What is Debian GNU/Linux?

Debian is a free operating system for your computer. Debian is currently based on the Linux kernel and includes more than 18,000 packages of utilities and applications. This is far more software than is available for any other Free operating system. Over 10 architectures are supported, including Intel x86, AMD64, Alpha, PowerPC and Sun SPARC. Since 1993, volunteer developers (currently about 1,000) are working on maintaining Debian's high quality.

debian

The Universal Operating System

- **Freedom** As stated in the Debian Social Contract Debian is comprised entirely of Free Software. By Free Software, we don't just mean zero cost, but also the Freedom to use it how and where you want, share it with your friends, read and modify the source code, and distribute those changes to other people.
- **Continuity** The Debian packaging system permits a seamless transition to newer program versions without the requirement to begin a new installation from scratch, and it won't delete your old configuration files. Dependencies between programs are handled automatically: if a package which you want to install requires another package, the installer takes care of it. You can install and upgrade using disks, CDROMs, or over a network connection.
- **Security** Debian is secure by default, and easily adjustable in case of really extreme security demands. It is easy to install a Debian system with just very little software. When a security problem is found, the Debian Security Team releases packages with backported security fixes, generally within 48 hours. With the help of the Debian package management system, it is therefore easy for an inexperienced administrator to keep up to date with security. This service is available to anyone for free.
- **Quality** Due to the personal commitment of Debian developers, package quality is unequalled. Keeping this standard up is furthermore helped by the Debian Policy Manual, which describes exactly how packages should behave and interact with the system. A package which violates the policy will not be included in the official stable Debian release. Another aid in quality assurance is the open Debian bug tracking system. Debian does not hide problems. Debian has no commercial pressure and will not release a new and possibly unstable version just because the market requires that.

Included with Debian GNU/Linux

Actually, the complete Debian GNU/Linux distribution consists of at least 3 DVDs or a dozen of CDs. These discs hold just the architecture-dependent precompiled binaries; you'll need more for the sources. Inside you'll find:

- the full set of GNU utilities, editors (Emacs, vi, . . .), network clients (chat, filesharing, . . .), web browsers (including Firefox and other Mozilla browsers), privacy tools (gpg, ssh, . . .), email clients, and every little tool you can think of
- full set of network protocols (PPP, IPv4, IPv6, SMB network neighbourhood, . . .)
- development tools for the major programming languages like C, C++, Objective-C, Java, Python, Perl, and some of the more obscure ones as well
- the graphical X11 Window System, complete with dozens of window managers and the two leading desktops: GNOME and KDE
- the TeX/LaTeX document preparation system, PostScript™ and Type1 fonts and tools, the Ghostscript PostScript™ interpreter, and a complete XML/SGML/HTML development environment
- GIMP, the GNU Image Manipulation Program (a free alternative to Photoshop™)
- a complete set of office applications, including the OpenOffice.org productivity suite, Gnumeric and other spreadsheets, WYSIWYG editors, calendars
- relational databases, like PostgreSQL, MySQL and development tools (application servers, server side scripting languages)

Want to know more?

Simply point your browser at `http://www.debian.org/`. For more information or help you can join the IRC channel #debian on `irc.debian.org`, or one of the Debian mailing lists. See `http://www.debian.org/MailingLists/subscribe` for instructions. Furthermore there are lots of inofficial user fora.

To install Debian GNU/Linux, you can download the install CD from `ftp://ftp.debian.org/` and then go for a network install, or order (or burn) some Debian DVDs/CDs. Debian does not sell media itself but provides Official DVD/CD Images that numerous vendors print and sell. For details about the Official DVD/CD Images simply go to `http://www.debian.org/CD/`.

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