

The Debian Installer

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Debian Installer

◆ Why

- ◆ Debian installation is perceived as difficult
- ◆ Building boot-floppies was error-prone and a **black art**
- ◆ Catch up with, and, exceed current state of the art

Debian Installer goals

- ◆ Make it slick and cool
 - ◆ LDAP
- ◆ Portability
 - ◆ across 13 architectures
- ◆ Modularity
 - ◆ allows OEMs to customise
- ◆ Make contributing to it simpler

Installation comparison

◆ Windows XP

- Typically pre-installed so hard to beat
- Minimal questions asked (roughly 9 steps)

◆ Mac OS X

- From scratch, 15 steps (2 reboots)
- Advantage of canned hardware

Installation comparison

- ◆ In both cases Welcome, EULA, Registration and Thanks are separate steps
- ◆ Proprietary Unixes have similar numbers of steps (between 9 – 15)

Linux Distributions

- ◆ Fedora Core 1
- ◆ Mandrake 9.2
- ◆ SUSE 9.0
- ◆ Debian 3.0
- ◆ Debian “sarge” with Anaconda
- ◆ Debian “sarge” with Debian-Installer

Fedora Core 1

- ◆ approx. 20 steps
- ◆ many questions asked which could be deferred
- ◆ also entertains users

Mandrake 9.2

- ◆ approx. 13 steps
- ◆ steps to perform are clear
- ◆ security is up-front
- ◆ entertain user while installing
- ◆ summary of what happend

SUSE 9.0

- ◆ approx. 19 steps
- ◆ lots of confirmations
- ◆ but good summary

Debian 3.0

- ◆ traditional text-UI
- ◆ plenty of flexibility
- ◆ hard for new users to utilise

Debian “sarge” with Anaconda

- ◆ Anaconda is familiar to a lot of users
 - RedHat has/had a lot of marketshare
- ◆ similar features to Anaconda

Debian-Installer

- ◆ The same, yet different, to boot-floppies
 - ◆ Done for UI familiarity
 - ◆ Different front-ends are possible
- ◆ Lots more people involved
 - ◆ So things take a bit longer
 - ◆ But Debian isn't as dependant on a few knowledgable people

New Features

- ◆ Install from USB keychain
- ◆ Supports other filesystems
 - ◆ XFS, JFS, etc. (one day NTFS?)
- ◆ LVM

How it works: Debian-Installer

◆ *u*DEBs (modules)

- ◆ menutest
- ◆ isinstallable

◆ Anna and the Retrievers

- ◆ CD, Floppy, HD, HTTP, NFS

◆ UI

- ◆ NEWT
- ◆ Can construct menu on the fly

Resources

◆ Mailing lists

- ◆ Debian-boot@lists.debian.org

◆ IRC

- ◆ #debian-boot on irc.debian.org (freenode)

◆ WIKI

- ◆ <http://wiki.debian.net/index.cgi?DebianInstaller>

Quotes

◆ “well d-i is a bunch of little piles of crufty sh, rather than a couple large piles of crufty C like boot-floppies” Ethan Benson