SEVENTH ANNUAL DEBIAN CONFERENCE
Final Report

Contents

Introduction

Report Editors

DebConf is the Debian Project's developer conference. In addition to a full schedule of technical, social and policy talks, DebConf provides an opportunity for developers, contributors and other interested people to meet in person and work together more closely. It has taken place annually since 2000 in locations as varied as Canada, Finland and Brazil.

DebConf6 took place in Oaxtepec, Mexico, from 14 May to 21 May 2006. It was preceded by DebCamp, starting on 6 May, a smaller, less formal event giving an opportunity for group work on Debian projects. 13 May saw Debian Day, a self-contained conference aimed at Debian users and others interested in learning more about free software.

Oaxtepec is situated in Morelos state, about 75 minutes from Mexico City. DebConf was held in the IMSS Oaxtepec Vacation Centre, a large complex containing several hotels and restaurants as well as conferencing facilities.

DebConf6 group photo

DebConf: the power of community

Andreas Schuldei

Main organiser

We had already started thinking about DebConf6 during DebConf5. We knew that it would take place in Mexico, and knew that Gunnar Wolf would be the local head honcho. Based on the location we quickly settled on the "hot and spicy" motto, and left it at that for then.

As a major goal for the coming years we aimed to have future DebConf local organisers involved in the DebConf previous to theirs, in order to avoid surprises and incorrect expectations, as well as to spread knowledge broadly.

To make that work better we started using a project planning tool. It made it easier to understand the interdependencies of our milestones and deadlines and the complexity of a DebConf.

> **. . . true to the "hot and spicy" motto we ended up with a lot of chili.**

As one of the early steps we asked people to make suggestions for a logo and a consistent design for DebConf6, that would decorate the website, proceedings, banners, t-shirts, name tags etc. The goal was to have more of a "corporate identity" and a better recognition rate. True to the "hot and spicy" motto we ended up with a lot of chili.

During DebConf5 we collected attendees' experiences and a long list of wish-list items for our conference management system "Comas", so that we knew precisely how we wanted to improve it. This and the website were the other

Formal dinner

early requirements that needed to be in place to let us open registration and to allow paper submissions for the talks.

In order to lighten the burden on the local lead organiser, who also happened to be the author of the conference management system (CMS), we tried to recruit volunteers knowledgeable about Perl who were willing to help out with the required features of the CMS. . . with little success. Most features never got implemented and those critical functions we critically required were usually added as last-second hacks by overloaded helpers. In one case that resulted in budgeting problems, because people who had requested food were not accounted for.

On the sponsorship front there was a humiliating slip-up, too: due to miscommunication and an extreme case of bad reachability, one sponsor thought he promised us 5 000 USD while we thought we would get 45 000 USD. Last minute efforts managed to more than compensate for that, though.

Another big sponsor had problems transferring money to our account both in Mexico and in the US, and it arrived only after the conference was long over.

The conference itself was perceived differently by organisers and participants.

Another kind of battle was fought with very little public attention: some attendees were not approved for visas until the very last moment, making it impossible for them to attend.

The Latin American way of dynamic last minute decision-making made the long-term budget planning challenging in parts. We had a hard time predicting how much the day trip, buses, formal dinner, insurance and numerous other items would actually cost. While the "last minute" approach made life for the non-Mexican organisers harder, the "dynamic" part played for us, as all items came out cheaper then expected.

The conference itself was perceived differently by organisers and participants. Most of the surprises were caught in time and could be defused by the tightly-cooperating team. Volunteers for network and conference management system hacking popped up when they were needed and helped out with a surprising diligence, with the enthusiasm and excellence that we were used to within the Debian crowd. The organisers responsible for accommodation planning and communication with the hotel worked hard to keep the number of used hotel rooms to a minimum and smoothed out incidents of night-time skinny dipping and drinking, and unexpected singing.

In comparison with earlier Debian conferences this one placed a higher load on the organiser team than we expected. The number of local volunteers was lower than at earlier events, and the hotel did not carry as much of the workload as earlier hotels had done.

The resulting workload turned out to be significant for a few people, and led to exhaustion and signs of burnout in some cases.

