

Debian Rolling Bof

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Debian Rolling's Goals

- A constantly usable distribution for end-users
- Regularly updated with the latest stable upstream versions
- Targeting the desktop market?
- Implications:
 - i386/amd64/armel is enough
 - Some sort of support by Debian to ensure the “constantly usable” part
 - Not targeting the server market

testing == rolling?

- Testing is regularly updated.
- But is it constantly usable?
 - Yes according to many people.
 - No according to a few others (details to follow).
- Can we support it?
 - Some maintainers don't care about testing before the freeze.
 - IMO: Supporting testing should be a duty of maintainers → a cultural shift we should embrace.

What makes testing not usable?

- Lack of a good installer
 - Many workarounds
- Some annoying bugs last for too long in testing due to migration problems
 - Josselin Mouette suggested to cherry-pick fixes from sid in a “rolling” repository that would complement testing
- Some packages are dropped
 - No “Long Term Support” → not fit for stable
 - Required to complete transitions

Quick poll

- Raise a hand to answer.
- Who believes that testing is {,not} usable?
- Who believes that we should {,not} endorse usage of testing?
- Who believes that we can {,not} support usage of testing?

Work in progress

- Josselin Mouette setup rolling.debian.net but it's empty
 - Need users reporting important problems in testing that can't be quickly fixed in testing so that we can try cherry-picking packages from sid
- SAT-britney (idea of Joachim Breitner)
 - Way to find automatically what packages have to migrate together, useful for testing and/or rolling
 - Joachim has prototype code written during debcamp

Processing user feedback

- How and where do we collect the “annoying problems” that users find in testing?
 - Goal: encourage user feedback, filter it and ensure we have everything properly filed in the BTS
 - Input to feed Josselin's rolling.debian.net
 - Input for the release team to manage priorities of testing migrations
 - Mailing list? Pseudo-package in the BTS? Web app?

How to get rolling rolling?

- Make it a symlink to testing.
 - Assuming that we can work with the release team to fix problems reported in testing.
 - We can always fork a dedicated distribution later if it turns out we need it.
- Make it a dedicated distribution.
 - More freedom to try out new rules.
 - More risks to hamper the stable release process.
 - What rules for a start?

What to do during freezes?

- Theory: rolling should not freeze (for too long).
- My stance: better to have a frozen rolling than no rolling at all.
- Work with release team to make it realistic to fork a “next-stable” (“frozen”) from testing/rolling for the last stabilization phase.

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