Why I am qualified to give this talk

- Debian Developer and Ubuntu Developer since 2006
- Involved in improving collaboration between both projects
  Developed/Initiated: Multidistrotools, ubuntu usertag on the BTS, improvements to the merge process, Ubuntu box on the PTS, Ubuntu column on DDPO, …
- Attended Debconf and UDS
- Friends in both communities
What’s in this talk?

- Ubuntu development process, and how it relates to Debian
- Discussion of the current state of affairs
- "OK, what should we do now?"
The Ubuntu Development Process
Linux distributions 101

- Take software developed by upstream projects Linux, X.org, GNOME, KDE, ...

- Put it all nicely together
  - Standardization / Integration
  - Quality Assurance
  - Support

- Get all the fame

Ubuntu has one special upstream : Debian
Ubuntu’s upstreams

Not that simple: changes required, sometimes

- Toolchain changes
- Bugfixes
- Integration (Launchpad)
- Newer releases

Often not possible to do work in Debian first
Ubuntu Packages Workflow

Upstream projects

Debian

Patch

Ubuntu
Ubuntu Packages Workflow

- Ubuntu Karmic
- Excluding specific packages
  language-(support|pack)-*, kde-l10n-*, *ubuntu*, *launchpad*
- Missing 4%:
  Newer upstream releases:
  Based on the Debian version or fully repackaged?

Debian

Ubuntu

Upstream projects

Patch

74%

7%

15%
Newer upstream releases (main)


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Newer upstream releases (universe)

Still newer in Ubuntu Karmic

Compared to Squeeze from a few days ago

Main:

Universe:
Managing the divergence

Keep local changes in Ubuntu:
- Requires a lot of manpower
- Need to merge them when Debian package updated

⇒ Strong incentive to push changes upstream (to Debian)

3 channels to push changes to Debian:
- Bug reports
- Direct interactions within teams / with maintainers
- Patch available in PTS/DDPO
Bugs

and

Bug Reports
Bugs

Ubuntu users have the choice:

- File bug upstream ⇒ might get flamed
- File bug in Debian ⇒ very likely to get flamed
- File bug in Launchpad ⇒ very likely to get ignored
  - Many users ⇒ many bug reports
  - Not enough Ubuntu developers for bug triaging and squashing
  - Lack of expertise for many packages
Why collaborate on bugs?

- Niche packages that rarely receive bug reports in Debian
- More users of Ubuntu ⇒ more opportunities to run into bugs
- Slightly different environment in Ubuntu (newer toolchain, X) ⇒ we are likely to run into the same issues in Debian later
- Solving bugs = improving Free Software
  (That’s what really matters, no?)
Collaboration on bugs, today

- Some bugs get filed in Debian by Ubuntu developers
  - `origin-ubuntu` and `ubuntu-patch` usertags
  - 250-400 per Ubuntu release cycle
    - Mostly upstreaming of Ubuntu patches to reduce divergence
- Ubuntu box on the PTS, but:
  - Data imported using a fragile hack
    ```bash
    for b in $(ubuntu_open_bugs_list) ; do wget $text_version_of_the_bug ; done
    ⇒ 80'000 HTTP requests per day
    - Doesn’t include private bugs
    - Ongoing discussions with Launchpad team to solve that
Ubuntu box on the PTS

Overview of nmap source package

General information

Latest version: 4.68-1
Maintainer: LaMont Jones
Conforms to: 3.7.2.2
Priority: extra
Section: net
VCS: Git (browse)

Available versions (more...)

Oldstable: 4.11-1
Stable: 4.62-1
Testing: 4.68-1
Unstable: 4.68-1

Source package

Files .dsc .orig:
.dif

Binary packages

nmap (27 bugs: 0.12.9.6)

Todo

Lintian reports 8 warnings about this package. You should make the package lintian clean getting rid of them.

mentors.debian.net has version 4.76-1 of this package, you should consider sponsoring its upload.

The package should be updated to follow the last version of Debian Policy (Standards-Version 3.8.2 instead of 3.7.2.2).

The BTS contains patches fixing 1 bug, consider including or untagging it.

