've been working since 2005!)

In such a distributed setting, difficult social interactions are unavoidable. Debian is often pointed at for its flamewars and rather vocal development community. There's surely space for improvement, but what most people don't realize is that we are actually doing great when one looks at the context and the constraints. How many other organizations gather so many volunteer contributors, from various cultures, in a very flat structure, towards achieving common goals?



Lucas Nussbaum, Debian Project Leader

Debian contributors have long understood the central contribution of DebConf to the success of Debian. Each year, Debian geeks from all over the world look forward to that event, and for many of them, including myself, DebConf is simply unmissable. DebConf is so important because it feels like it exists in a suspended reality: a reality where Debian enthusiasts, who during the year fight hard to find free time slots to work on Debian, can finally do so 24x7.

From the outside, DebConf could be seen as a hacking event, and the number of IP addresses per attendee could reinforce that feeling. But it is actually primarily a social event. It enables Debian contributors to put faces to names (and nicknames), meet with each other, talk about future ideas and design plans, strengthen the ties within the Debian community, and smooth grudges that arise when communicating only over the Internet.

DebConf13 has met the very high standard that all DebConf attendees expect from a DebConf. Of course, every single DebConf has distinguishing traits which make it unique and memorable to its attendees, and DebConf13 was no different in that regard. The main feature of DebConf13 that will make me remember it forever is the location. Being a fan of nature and wilderness, I was looking forward to an event outside the traditional conference setting of a city center or a university. In addition to the great environment, the Le Camp venue itself also provided a fantastic setting for a DebConf, by providing housing space in the same location for all attendees and many spots inside and outside buildings for discussions and informal meetings.

On a more personal note, this DebConf was very special to me, since it was my first one as the DPL. I will always remember the numerous times during DebConf13 when I felt so lucky to be part of such a great community.

All this has been made possible by more people than could possibly be listed here. From the organizing team to the speakers, from participants to sponsors, from locals to government officials, and to everyone else whom 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) what DebConf13 has been. See you next year!

The Role of DebConf



Focused hacking

Over the last decade, 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.

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 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 project members who would not be

able to attend out of their own resources, but who can make significant contributions to the conference—it's not only the recipients of the bursaries who benefit, but the whole project.

The talks and discussion sessions at DebConf are important opportunities to raise new proposals for development, to let contributors know about new technical advances they can build on in their own work, and 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 over IRC, 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 increase the benefits gained from the money spent to arrange talks at DebConf.

Anyone visiting the hacklabs during DebConf, at almost any time of day or night, will find people engrossed in work on Debian—some silently by themselves typing, others peering at computer screens in pairs, and others sitting 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 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. Fewer people are present than during the main conference, but all are keen to progress their work. The work done on

Debian during DebCamp and the main DebConf period has a far higher value than the amount spent to arrange the conference.

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 end up becoming Debian Developers as a result. 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.

Talks

Gunnar Wolf

What makes a DebConf happen?

Yes, DebConf is about making Debian better. It is also a great social opportunity. We get to meet face-to-face the people we work with online every day throughout the year. We get the time to develop non-technical relationships that often grow into long term, deep friendships. But before anything else, DebConf is a conference: an academic gathering structured around a set of peer-submitted, peer-selected talks.



Main talk room

Our procedures for talk selection are much more informal than at most academic gatherings. DebConf is about *sharing with peers* rather than *rating* them. Thus, we do not reject talk propos-



als, and have a very small set of plenary talks. That does not mean that we lack a talks-selection team. A group of volunteers goes over the talks submitted before the deadline, rates them, and prepares the preliminary schedule.

Talks are rated according to three main criteria:

Relevance *How important is this talk to the Debian project?* We always get many proposals for talks which are very attractive and technically interesting. However, we have to keep the sessions relevant to Debian's growth and development.

Novelty *Does this talk present new developments in Debian rather than existing technologies?* While it is important to increase awareness of existing technologies, the Debian community—as a direct consequence of its geographic dispersion—is good both at documenting tools and at educating itself using this documentation. DebConf can be seen as the best moment to present new analysis, developments and ideas.

Interest *How will a specific talk be received by the Debian community?* This final criterion is somewhat subjective; it requires the Talks Team members to be intimately familiar with the direction and level of discussions within the Debian Project. The reason for this criterion is not to create an artificial *feel-good* set of talks. To the contrary, we try to favor topics that will spark interesting discussions and that can push important discussions forward in this high-bandwidth face-to-face setting.

A defining characteristic of DebConf is that the Talks Team does not formally approve or reject talks. Instead, we select talks that fill the tentative schedule, while taking care to leave enough space for people to propose other talks that were initially submitted, or even for last-minute ideas. The only requisite for talk schedule changes is to inform the Video Team far enough in advance that they can plan and cover the sessions. Thus, the DebConf talks schedule is only truly finalized when the conference is over. Every year we have interesting *ad-hoc* talks.

The DebConf talks range over the entire Debian development spectrum. For 2013, we defined the following tracks:

Debian For The Cloud The operating system we produce is among the most popular server systems. In the server space, consolidation and cloud computing is the rage. We had an interesting mix of talks about such topics as Debian systems integration with the main commercial cloud providers and using Debian as the infrastructure upon which to build private clouds.

Building and Porting Not too long ago, the direction of computing seemed to show an inevitable trend towards homogeneity. While Debian prides itself in being the most diverse distribution, most of the historical hardware architectures for Unix workstations had faded away. The future seemed to be dominated by the x86-derived instruction set.

In the last few years, low-power CPUs, particularly ARM and MIPS, gained traction from their use in mobile devices, and now seem to be making inroads in the desktop and server spaces as well. Cross-compilation and multi-architecture systems have once again become not only relevant but strategic.

There are exciting developments in building and porting Debian on the software side as well. Linux development has historically been identified with the use of the GNU Compiler Collection (GCC). However, other free compilers have reached the maturity and feature-richness to be considered as serious alternatives, with LLVM/Clang leading the pack. Several talks discussed the issues here.