For the participants, though, these efforts managed to make the conference a smooth and pleasant event. The marvellous hotel facilities, with swimming pool, diving tower and gardens, the nearby market, and friendly Mexicans, were a wonderful setting for the Debian community to interact and prosper in the usual way: lots of discussions, talks, BOFs on technical topics, as well as all those one-on-one meetings with people that you had not met in person for a long time, if ever, and bonding in new ways and on a more personal level then is possible over the net. The goal of an inspiring and motivating conference for the people making Debian happen was fully achieved.

The surprises that made it past the organisers to the participants, like initial network hiccups, or the rain and the power outage at the formal dinner (along with the other unplanned events there), only made the event more memorable for everyone and were handled very gracefully and tolerantly by the crowd.

For the participants these efforts managed to make the conference a smooth and pleasant event.

I would like to thank the skilled, dedicated and enthusiastic DebConf crew for working so hard and making this event happen. I would like to thank the Debian community for attending and making the event into the inspiring, fun and uplifting one it turned out to be. I would like to thank the sponsors that provided the resources so that Debian could once more have a DebConf with so many attendees in such a nice location. Yay!

Part I

Voices from DebConf

A word from the DPL

Anthony Towns

Debian Project Leader

The annual conference provides an unequalled forum for high-bandwidth discussion of Debian development topics. The 2006 conference held in Mexico was no exception, bringing together three hundred Debian developers and contributors over an intense two week period of presentations, development and debate, all focussed on improving the Debian system and broadening the reach of free software.

DebConf6 reception with banner

Accessibility continues to be an important goal for the conference. This takes multiple forms, including not charging a registration fee, offering travel support for participants, shifting the conference's location, and taking care to ensure disabled access. The efforts of the video team over the past two years have added another aspect, that has set the standard for free software conferences: the ability to participate without attending, by joining dedicated IRC channels and enjoying the live streaming video, or the permanent recordings.

...an unequalled forum for high-bandwidth discussion of Debian development topics.

The ongoing contributions DebConf makes to the Debian ecosystem are built on the generous support of its sponsors, and the vast enthusiasm and dedication of the DebConf volunteer organisers, both local and global. Their work and involvement continues to be appreciated by everyone involved in Debian.

Infrastructure

Gunnar Wolf

Local team coordinator

Making DebConf 6 successful was in many respects not an easy task – getting the proper infrastructure ended up being not only a key task involving working closely with our valuable sponsors and friends, but also required being very creative and even stubborn. Oaxtepec

Network preparation

was chosen to host DebConf as it is one of the most inviting and complete convention centers in Mexico. One of DebConf's main goals is to enhance the social interaction between

Debian developers, to help them better work as a team. Spending the full conference in a beautiful place, isolated from the city noise and distractions, seemed ideal – but holding a technology-intensive conference in a semi-rural area brings with it quite a challenge.

A reliable, high-bandwidth connection is one of the most important requirements for DebConf. Aware of that, the local team started researching into the available service providers in the area. We had to aggregate five high-speed links to get to the bare minimum bandwidth we agreed was required to operate. And the connection had to be delivered, for technical reasons, to the outside of the convention center's premises. Setting up a reliable wireless link was a stressful activity, and at times we thought we would not make it — but, again, thanks to intense volunteer effort, the attendees were able to work together to make it work.

Network details

Joerg Jaspert
Co-organiser, head admin

Oaxtepec hotel area

When we arrived in Oaxtepec, Mexico, we found the hotel area as shown in the hotel pic-

ture. The stadium on the left-hand side should help you imagine how large the area is. Our task as the network team was to provide network access throughout as much of the hotel area as possible.

The central server room was located at the bottom right, whereas most sleeping rooms were in the building in the top left, and the talk rooms were further away still, so far that they aren't shown on this image. The initial plan was to get a network cable to every point where we wanted to have a wireless access point, using about 600m of cable. In the end we used about 1800m of cables to get about 90% of the area connected, most of it using the great wireless access points sponsored by Aruba. One unexpected positive was that we ended up being able to use a fibre link to the talk rooms – via 10mbit hubs.

As already mentioned earlier by Gunnar, we had to run multiple links to the outside world, to get to the required minimum bandwidth.

It seems 5 times 2 has a different result in Mexico from elsewhere: here you get 7.5 MBit/s out of five 2 MBit/s internet links.

