A new Debian and a new Debian leader

AND THE WINNER IS ...

The new Debian "Etch" release follows a close Debian Project Leader election. Sam Hocevar surpassed other candidates by only eight votes.

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April 8, 2007, Debian Project Secretary Manoj Srivastava announced a winner in the election for a new Project Leader. The choice came as a surprise to many people: Sam Hocevar won the battle.

Just a short time later, the tickers displayed a second Debian announcement: The developers announced that Etch was now finished and available as an official release.

Hard Fought

At about 2am on April 8, Manoj Srivastava published the interim results of the election for a Debian Project Leader (DPL), causing an outcry. Many voters considered Steve McIntyre a hot favorite – after all, he finished a close second to Anthony Towns in last year's election – but the majority of votes went to Sam Hocevar (Figure 1). The graph with the election results, which was published after the shouting died down, might help you understand the complicated DPL election process, which is based on the Condorcet method [1].

Steve McIntyre again lost by the narrowest of margins. He scored just eight fewer votes than Hocevar.

Raphael Hertzog was slightly further back in third place, and Wouter Verhelst was in fourth.

Antony Towns, last year's leader, failed to convince the developers with his campaign, which mainly comprised references to his activities during his period of office, and he ended up well back in fifth place.

Gustavo Franco came in sixth, and neither Simon Richter nor Aigars Mahinovs had a real chance.

Surprise

Sam Hocevar expressed his astonishment shortly after the result was announced, stating that he had not expected the election to turn out this way. His plan had been to compose a fantastic election campaign to provide the other candidates with ideas and suggestions for their work.

But that's not the way things turned out, says his blog, and he finished with the words, "So, here I am." The previous Project Leader handed over the reins on April 11, and the new leader is already in office.

April Fools?

Given that April Fools Day gags are only funny while they last, you might consider April 1 a poor date for the committee to announce that the official Etch release would be delayed by six weeks because of critical security problems. Considering that Etch was supposed to be finished by Christmas 2006, some people might not have been in a laughing mood.

The relief was all the more tangible when Debian announced that Debian GNU/Linux 4.0 was actually complete.

Etch replaces the slightly ancient Sarge release. ISO images and installer disks are available from the Debian page [2] or from the mirrors.

Despite the delays, the project is proud to emphasize that Etch is the first Debian version to have a graphical installer.

Figure 1: New Debian leader Sam Hocevar has ambitious plans for the future.

Etch also comes with a collection of state-of-the-art software that Sarge users can only dream of.

Etch is also the first Debian to officially support AMD64 CPUs – on the downside, support for older Motorola CPUs was dropped.

Work Effort

Inspired by a wave of euphoria surrounding the release, some developers have not bothered to take time out and are already working on the next Debian. The next release will be titled Lenny when it sees the light of day; but the Lenny release date is totally unclear at this point.

You can expect the Lenny roadmap in the near future. ■

INFO

[1] DPL election page 2007: *http://www. debian.org/vote/2007/vote_001*

[2] Debian download page: *http:// cdimage.debian.org*