Community Outreach Debian is more than a technical project—it also includes a vital social component. The Community Outreach track included talks on such topics as: how Debian can grow socially to be more inclusive, diverse and rewarding; how to lower the entrance barrier, making it easier to become involved; how Debian can better be integrated into the larger Free Software ecosystem; and how Debian and its sub-projects (such as DebConf itself!) should be governed.

Real-Time Communications Free Software seemed to have lost the race to bring voice and video-conferencing solutions to end users. But several recent developments have again sparked interest in this area; there is fresh interest in reliable, secure, and user-friendly mechanisms for person-to-person synchronous communication.

Debian Blends and Derivatives Our project seeds literally hundreds of derived Linux distributions, as well as many *pure blends* (derived distributions developed wholly within Debian). This track is one of our constant fixtures, presenting some of the most interesting cases.

Quality Assurance When facing a project as large as Debian, automating archive-wide quality checks is always a hot topic. There are many Continuous Integration suites that are being integrated into various Debian processes, as well as many QA tools specifically developed for our workflows and needs.

Debian Boot The reality of computing changes: what was clear and sufficient yesterday will not be enough tomorrow. For the last few years, developments both inside the Linux kernel and in the general use of computer systems have shown that our traditional initialization system, derived straight from *Unix System V*, is no longer enough. One of the toughest decisions the Debian project faces for our mid-term development is choosing which of the alternatives we should adopt. An entire track of talks was sparked by this seemingly too-specific topic.

Debian Teams Debian is to a large degree structured around team-based package maintenance. Most areas of the project's social life are also managed in a team-based fashion. DebConf is the natural place for these groups to get work done together, but also to hold specific meetings, inviting the rest of the project to understand their status and challenges. Many of the sessions in this track are repeated year after year, and allow us to get the pulse of Debian.

Debian's 20th Birthday Finally, during DebConf13 we celebrated Debian's 20th birthday. As part of the celebration, we had a set of talks meant for the general public. These talks showed many of the ways in which people can get involved, and highlighted interesting projects where Debian is one of the players.

Not all of the talks were part of a track. Of the 112 sessions we scheduled, 41 were presented outside the formal tracks.

On a more personal note, I have personally always tried to be a part of the Talks Team, and have always considered it a privilege and an honor. As I was unable to travel to DebConf this year, being involved in planning the set of talks we would host at least allowed me to play an important role in the most formally important part of our conference.

Finally, I would like to thank the *Talks Scheduling Team*. Just having a list of talks to present is not enough. Scheduling the talks to minimize the number of sessions an attendee has to miss due to conflict between talks that they want to hear, and having a connecting thread between sessions, is difficult to achieve. Tássia, Tiago and Andreas managed to prepare a great schedule!

Debian Birthday Party

Steve Langasek

August 16th, 2013 marked the twentieth anniversary of the founding of Debian¹, and for the first time, this date fell during DebConf. This occasion could certainly not be allowed to pass unnoticed!



Lighting the candles on the birthday cake

Continuing the DebConf tradition of holding a Debian Day for the local community, the wider Swiss community was invited² to join us in Vaumarcus for an afternoon of talks targeted to users and new contributors to Debian. In all, around 25 people who were not attending DebConf joined us for the birthday party. The festivities continued into the evening with a barbecue, a bonfire, and a birthday cake: a giant, traditional Swiss cremeschnitte was prepared on-site for the party. Four Debian Project Leaders, past and present, did the honors of cutting the cake.

One of our sponsors, Plat'Home, also donated two of their OpenBlocks embedded ARM servers to be raffled off, raising over 450 CHF for Debian. Many thanks again to Plat'Home, and congratulations to the raffle winners, Salvatore Bonaccorso and Cédric!

Once everyone had had their fill of cake, the Debian community kept the party going by showcasing their many talents with outdoor poetry recitals, live music on piano and flute, and DJing in the bar that ran well into the night.

¹<http://groups.google.com/group/comp.os.linux.development/msg/a32d4e2ef3bcdcc6>

²<http://www.debian.org/News/2013/20130809>



Past and present Debian Project Leaders, Ian Jackson, Bdale Garbee, Lucas Nussbaum and Stefano Zacchiroli (from left to right) watch the lighting of the birthday cake

Video Team

Tássia Camões

For DebConf13, the video coverage of the conference once again allowed people from all around the world to actively participate.

The remote audience was able to send their questions through IRC in pre-established channels, and the room coordinator promptly forwarded questions to the people in the room. The impact of this action can be seen by the amazing expressions of appreciation³ for the Video Team's work from a variety of countries.

This year the Video Team was composed of almost 50 volunteers⁴, many of them participating for the first time. Two training sessions were organized before the conference start and additional training was provided during the week. Each session was covered by a team of 5 people including a video mixer, an audio mixer, two camera operators, and a room coordinator.

In parallel with this work, while the talks were being prepared for release, there were additional volunteers working hard to produce subtitles⁵ for them. The workflow for subtitles was new with DebConf12 and was further improved in DebConf13.

A total of 85 events happened in the two main conference rooms, of which 83 were recorded. Within a mere 30 hours after the end of the conference all the videos were made available to public for download. Once again, thanks to IRILL and all our sponsors for their support. And many thanks to all the Video Team volunteers, without whom this great job wouldn't have been possible.

³<https://wiki.debconf.org/wiki/DebConf13/Videoteam/Thanks>

⁴<https://wiki.debconf.org/wiki/DebConf13/Videoteam/Help>

⁵<https://wiki.debconf.org/wiki/Videoteam/Subtitles>

Attendee Impressions

*Martín Ferrari*⁶

On Sunday I arrived to DebConf13. It has been so much fun that I didn't have the time to post anything about it!

As usual, I really enjoy meeting old friends and putting faces to nicknames. Last night the Cheese and Wine party was once again great.

Not everything has been partying, though. I've been discussing with Enrico ideas for recognising Debian Contributors, as he presented on his talk on Sunday. We still have to discuss further, and obviously, sit down and write a lot of code :-).

Yesterday we also met with Luk, and discussed what to do with the ancient net-tools package. We had had the idea of writing compatibility wrappers using iproute2, but that turned out to be too complicated and brittle. After looking at the current state of net-tools, and its reverse dependencies, we decided that the best way to go is to deprecate it by asking rdepends to migrate to iproute2 (for most of them it should be trivial), and then downgrade net-tools to optional. It won't be removed from the archive, as people will still want it, but it will not be required by any core functionality any more.