Those links had to terminate outside the hotel area, which meant we needed to get them to us somehow. Naturally that meant using wireless networking, and people proceeded to try to get the connections together. As usual Murphy had something to say: there was a big tree directly between us and the place where we had our uplinks. Which was not exactly helpful. The local people sorted that out, by using someone else's roof, which had a direct line of sight to the hotel area. The equipment used for this connection to our uplink was hand-built by the local team, and as far as I know worked way out of

Direct line of sight to uplink, from a 30–40m high point

any technical regulations you usually encounter for wireless devices. This meant that even after a storm made an antenna send its data down towards the ground instead of up to our receiver, we still had a link. It wasn't a perfect link – we got around 70% packet loss – but it was still a working link.

> **Due to some uplink problems I started a local IRC server on a server once. Within 2 minutes of announcing it to the attendees the whole hacklab turned silent . . .**

As we never had enough access points, power cords and other network related hardware, we made a sign asking for such stuff. The response was great, a lot of people did lend us their equipment, so we could enhance the network.

Video

Holger Levsen

Co-organiser, video team coordinator

The core video team at DebConf6 was almost the same as DebConf5, and the setting promised to be similar. Due to our success in Helsinki at DebConf5 we gained some more people and also better and more resources, though we lacked a video mixer. Despite this promising start, in the end many important details were different or didn't work out as we planned, but we were able to deliver the recordings we promised plus the *optional* streaming as well.

We had quite ambitious plans for what to prepare during Debcamp, the week of hacking before the conference. But without (much) network we were not motivated to set up the streaming, because streaming to the outside world doesn't make sense without a connection. Eventually the network worked and we set up a streaming solution using icecast2 going over a wireless link to some slow ADSL modems to the internet, where we had loadbalancers for video.debconf.org.

> **Due to our success at DebConf5 we gained some more people . . .**

The team doing this consisted of 12 core members, and countless helpers, for operating the cameras or audio mixers, handing microphones in the audience and working on the traffic shaping or the IP-tunnel on the hotel network. These helpers deserve part of the credit and applause the video team got.

Of course, we also received some criticism: due to local and uplink network problems the streams sometimes stopped, and due to the ADSL uplink the bitrate and resolution of the

streams was at the low end. But, as we kept saying, streaming was optional and it mostly worked well enough, that Debian developers at home spread all over the world could participate in the discussions, thanks also to the back-channel via IRC (Internet Relay Chat). Our main focus was archiving the conference

Video team member at work

for the future. 62 sessions at two different venues were recorded and later published on http://meetings-archive.debian.net/pub/debian-meetings/2006/debconf6/ We also produced a set of DVDs: two English ones with all the sessions from DebConf and English sessions from Debian Day, and a Spanish one with all the talks from Debian Day and Spanish sessions from DebConf.

... 62 sessions at two different venues ...

For the streaming and the recording we used five machines and 1.5 terabytes storage in total, which we encoded and took home on two 250gb harddrives, because it was not possible for us to uploading this amount of data from Mexico. We used two machines per venue and a streaming server to deliver the streams to the local network and the internet. One machine at each venue was placed in the auditorium and connected to the DV camera and streamed raw DV to the second machine at the venue, which first recorded the raw DV stream to disc and then encoded it and forwarded it to the streaming hub.

... the video team experience in Oaxtapec was surely a lot of fun and probably even more of a learning experience for each one of us ...

The post-production setup was similarly simple: for most sessions we just cut the beginning and end of the videos, and for the hacklab we normalised audio levels. For a few talks we needed to fix audio/video synchronisation problems or make some cuts. This setup proved to be very helpful when we arrived with those two 250gb harddrives in Europe and discovered that all audio and video was out of sync due to a bug in the encoder. As we had previously made sure that the server hard drives in Mexico wouldn't be erased until we gave clearance, we could still access the raw DV files with correct audio-video sync, re-ran the fixed scripts with bugfixed encoder and had the data sent to Europe again by air mail, for further encoding, DVD production and uploading.

All in all, the video team experience in Oaxtapec was surely a lot of fun and probably even more of a learning experience for each one of us and for future DebConfs to come. Person-

ally I'm very much looking forward to extending our knowledge, our recordings and streams, as well as the archive webpage, and repeating our success at DebConf7 in June 2007 in Edinburgh.

