

The Debian Developer Conference 2007

CLAN MACDEBIAN



DebConf7

Edinburgh, Scotland
17–23 June 2007

Debian conferences are like a family gathering. About 1000 developers work on the distribution in their spare time. These enthusiasts are spread around the world and talk online for days, sometimes weeks, before important decisions are made. As in every family, different personalities and opinions are involved, so it's important to meet regularly to talk things through over tea, coffee, or a nice pint of beer. The yearly developer meetings, called DebConf [1], are the perfect opportunity to spend some time together, put names and faces to nicknames, and discuss the future of the community distribution.

Camp and Conference

About 150 attendees turned up early for DebCamp, a work session that usually

From the 17th to 23rd of June, about 400 Debian developers from all over the world met in Edinburgh, Scotland, to listen to talks, attend workshops, hack some free software, and have a good time.

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takes place the week before the main conference. DebCamp is the perfect opportunity for developers to work together in person on the different Debian projects, and several people reported that it was a very productive week [2].

DebCamp and DebConf were held at Teviot Row House, which offered plenty of rooms for workshops and talks, as well as enough space for the so called hacklabs – rooms packed full of cables, hardware, and geeks. All in all, the building buzzed with excitement. The organizers had booked an old church hall around the corner for the nightly hacking sessions, and even the order to “not fix or improve anything” didn't stop the geeks from repairing the church organ and having nightly musical sessions. “Let's just call it a workaround,” one developer suggested with a grin.

The future of Debian and the upcoming release were topics of several talks. Most people agreed that Debian should be aiming for faster release cycles. Sam Hocevar, current Debian Project Leader

(DPL), said he would like to see a “sexier distribution” and reminded his fellow developers that Debian should be interesting for users: “It is time that Debian focused on the desktop.” Thanks to the video team, most of the talks were broadcast live on the Internet and are now available online [3].

Several geeks went on a trip to the Isle of Bute on the west coast of Scotland. The idea of organizing people into groups of four and telling them to stick together seemed to have worked out, although one organizer joked, “We're still not sure if we lost anyone on the train, the ferry, or the island.”

The conference party on Thursday was a Scottish céilidh [4] – the perfect opportunity to present the new Debian kilts (Figure 1). The design includes the red of the Debian swirl, the black and yellow of the Linux penguin, and electric blue. In Morse code, the tartan's stripes spell out *Debian*.

So Now it Ends...

DebConf7 was very well organized and it was nice to get to know the people behind Debian. Next year's meeting will be held in Argentina, and in 2009, on to another new location – the current favorite is the region of Extremadura in Spain. ■



Figure 1: Debian developers go native with the new Debian tartan.

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- [1] DebConf website: <http://www.debconf.org/>
- [2] Blogs of the Debian developers: <http://planet.debian.net/>
- [3] DebConf7 talks: <http://meetings-archive.debian.net/Public/debian-meetings/2007/debconf7/>
- [4] Wikipedia article on céilidh: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ceilidh>