In the next few days, we will be sending an email to debian-devel, and filing about 80 bugs to get rid of the dependency on net-tools, many with patches.

*Richard Hartmann*⁷

The venue here at Le Camp is pretty much perfect. Short walking distances, organic layout of the buildings, and a stunning view of the lake. I would be hard pressed to think of other venues which could be as nice...

After arriving Fri/Sat night at 0330, Saturday was spent setting up the access points. A little green valve caused a power outage in the server room, messing with servers, and resetting several switches to old configs. XTaran had a lot of fun as a result of this.

The ikiwiki BoF on Sunday was rather interesting. I will try to publish some notes from this BoF and the other Git-related ones towards the end of the week.

The *Gitify ALL the things* BoF managed to fill the room from "full-ish" over "good thing we don't need the beamer and can use the space in front of the whitescreen" over "out of chairs" over "the chairs from other rooms won't fit any more" to the final state of "people stand around near the walls and in the doors". At a total of 54 people, turnout has been... unexpectedly high..

The BoF started at 1130 and usually, slots are 45 minutes long. We extended our BoF into lunch time (I chose the slot just prior to lunch for precisely that reason) and finally finished at around 1245, i.e. 30 minutes late. After a quick show of hands on if there's interest in another BoF, I applied for and got the next slot, tomorrow at 11:30, once again in BoF room 1 and just before lunch. It's called *Gitify EVEN MORE of the things* and will expand on use cases and best practices. At a guess, we will focus on managing configurations and photos in default and complex situations.

Afterwards, I had a chance to sit down with Lucas Nussbaum to talk over some points regarding the Debian Trademark Team.

Finally, during *Why Debian should (or should not) make systemd the default* (it probably should not, but that's a different story), my kernel panicked. 3.9 and 3.10 have been less than ideal on my new X1 Carbon, but this was the first panic. I was not even

⁶http://blog.tincho.org/posts/DebConf_13/

⁷<http://richardhartmann.de/blog/posts/2013/08/12-DebConf13-I/>



done cussing and Ben Hutchings suddenly appeared on my side, telling me that yes, this particular module (mei) has been causing issues recently.

As a closing note, I am really enjoying my first DebConf. Great venue, great people, great content, wine, beer and cheese party tonight, and I found out that we have a fire place and fire wood...

Christian Perrier⁸

I did some hacking at DebConf, as usual. For once, I had no TODO list: after all, I never complete these, so why make one?

Still, I participated to discussions around samba packaging (mostly animated by Ivo De Decker) and I think we're making good progress towards samba 4.x packages. The road is long, quite complicated, but we now have a stronger team, with a very active Ivo, Jeroen Dekkers who officially joined, and Steve Langasek who still cherishes one of his pet packages (and even branched in our git with the Ubuntu packages). Great work and thanks to Ivo for pushing this forward.

I also worked quite actively on the migration of fonts packages to git (I now reached the point where I'm more comfortable with git than svn, yes, everything can happen). These packages were modernized at the same time and checked for new upstream versions (I have to say that few of these fonts had new upstream versions, indeed). We unfortunately found no time to have a good font BoF in Vaumarcus, indeed... but I'm not sure we would have many things to say. The work is done and done well, in this team.

Some progress was made, also, for restoring a working "monolithic" build of D-I. This build gathers together all udebs from unstable, which means it offers a D-I image that uses ALL udebs from unstable... which is not the default of other images. This would be very helpful for translators who want to check their work as soon as possible. In the future, with a Jenkins task that would build each package at each commit and then build a monolithic image, we could have a way to provide a test snapshot of D-I git repos... which could help catching more bugs (or more of my stupid mistakes).

So, in general, I consider this a quite successful DebConf when it comes at "real" production.

Gregor Herrmann⁹

Today DebConf, this year's edition of the annual Debian developer conference, started with two inspiring talks about Debian proper, one by Lucas Nussbaum, the other by Joey Hess.

This also means that yesterday DebCamp ended, the period preceding DebConf and dedicated to working on Debian together with others. Here's a short report from my point of view.

I arrived here on Tuesday, the first day of DebCamp. I immediately fell in love with the venue, & despite the early stage of setup, everything I needed was working fine for me from the very start.

Like in previous years, I used the time to do work in the Debian Perl Group, especially taking advantage of the presence of other team members. That's the great thing about DebCamp & DebConf: collaborating in real-life & real-time, from quickly asking a question over sitting together to think about solutions for a problem to "just" chatting & thereby developing ideas for the future.

In the previous days I

⁸<http://www.perrier.eu.org/weblog/2013/08/31#dc13-hacking>

⁹http://info.comodo.priv.at/blog/debcamp_2013.html



- tried to get down the amount of packages with not-yet uploaded new upstream releases;
- looked into the pending bugs around the Perl 5.18 transition;
- investigated with others the details of the upcoming new timezone file handling in the Perl world, which will make our lives easier but still needs some work on the Debian side;
- prepared with others the Perl Group's BoF that will take place during DebConf on Thursday;
- helped with the creation of a new pkg-perl-tools package.

I really enjoy my time here, & I'm especially happy to meet some people for the first time in meat space. This is only possible due to the generous support of the DebConf sponsors & the immense efforts of the DebConf team. Thank you!

*Joey Hess*¹⁰

For me, DebConf13 in Switzerland was a perfect DebConf, and generally a great developer meeting and conference. I've attended several past DebConf's in Canada, Norway, Brazil, Finland, Mexico, Scotland, Spain, NYC, Bosnia, and Nicaragua. I have special memories of each. DebConf13 was ideal in every way.

Let's start with the camping. Only a minority of us did it, and my campsite was located in a small field behind a bar that was often noisy late into the night, when I was trying to rest and preserve my European jet lag remedy of inverted sleeping schedule. Still, I love sleeping cocooned in a tent, and going through the routines of camping and spending time alone there was a good counterpoint to DebConf. I generally find myself retreating for a day or two in the middle of a week-long conference, burnt out with social interactions. That didn't happen this time. I need to find way to camp at future DebConf's.