Personal impressions

Hacking

José Miguel Parrella Romero
First-time participant

I attended DC6 as my first DC when I was starting to get serious about being involved with a Free Software project such as Debian. I previously collaborated with lots of communities (such as LUGs) here in Venezuela, but chances are people won't find a better opportunity to start getting involved in Debian and FOSS like the ones at a sui generis event such as DC6.

an event like DebConf represents
a unique time of the year ...

At that time, I was involved in Debian through its promotion in my Country, being "BTS-aware" and co-maintaining XMMS. But since DC6 I became really involved not only with

Debian (I'm now some way through the NM process, and maintaining seven packages) but also in so-called "upstream" development and derivatives such as Ubuntu.

Our (the Venezuelan team's) participation in DC6 brought a new wave of Debian awareness in Venezuela, where the Government made it mandatory to use FOSS in public offices, and current developments are made mostly on Debian (even a Linux distribution for use in thousands of schools, Internet access points and desktops through the whole Country). Both government and private enterprises are willing to sponsor new Venezuelan developers for next DCs, since they know about the great payback of the event.

...DC6 brought a new wave of
Debian awareness in Venezuela ...

An event like DebConf represents a unique time of the year where developers can meet, share thoughts on critical issues, present state-of-the-art technologies and, in general, raise different points of view on development topics which directly affects, in a short term, IT plans in organisations in all parts of the world.

I would recommend interested users, developers, decision makers and IT managers to attend an event such as DC. It's a unique event where symbiotic relationships are established and chances are you'll find great ideas which can positively affect your IT management in any level.

Mohammed Adnène Trojette
First-time participant

It was my first DebConf and it was really amazing!

- the team who made this possible and who made it possible for me to come (special thanks to Joerg and Meike)

- people there were wonderful (Damog, Marga, Enrico, Ana, Gunnar, . . .)

- very interesting technically and socially

The best moment of the whole event was the formal dinner with the rain, the mariachi, the mole and the animations. I could never have been so happy. That's the way I see Debian: alive.

Frans Pop
Debian Developer

After a somewhat long flight (two stops in the U.S. with the customs hassles that seem to be necessary there), I arrived at the start of DebCamp. Had quite a bit of work planned for that first week (including finishing my presentation), but due to missing/unreliable networking I ended up spending quite a bit of time on the roof of the walkways around the pool laying network cables and setting up wireless.

DebConf itself was good, with nice people, lots of high-quality talks and discussions, a dip into the pool every once in a while. Finishing my own presentation meant I had to skip on the daytrip (and on the sunburn that quite a few people got that day), but it was worth it as the presentation was very well received. The formal dinner that same evening was memorable; especially the incredible indoor waterfall and blackout.

> **. . . nice people, lots of high-quality talks and discussions . . .**

After DebConf I went on a three week holiday. The first two weeks were extremely enjoyable as I'd somehow managed to get hooked up with a few great people during DebConf. We visited Oaxaca, Puebla and Mexico City. It was funny to run into other DebConf people everywhere

:-) I'd been to Mexico before, but not this part of the country. It continues to impress me. The last week was spent with a friend in California and a few days in Yosemite park.

Otavio Salvador
Debian Developer

I had a great time at DebConf6. I met a lot of friends, and was able to discuss a bunch of important things that were planned for Etch and Lenny. Basically everything went fine except internet and disabled accessibility. Those two simple things are the most important aspects that need to improve for DebConf7. Here is a little description of the problems we had there:

Internet We had too much trouble with internet access at this conference, and DebCamp people couldn't work as they wanted due to this.

Accessibility The accessibility aspect wasn't taken very seriously on this DebConf. This can be seen on the Day Trip where we were invited to go somewhere without *any* access for disabled people. The buses to take people to the places weren't handicapped-ready and the formal dinner also had problems. This ought to be a top priority for future DebConfs otherwise the "universal" Debian project concept will start to lose its meaning.

Christian Perrier
Debian internationalisation team

DebConf 6 has been, as usual, too short for me! This unique opportunity to meet fellow developers and contributors of the Debian Project has again contributed to develop the social network in the project. The numerous interesting

talks and BOFs have been particularly interesting this year. It will certainly enhance the wide participation of attendees from Latin America, where the development of Free Software, and particularly Debian, is impressive.