Latest news [RSS]

[2009-02-16] nmap 4.68-1 MIGRATED to testing (Britney)
[2008-08-01] Accepted 4.68-1 in unstable (low) (LaMont Jones)
[2008-06-27] nmap 4.62-1 MIGRATED to testing (Britney)
[2008-06-14] Accepted 4.62-1 in unstable (low) (LaMont Jones)
[2008-04-25] nmap 4.53-3 MIGRATED to testing (Britney)
[2008-04-04] Accepted 4.53-3 in unstable (low) (LaMont Jones)

Bugs count

All bugs (graph): 29 (32)
RC bugs: 0
I&N bugs: 13 (14)
M&W bugs: 12
F&P bugs: 4 (6)

PTS subscription

Subscribers count: 5
Subscribe your email Send

Other links

Changelog / Copyright Build: logs, more, exp, ports
Lintian report (0, 8) Popcon stats

Ubuntu ...

Version: 4.76-0ubuntu4
Patch for version 4.76-0ubuntu4
13 open bugs
State of the Debian - Ubuntu relationship

Disclaimer:
Based on my perception
(which I hope is quite fair)
Feelings on the Debian side, in the past

Historically: many DDs were unhappy about Ubuntu

- Feeling of being stolen
- Public claims of "giving back", difficult to back with reality
- Problems with some Canonical employees tend to reflect on Ubuntu as a whole
Feelings on the Debian side, now

Things have improved considerably
Most DDs see some good points in Ubuntu

- Brings a lot of new Linux users
  (and Debian derivative users !)
- Provides something that just works for their friends/family
- Brings new developers to Debian
  Barry deFreese, Scott Kitterman, Luca Falavigna, Emilio Pozuelo Monfort, Albin Tonnerre
- Serves as a technological playground
  dash as /bin/sh, boot improvements, debug packages, hardening GCC flags, ...
Feelings on the Ubuntu side

Culture: contributing to Debian is The Right Thing to do
Many Ubuntu developers contribute to Debian

However:
Often not a lot to contribute back (on the package level)
Many bugfixes are just workarounds

 Canonical is a company
Contributes back when it benefits them
Don’t expect many free "gifts" to Debian

Banner on ubuntu.com for Debian 15th birthday; DebConf sponsorship
Problem: loss of relevance of Debian

- Debian user-base (or at least market share) decreased
  - Ubuntu won the desktop/laptop market
  - Slowly makes a place on the server

For many new Linux users, Linux = Ubuntu

- Recent innovations usually happen in Ubuntu

- As a result, Debian becomes less relevant
  Even if Debian is now the basis of a major distribution
Problem : loss of relevance of Debian

Debian needs to be relevant
- Fights for important values
- Takes position on technical and political issues

But collaborating with Ubuntu (and improving it) is the right thing to do for Free Software world domination

How do we make Debian relevant again and still help Ubuntu?
Behave like a good Upstream

⇒ Improve collaboration with Ubuntu:

- Improve relationships with Ubuntu developers
  - More cross-distribution packaging teams

- Help Ubuntu maintain our packages
  - Notify them of important transitions
  - Bug triaging/fixing directly in Launchpad?

- Acknowledge that some high-quality work is done in Ubuntu
  - Import it into Debian, create collaboration around it
    (The packages import doesn’t have to be one-way only!)

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Communicate on why Debian is better

Yes, Debian is better!

- OK, maybe not for everybody
- But we totally fail at communicating that
  Except when Bradley Kuhn does it for us
- Let’s try!
Debian is better.

Better values:

- **Debian**:  
  - Volunteer-based project. Decisions taken in the open.  
  - Advocates the Free Software philosophy since 1993

- **Ubuntu**:  
  - Project controlled by Canonical. Some decisions imposed. Ubuntu One, switch to Yahoo! for search  
  - Advocates proprietary web services (UbuntuOne)  
  - Installer recommends to add proprietary software  
  - Copyright assignment to contribute to Canonical projects
Debian is better.

Better distribution:

- Debian:
  - All packages are maintained except orphaned packages
  - Many maintainers are experts
  - Emphasis on quality

- Ubuntu:
  - Most packages are just sync’d from Debian
  - No real knowledge about many packages

Debian testing: the perfect distribution for your laptop?
Recent software, few problems (but interesting/useful ones)
Conclusion

- We can’t ignore Ubuntu
- We can’t fight Ubuntu
  (Would not be the right thing to do)

**Ubuntu is a chance for Debian:**
Leverage it to get back in the center of the FLOSS ecosystem

- Work with Ubuntu
  - Like a good upstream
- Be more vocal about Ubuntu problems (but be constructive)
  - Can also help improve Ubuntu (and Free Software)

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