(Also special shout out to wonderful people who lent me a warmer sleeping bag, and bought me a pillow while on a trip to town! Upgraded my first backpacking in Europe experience's comfort level a lot!)

The next perfect thing for me were the talks I gave at DebConf. I always enjoy presenting at DebConf, and barely remember when I'd get nervous doing it. But I really felt comfortable giving these talks in a way I've not before. I'm pleased with how the *Debian Cosmology* talk turned out; I'd worried it would be a downer talk, or too light, or not well received, and none of those problems surfaced.

I was especially happy with my *dh busfactor* session, which I prepared for all of 10 minutes and was structured entirely to benefit me by talking over my thoughts and getting feedback, and in which I probably drove the camera people crazy running my own mic into the audience. Despite all that, I think it succeeded being interesting for the participants as well as for me. Hope to follow up on it soon.

But beyond the two talks I submitted, there were a series of ad-hoc scheduled talks. It seemed that every day I spent at least an hour discussing something I'm deeply involved in. This started with the *Ikiwiki* BoF, and then there was an epic series of (unrecorded) BoFs about git stuff, which basically turned into an unofficial git track at DebConf. Much, much discussion of git-annex and other things I'm involved in.

BTW, I really like that DebConf, as well as being a formal conference on top, is really an un-conference underneath, with new BoFs and things popping up on the schedule all week long. You can even have completely unscheduled meetings that somehow get just the right mix of people to make something awesome happen.

But it wasn't all about talks. Indeed, I only attended 2 or 3 sessions a day. The DebConf13 venue was controversial, but I found it excellent for getting things done.

¹⁰http://joeyh.name/blog/entry/best_DebConf_ever/

Rather than one or two massive rooms that get too noisy to think in, this venue had many little nooks and crannies suited for different types of work. There were so many I only discovered some while walking down the hill as I was leaving the venue! Anchoring it all was the excellent view, and I particularly enjoyed the “scenic hacklab”.

I was particularly impressed with the flexibility of the venue’s management. Someone asked if we could have cheese for breakfast, and every breakfast thereafter had not one but often three excellent cheeses. One day we’d be complaining that there were not enough vegetables in the food, and the next we’d be eating an excellent vegetarian Swiss lunch. They even apparently relaxed stringent Swiss rules on not allowing tents in sightlines visible from people further up the hill. They were clearly happy to welcome our crazy gathering to Le Camp. They let a DD borrow and use a chain saw and build a bonfire!

The venue also encouraged getting out and exploring the surrounding countryside. Too often I end up spending the whole DebConf without seeing much of the area around. This time I at least got down the hill to see the castle in Vaumarcus a few times, and enjoyed many evening walks among the grape fields. The conference dinner (on a boat!) tied into this well too. And the day trip to CERN was a great addition. We got to poke around the control center for a massive particle accelerator! My only regret is we didn’t get a chance to actually go inside the LHC tunnels.



Joey Hess (outside of the photo to the right), several members of the Debian Technical Committee and other DebConf13 participants during a git BoF

Back to DebConf, another thing I really liked about this one was that its location allowed several upstream authors of software in Debian (other than the usual suspects who are both upstreams and Debian Developers) to attend. I don’t know if Lennart Poettering changed any minds about systemd with his talk, but I was happy for the opportunity to buy him a beer. I didn’t get to Monty’s talk, but it was excellent to see him attend as well.

Finally, I got to meet old friends I’d not seen in years, and new ones I’ve not met in real life before. We’re still not sure where this whole DebConf thing is going – will it be all about the cheese and wine party and greybeards in 20 years time? But one thing we know is we enjoy our little slice of the year where kilts and coding are equally unremarkable, where problems that seem intractable online somehow solve themselves in person, where we come away with ideas for an entire year and memories for a lifetime.

Le Camp, Vaumarcus

Raphaël Walther

Le Camp is an amazing place on the shores of Lake Neuchâtel, spread between Concise and Vaumarcus, two towns in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. The buildings of this holiday resort are like a small village spread over an area of approximately 100,000 square meters. With an incredible view of the lake, the Swiss Alps, and the forest which begins just a few meters behind the main building, this is probably the nearest a DebConf has ever been to nature.

The site provided a fiber uplink, which was perfect both for hacking and remote participation in the conference. There was plenty of space to accommodate people, an abundance of tasty food, and several recreational facilities including a soccer field, table tennis, and a volleyball court.



Aerial overview of Le Camp, with adjacent vineyards and Lake Neuchâtel in the background

The venue is accessible by bus from Yverdon-les-Bains which is connected to Zürich and Geneva airport via the train. For those who drove, there was also a new parking lot available.

Our hosts continually did their best to make our organizers' lives easier and provide each and every attendee the best service they could. They made significant contributions to make the conference a success. Many thanks to our hosts!

Food

Didier 'OdyX' Raboud

Managing food for an international conference is always an interesting problem. Challenges include attendees from many different countries, food restrictions of all sorts, and the desire to offer local food while satisfying most attendees. This year's task was additionally interesting because of two factors. First, the caterer was known from when we chose the venue; it had to be the cook team from Le Camp. Second, there was no reasonable alternative nearby: Yverdon-les-Bains, the nearest city, was more than a half hour away by bus. When DebConf has been held in cities, people have had the opportunity to sample a variety of nearby restaurants or shops; this was clearly not so easy this time.

With these restrictions in mind, the organizing team approached the Le Camp cook staff to agree on meal types, numbers, special cases and so on. As in previous DebConfs, we agreed to provide three types of meals: *vegan*, *vegetarian* and *others*. Thanks to early registrations from all attendees, we could inform Le Camp of our meal-type numbers in advance as well as provide updates on a daily basis.



The second lunch room

There were three meals served every day: breakfast for attendees accommodated in Le Camp, and lunch and dinner for all attendees regardless of their place of accommodation. All meals were served next to the main talk room, both in the left upper part and lower part of the *Bâtiment principal*. On many sunny occasions, several attendees took their full plates and ate outside in groups, enjoying a fruitful discussion or just the beautiful lake view.