DebConf 6 has been, as usual, too short for me!

The Debian internationalisation community also had a great chance to start building a project for the future during DebConf 6, which could become one of the keys of Debian developmeent all over the world.

Manoj Srivastava

Debian project secretary

The location of DebConf 6 was very nice, there was peace and quiet, and it was relaxing. Of course, rural isolation has its negative aspects as well, there was little entertainment to be had for companions and spouses of the people interested in the event, and late night food options were very limited. Overall, though, the pastoral beauty of the setting overrode the lack of larger city amenities. Some of the things that worked were:

Day Trip The day trip was very interesting, and helped making the conference different from yet another week spent in a hotel. The Gala dinner was one of the most memorable I have been to at a conference.

Common meals Having meals together allows for far more social integration (and given the flame wars that erupt between relative strangers on the list), and this is perhaps one of the major benefits of the conference. The common meals mean that one can find new dinner companions serendipitously, by merely sitting at a different dinner table. While it is easy enough to forage for meals, one tends to just go out with a group of familiar faces, and breaking ice between fellow developers whom one does not know becomes a slower process.

Wine and Cheese tasting Extracurricular activities like this were great for bonding.

Some of the things that could have been better:

Talks disguised as BoFs Some of the BoF sessions felt more like misplaced talks than a audience participating discussion and brainstorming session.

Distributed location The fact that the campus sprawled over several acres, and there was a 10 minute rapid walk between the two locations, was a bit of a strain for my aging feet, especially carrying a heavy laptop. Also, I have found that single building conferences and convivial to late night discussions and design sessions that have led to various improvements in Debian, and many sub-projects. Knowing that one only needs to head to the elevator to go to bed encourages lingering the last half and hour or so that often makes a difference.

Don Armstrong

Presenter for "GPLv3 and Debian"; involved in scheduling for DebConf6

During DebConf6 I had the pleasure of presenting a talk on the then current draft of GPLv3 and the implications both for Debian and the Debian Free Software Guidelines as well as the broader Free Software community. The talk was followed by a roundtable discussion to air as many of the concerns of the audience as there was time available to discuss. While a

lot of discussion about this license (and other licenses) occurs in Debian using mailing lists, it's a rare treat to be able to discuss licensing face to face with fellow developers and the broader Debian community. In just a bit over an hour, we were able to tread through water that would have taken many weeks of discussion on a mailing list, owing primarily to the high bandwidth nature of real physical interaction.

> **. . . at DebConf6 we were able to tread through water in a few hours that would have taken many weeks of discussion on a mailing list. . .**

Beyond the talk, I was also involved in helping to schedule the talks. In order to attempt to make as many people as happy with the order of talks and reduce the conflicts between popular talks, we schedule so as to minimise a cost function. In this way, participants in DebConf are able to get the maximum possible exposure to the talks that they want to attend, and get the most out of their time at DebConf.

> **. . . scheduling optimisations enable participants to get the most out of their time at DebConf . . .**

Michael Hofer, Matthias Diana, Christoph Fink
Brixen team

In the autumn of 2005 our school organised the SFSCon (South Tyrol Free Software Conference). After Kurt Gramlich's talk about Skolelinux and its advantages he offered us to join the Debian-Community and eventually to organise the DebConf7 in our school. Inspired by his idea we founded a team of 7 pupils and 3 teachers and we began to help the organising team. During the DebCamp our role was

Brixen team

to set up the network for the whole DebConf area and to prepare the "Welcome Bags". Finally the DebConf started and we met a lot of different Debian developers, specially while we were collecting the food-tickets for sponsored dinner and lunch. The remaining time we assisted the videoteam or our attention belonged to the Talks and BOFs. The last day we had the possibility to present our location and plans to realise the following DebConf in Italy.

All in all the whole Brixen team was really impressed by the enthusiasm to work on free software and to distribute it. We earned a lot of experience and knowledge about how to organise and arrange such a conference, and if we find a way to reduce the costs for a possible DebConf in South-Tyrol, it would be a pleasure for us to represent our team and to offer locations and infrastructures for a successful DebConf.