The number of daily meals served ranged from **43 meals** on the first DebCamp day to **265 meals** during the Debian Birthday Party, for a grand total of **5312 meals** served by the Le Camp cook staff during the two week period. The attendee categories were approximately as following: 4% *vegan*, 18% *vegetarians* and 77% *regular*. One need imposed by having fixed categories per attendee is to ensure that everyone only eats what they signed up for, but this was made really difficult by the fact that all three types of food were appealing visually and in taste! Thanks to

the cook staff, this was only a problem once, and was fixed very rapidly.

We also made some special requests of the cook staff to suit our needs:

- a grillade for the twentieth Debian birthday party, with more attendees than usual as it was a public event
- a special meal (and their attendance) for the Cheese and Wine party
- a packed lunch for the Day Trip

All in all, the cook team from Le Camp was a truly excellent and trustworthy partner throughout DebCamp and DebConf. Their responsiveness was fantastic. For example, when some attendees asked to have something less sweet at breakfast, not only was this accepted without hesitation, but truly excellent Swiss cheese was provided from then on at every breakfast! Also, when there was a shortage of food on one occasion (because we provided them wrong numbers), they reacted very quickly and managed to find a good solution in half an hour.

We are very thankful to Pierre Schwab and all his cook team for their presence, openness, and helpful attitude during the two weeks.

Bar

Benedikt Trefzer

Le Camp is located far from any establishments selling beverages and food such as restaurants, bars and supermarkets. Therefore, the organizing team decided to provide a location in Le Camp where, for more than 12 hours per day during the conference, drinks and food could be purchased for a very reasonable price (in part thanks to additional sponsorship).

The bar was located in the building called "Ronde". The large floorspace of the building, the wonderful view of the lake, and its central location contributed to making "the bar" not only the place where attendees could have a drink together, but also a place for coding and sharing ideas.

The bar served sodas, local wines, and three types of beer. The high demand for the dark beer surprised even our brewer, and it ran out twice! The bar also served snacks, such as ice cream, hand-made sandwiches and cakes, and raclette—a Swiss melted cheese specialty. Our thanks to the bar volunteers for serving almost 2000 liters of drinks while others were having fun drinking it.

Product	Quantity sold
Beer Hasli lager	800 L
Beer Hasli wheat	260 L
Beer Hasli dark	280 L
Wine	25 L
Soft drinks	545 L
Coffee	947 cups
Sandwiches	97 pieces
Ice cream	369 pieces
Fruit cake	134 pieces
Raclette (each for 2 persons)	23 pieces

For the Debian birthday party, the bar team prepared a huge cake. Scaling up the recipe to more than 300 people was easy but the preparation of a 1.5 m² birthday cake was definitely a challenge. A wooden frame was assembled as a support. 4.5 m² of puff pastry were baked along with 33 L of vanilla cream. Finally, 8 kg of sugar were used for the icing, which was decorated with an impressive Debian swirl. With the help of 6 attendees, the cake was finished on time and was cut by the present and former Debian Project Leaders.

Day Trip

Michael Banck

The conference day trip is a long-standing tradition of DebConf. As the overwhelming majority of attendees are usually not from the country where DebConf is taking place, getting to know the surroundings of the DebConf location is welcomed by most. Furthermore, the day trip allows for longer discussions and socializing than is otherwise possible during the hectic DebConf schedule. For DebConf13, as for several previous DebConf, the usual conference dinner was combined with the day trip.

In order to best handle all the participants, the day trip was split into several intertwining options. Buses were organized to several locations:

- to the international clock museum at La Chaux-de-Fonds¹¹
- to the asphalt mines at Travers¹²
- to the absinthe distillery in Couvet¹³

In addition, two hike options to Soliat were offered, a short, 2.5-hour hike from Les Rochats or a longer, 6-hour hike from Le Camp.

All of the above variants converged at Soliat for lunch and leisure around the natural, amphitheatre-shaped attraction Creux du Van¹⁴. In the afternoon, day-trip attendees took their buses to the city of Neuchâtel for a city visit or to attend the buskers music festival. In the evening, a boat was boarded for the conference dinner, taking everybody back to Vaumarcus after a long tour around Lake Neuchâtel.



Creux du Van

Additionally, a bus trip to CERN was organized by one of the DebConf attendees. Guided tours to the computer center, the main CERN control center, the ATLAS experiment control center and the SM-18 test facilities were arranged. Unfortunately, access to the main LHC accelerator tunnel was not possible at the time. The CERN tour joined the main day trip on the boat for the conference dinner.

¹¹<http://www.neuchatel-tourisme.ch/en/decouvertes/museums/clock-making-m-lanbspchaux-de-fonds.1500.html>

¹²http://www.myswitzerland.com/en/destinations/top_attractions/travers-asphalt-mines.html

¹³<http://www.distab.ch/>

¹⁴https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creux_du_Van

Network

Axel Beckert

Debconf wouldn't function well without a good network for the participants to rely on.

Connectivity

Le Camp has fibre connection operated by Vidéo 2000¹⁵, based in Neuchâtel. The fibre connection is part of UPC Cablecom's network and is geared for connection up 1 GBit/s but throttled by the carrier to 100 MBit/s on the far side.

Vidéo 2000 provided us two /22, one /27 and one /29 public IPv4 ranges – which was more than we requested. They also reconfigured the local wireless access points to sport an ESSID called DebConf.

IPv6 connectivity came via an 6to4 tunnel to a Debian machine hosted at Man-Da.

Local Servers and Network Configuration

We had two local 2U servers built and provided by Dalco¹⁶, each with 32 GB of RAM, 4 * 4TB disks, hardware RAID and two quad-core CPUs.

Both machines were setup as Xen Dom0 servers and ran multiple virtual machines.

One of them (named homer) was used as DNS and DHCP server (for the wired network as well as for DebConf's own wireless network), router, and local debian mirror. The other one (named storagel) was exclusively used by the Video Team as temporary storage for the recordings as well as for encoding and local streaming – the latter was setup in a virtual machine named localstream1.

Additionally, Philipp Hug provided two 1U servers which were used as cluster nodes for Thomas Goirand's OpenStack workshop. The OpenStack controller named osc was running as virtual machine on homer.

As server room we used Le Camp's laundry and janitor depot room in the lower floor of Rotonde. This is also where there uplink ends.

Local Network Infrastructure

Le Camp sports a quite impressive local network infrastructure including wired network connections between approximately one third of all buildings and a Cisco-based wireless mesh network reaching all other buildings. All Cisco switches on-site offered Power over Ethernet (PoE) and allowed us much easier placement of further switches and wireless access points. All switches belonging to the local infrastructure were managed and supported VLAN tagging.

Besides Rotonde as main network hub, there are network switches and RJ45 wall sockets in main building (Bâtiment Principal) as well as in Passerelle and Carré. Except in the latter two buildings, all local switches were Cisco switches. Passerelle and Carré sported each one "Blackbox" branded switch which didn't provide PoE on its ports.

Nevertheless the local network infrastructure had its drawbacks which came to daylight when the uplink was used up close to the throttled limit, e.g. during mirror syncs – which we later throttled to 10 MBit/s. The controller for the wireless access points as well as the DHCP and DNS servers for all machines connected to them is sitting behind the uplink in Neuchâtel. The above mentioned throttling caused package loss, and especially non-TCP traffic like DHCP or DNS requests were often lost.

¹⁵<http://www.video2000.ch/>

¹⁶<http://www.dalco.ch/>

Our own Wireless Network

Since all traffic from and to the local wireless infrastructure was routed to Neuchâtel on layer 2, we were not able to use our own DHCP and DNS server for that network, hence we could not work around the DHCP and DNS issues caused by the uplink throttling.

So we set up a second wireless infrastructure based on the Chaos Computer Club Mainz/Wiesbaden¹⁷'s Ubiquity based EventWLAN¹⁸ (System I) hardware, but with our own controller running on a virtual machine (named wlc) on homer.

All the Ubiquity hardware could be powered by PoE, hence it sufficed to just pull a long ethernet cable and we didn't have to care for weather-safe 230V power lines.

Partially we had to use PoE injectors, either because of different PoE voltage was needed or because we had to chain PoE-powered equipment.

Inside buildings we were not allowed to hammer nails into walls or wooden beams, so we used pillow slips and cable ties to mount our own access points.

Our own Wired Network

Since two of the hacklabs were only reachable via the local wireless mesh network, we used multiple 70m twisted pair cables and PoE-powered HP ProCurve switches (provided by Philipp Hug, too) to get wired networking into the buildings Zwingli (balcony hacklab), No. 8 (DebCamp hacklab) and No. 5 (own wireless access point for the lower buildings).

Talk Rooms

The smaller talk room was no issue as it was in Rotonde and had enough RJ45 sockets which we were able to patch as necessary.

The main talk room in Bâtiment Principal was less easier. There were only two free RJ 45 wall sockets in the main talk room, one at each end, all others were needed by the local wireless access points.

We needed at least two different networks (participants network and video team network) in the main talk room, so this seemed to suffice in the beginning. But we couldn't find the other end of the socket close to the speaker on the patch panel - we finally found out that this socket wasn't connected to the normal infrastructure and could not be used at all.

So we only had one socket left, but needed two different networks. Vidéo 2000 kindly patched "trunk" on that socket, so that we could use one of our HP ProCurve switches and configure different VLANs on its ports.

Hence we had to pull long cables from the left back of the talk room to the right middle (where the video had its equipment) and further to the speaker. We mounted the cable to wooden beams of the ceiling structure of the room, but at some point we seem to have damaged it in a way so that the cable tester said that the cable is fine, but network didn't work. Took a while until we decided to exchange the cable by pulling a second cable along a wooden beam at the ceiling, but it helped. Conclusion: Cable testers don't seem to test everything.

¹⁷<http://www.cccmz.de/>

¹⁸<https://eventwlan.cccmz.de/>

Budgeting

Steve Langasek

The process of budgeting for DebConf starts a year before the conference, as the team starts to nail down numbers for its expenses and seek sponsorship. The nature of sponsorship needs change from year to year depending on the venue, with some years in need of more material sponsorship and other years reliant on financial contributions.

The budgeting, sponsorship, and accounting teams work together to balance the available resources, needs of the attendees, and constraints of the location, fitting the pieces together to make a conference that's good, productive, and enjoyable for everyone.

Budget Planning

The budget for DebConf 2013 was based on an assumption of 90 DebCamp attendees and 280 DebConf attendees. The following table outlines the original budget.

Category	Amount [CHF]
Venue, accomodation, food and cleaning	139,000
Day Trip	28,000
Travel sponsorship for developers	25,000
Other conference-related expenses	30,000
Total	222,000

No further costs were budgeted for personnel and organization, as DebConf is traditionally organized by volunteers who graciously contribute a substantial part of the time and energy needed to run the conference.

At the time the initial budget was calculated, it was clear that the conference would be reliant on unprecedented levels of sponsorship for its success. The choice of host country for DebConf13 ensured higher costs than in other years relating to the conference venue, food, and accomodation. It is only thanks to the tremendous efforts of the sponsorship team, and the amazing support of our sponsors, that Debian was able to raise enough resources that enabled us to hold the conference this year.

Sponsorship

The sponsorship team reached out to a number of first-time sponsors in the host country to help close this funding gap. Through the generous contributions of these local sponsors, as well as our international sponsors who have steadfastly supported us over the years, the sponsorship team was able to raise over three times the amount raised for the conference in previous years. Combined with the income from registration fees for non-sponsored attendees and fees for accomodation upgrades, the conference ran a surplus which will be returned to Debian to be used for funding future Debian Free-Software activities.

Final Numbers

The total expenses for the conference amounted to 181,000 CHF, grouped into the following major expense categories:

Category	Budget [CHF]	Expense [CHF]
Venue, accomodation, food and cleaning	139,000	129,000
Day Trip	28,000	23,000
Travel sponsorship for developers	25,000	10,000
Other conference-related expenses	30,000	19,000
Total	222,000	181,000

Registration



DebConf13 registration desk

Registration to attend DebConf happens in several stages. We opened our registration process for DebConf13 on 3 May, coinciding with the Call for Papers. Upon opening registration, people can start to apply for sponsorship via Pentabarf, a conference management system with a web interface. The deadline to apply for sponsored registration passes as of 19 May. Those who register after this point are no longer eligible for sponsored registration, but are still welcome to register with paid Professional or Corporate registration. Registration remains open until the conference period for those who will arrange hotel accommodation themselves, or who live nearby. Basic registration for conference attendance is free of charge.

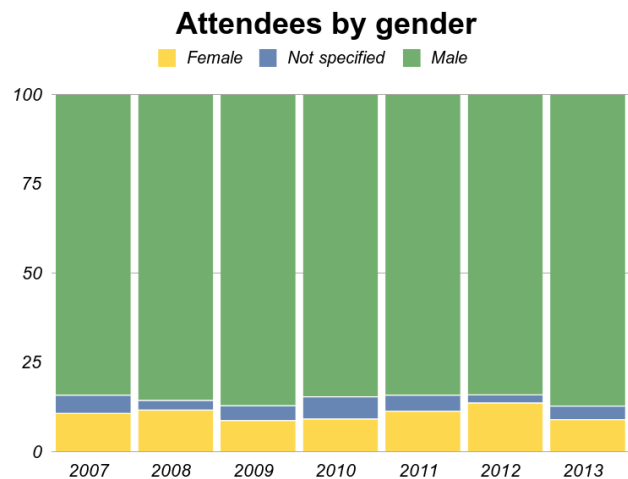
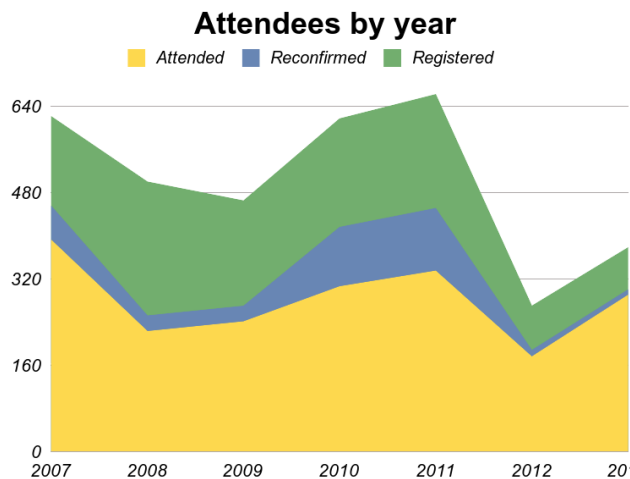
Corporate registration (US\$540 in 2013) is intended for organizations who wish to send their employees to attend DebConf. This registration fee optionally includes accommodation and food during DebConf. We also offer a *Professional* registration category (US\$215 in 2013), which covers only the direct costs to the conference from the attendee.

As DebConf approaches, a few weeks before the event, the reconfirmation phase begins. Attendees are required to log in once again to Pentabarf, and indicate that they really do intend to come to DebConf. The initial registration process gives the organizing team an estimate of attendee numbers, while the reconfirmation process gives more precise numbers. This in turn facilitates the process of assigning rooms, arranging catering of meals, and so on.

Finally, in the first few days of DebConf itself, the registration team's work flows into that of the front desk team, and the two teams tend to have a few members in common. Upon arriving at DebConf, attendees are checked in by members of the front desk team and receive their name badge and conference bag with a t-shirt, materials from sponsors, and information about DebConf itself and the local area. The front desk remains open as an easily accessible point for attendees to get more information about the conference or coordinate with the team at large; the front desk becomes the DebConf customer-service centre.

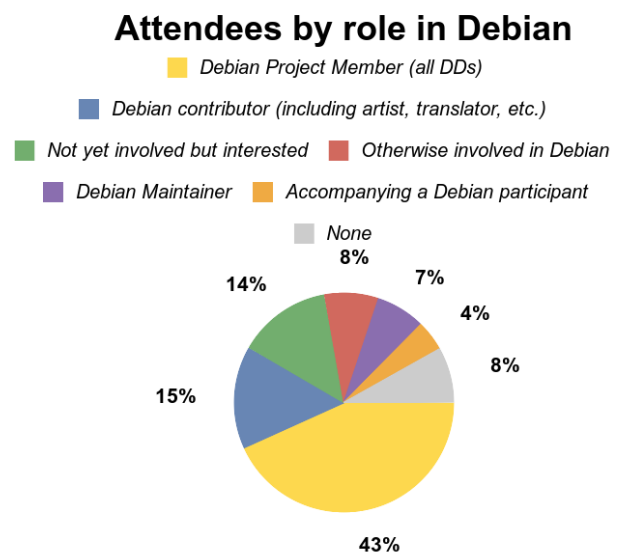
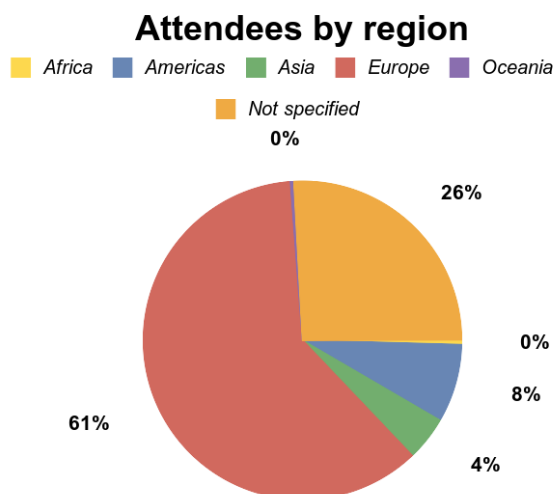
DebConf13 in Numbers

Kees Cook, Gunnar Wolf



Year after year, our conference is clearly among the most diverse of the Free-Software ecosystem. DebConf13 hosted attendees from at least 37 different countries (75 people did not reveal their country of origin). Excluding locals, the distribution of attendees was close to the Debian Developer distribution per country—DebConf has a loyal following among its previous attendees, and similar distributions will happen no matter where in the world the conference is held.

Of course, the long-standing, unofficial policy of not holding DebConf on the same continent for two successive years has the merit of balancing the costs to attend as evenly as possible for the largest percentage of attendees. While it is true that a large number of attendees participate only when the conference does not imply an intercontinental trip, DebConf maintains a high rate of repeat attendance. This year, besides the 75 who withheld their origin, 176 people attended from Europe, 23 from the Americas, 13 from Asia, 2 from Oceania and 1 from Africa.





DebConf is eagerly anticipated by repeat attendees and by Free-Software enthusiasts in the region who have never attended a DebConf before. Registration for DebConf usually opens several months before the conference actually starts, allowing both interested individuals and the organizing team to plan accordingly. We kept the mis-estimation level very low again this year, matching that of DebConf12, but with more participation.

Regarding DebCamp participation, approximately 22% of the attendees arrived in time for DebCamp. As DebCamp is a non-structured week where work is carried out by each person on the specific projects he/she works with, we request people to specify what their work plans are, or pay for the provided lodging and food.

Regarding gender distribution, although at a first sight DebConf is clearly gender-imbalanced, we have achieved a much higher participation of women than in many other areas of Debian—and of Free Software in general. This year we had 26 women out of 290 total attendees, slightly under 9%, which has fallen quite a bit from last year; the lowest since 2009.

Attendees by country of origin	
75	Not specified
43	Germany
30	France
27	Switzerland
22	United Kingdom
12	United States
9	Italy
7	Spain
6	Japan
5	Austria
4	Belgium, Canada, Finland, Hungary
3	Denmark, Sweden
2	Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Ireland, Sri Lanka, Martinique, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Taiwan
1	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, China, Czech Republic, Greece, Guatemala, Israel, India, Norway, Portugal, Venezuela, South Africa

Regarding attendees' relation with the Debian project: The largest sector, with 43%, consists of Debian Developers. 66% of the attendees already do some Debian-related work; 14% stated they attended because they are interested in getting involved.

Also as in the previous years, food preferences diverge strongly from the trends in the population at large. While 234 attendees specified no dietary restrictions, 40 were vegetarian and 9 vegan (strict vegetarian). This means that (taking into account people who chose not to eat with the rest of the group or had other specific needs) we had 17% vegetarians in the group.

Credits

It would have been impossible to make such a large event a reality without the outstanding help of a great group of volunteers—starting with those whom we can't name here, since they just volunteered during the conference to do various tasks, and ending with the core team, who started organizing this year's DebConf right after the last one ended.

It's impossible to list everyone who contributed to make this event happen; there were too many contributors. We apologise for every name we forgot to mention here.

DebConf Chairs	Moray Allan Gunnar Wolf	Holger Levsen
DebConf13 Team	Gaudenz Steinlin Raphaël Walther Michele Cane Arne Wichmann Giacomo Catenazzi Michael Germini Alfusainey Jallow	Didier Raboud Philipp Hug Axel Beckert Luca Capello Benedikt Trefzer Kevin Mueller
Sponsorship	Brian Gupta Luca Capello Giacomo Catenazzi Didier Raboud	Raphaël Walther Gaudenz Steinlin Arne Wichmann Holger Levsen
Budgeting and finances	Philipp Hug Richard Darst	Raphaël Walther Eva Ramon
Travel bursaries	David Bremner Lior Kaplan Margarita Manterola Didier Raboud Andreas Tille	Philipp Hug Steve Langasek Christian Perrier Gaudenz Steinlin Gunnar Wolf
Visas	Giacomo Catenazzi Norman García	Raphaël Walther
Pentabarf	Jörg Jaspert	
Room assignments	Giacomo Catenazzi	
Talks selection	Tiago Bortoletto Vaz Giacomo Catenazzi Andreas Tille	Tássia Camões Daniel Kahn Gillmor Gunnar Wolf
Talks scheduling	Tiago Bortoletto Vaz Andreas Tille	Tássia Camões
Video team coordinator	Holger Levsen	
Video team	Tiago Vaz Judit Foglszinger Stefano Rivera intrigeri Ben Hutchings Solveig Josue Ortega Daniel Glassey Franziska Lichtblau	Sylvestre Ledru Giacomo Catenazzi Agustin Henze Kurt Roeckx Gerfried Fuchs Tassia Camoes Christoph Egger Philip Hands Jonathan Dupart

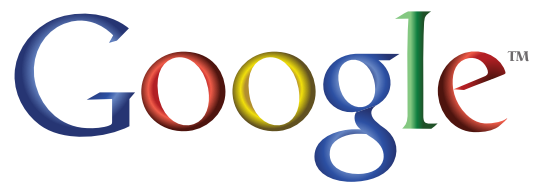
Alberto Fuentes
Andi Mundt
Dominic Hargreaves
Simó Albert i Beltran
David Prévot
Thomas Koch
Sorina Sandu
Giovanni Mascellani
Florian Schlichting
Philipp Kern
Franklin Piat
Ivo De Decker
Mattias Wadenstein

Marc Schaefer
Tzafrir Cohen
Philipp Kaluza
Mika Pflüger
Jonas Smedegaard
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Wouter Verhelst
Thomas Vincent
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Steinar H. Gunderson
Niels Thykier
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Logo and designs	Felix Delattre	
Artwork	Didier Raboud	
Bar masters	Benedikt Trefzer	Michele Cane
Bar team	Michael Germini Aude Rey Ursus Judit Foglszinger Jonathan Dupart Arne Wichmann Eike Penta 2706	Sarah Giacomo Catenazzi Raphaël Walther Lunar Sandro Knauß Elimar Riesebieter Juerg Haefliger jack
Day trip	Raphaël Walther Martin F. Krafft	Didier Raboud
Front desk team	Nattie Mayer-Hutchings Eva Ramon Sorina Sandu Wolodja Wentland	Patty Langasek Santiago Ruano Rincón Zlatan Todoric
Cheese master	Christian Perrier	
Final report typesetting	Didier Raboud Michael Banck	Carl Worth

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Lighting the candles on the birthday cake 11

Michael Banck

Past and present Debian Project Leaders, Ian Jackson, Bdale Garbee, Lucas Nussbaum and Stefano Zacchiroli (from left to right) watch the lighting of the birthday cake . 12

Richard Hartmann and Wouter Verhelst

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Christian Perrier

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