> **All in all the whole Brixen team was really impressed by the enthusiasm to work on free software and to distribute it.**

We'd like to thank the whole Debian community for everything and we're sure that if you go on working in that way, Debian will stay the best OS.

THANK YOU FOR MAKING IT POSSIBLE

The *real world*: AMESOL

Rodrigo Gallardo
AMESOL member and DebConf6 volunteer

AMESOL is a business organisation which aims to promote a productive environment for Mexican enterprises dedicated to free software. It was thus natural for us to agree to become involved in the organisation of DebConf. Making such efforts would be positive for us, first by raising awareness about free software in Mexico, and second by increasing our organisation's visibility and goodwill among the existing community.

Thanks to DebConf we have learned that the awareness and use of Debian in Mexico is higher than we had thought. This has allowed our organisation to get a better view of the opportunities available, and has already resulted in our members persuing some new business opportunities. Another benefit to our members was the exposure they got to the community and to the pool of talented local people that gathered in the conference.

> . . . **Mexican involvement in free software development in general and in Debian in particular has already increased.**

I firmly believe that the conference itself, the fact that it was held in Mexico, and our involvement in its organisation have already borne fruit. Mexican involvement in free software development in general, and in Debian in particular, has already increased. In my triple involvement as an AMESOL member, as a businessman interested in free software, and as an individual user and developer, I am enormously

pleased to have been able to help make DebConf6 such a wonderful experience and such a boon to Debian itself.

Full service please: organising the sessions

Alexander "Tolimar" Schmehl
Head of the speaker team and co-organiser

Organising DebConf is unique in many ways. Since its attendees are scattered around the world and seldom meet each other in person, DebConf is heavily used to hold discussions, outline new ideas, collect feedback and implement them.

This leads to significant changes in the schedule, and all the organisational problems involved with that. New ad-hoc session are added on a frequent basis and need to be announced to other attendees, while conflicts with other sessions must be avoided. And all this while the usual stuff common to every conference happens (e.g. speakers requesting to change slots or informing you late about their special requirements).

> . . . **so we had yet another job: playing IRC-proxy and forwarding questions asked by those who couldn't attend.**

An example for such an ad-hoc session would be the one where Debians new Python policy was drafted. It started with an ad-hoc session visited by 30 Debian Developers. And reached a critical point right when the room was scheduled to be used for another session.

So we rescheduled that session and gave the Python people the time they needed to come

up what with what is now the new policy for Python packages in Debian.

Another challenge was caused by the good work of two other DebConf teams: the video and the network team. Not only did they record nearly every session, they streamed them to the outside world, so interested people who couldn't attend DebConf could participate.

But that leads to a problem: seeing and hearing a talk is just half of the fun. To truly participate you need a communication channel back to the audience to ask questions and get involved in discussions. That's even more true for ad-hoc sessions.

Talk session

So we had yet another job: playing IRC-proxy and forwarding questions asked for those who couldn't attend. Many of the Debian folks are familiar with Internet Relay Chat. So we created some special IRC-channels for the audience to discuss and ask questions which we in turn would ask aloud. Of course it didn't work perfectly. Sometimes we had technical problems, and sometimes during a heated debate forwarding questions proved to be quite complicated. But it went surprisingly well, and turned out to be a real benefit for the conference.

If you read last year's report you'll already know most of our attempts to make life for our speakers as easy as possible. Measures like warning signs if they run out of time (not all rooms had clocks, nor does every speaker check on their own) or a newly-introduced sign signalling the speaker to speak slower again proved very useful.

But even if last year's conference was a big success, we thought there might still be place for improvements. We got the idea that some kind of speaker training might be useful. Some of our speakers are quite young and inexperienced. It turned out to be a splendid idea! Even non-speaker attendees joined the speaker training sessions, and in the end we needed to repeat those trainings due to the great demand.

> **We got the idea that some kind of speaker training might be a good idea ... it turned out to be a splendid idea!**

It will be hard work to find further improvements for next year's DebConf.

How many, how far, how diverse: numbers

Gunnar Wolf
Local team coordinator

DebConf is among the most complex conferences to run: its attendees come from every possible corner of the world, the organisation takes care of *everything* – from taking care people do not get lost in the way from the airport to the town the conference is held, in a country where few people speak English, to ensuring

the food served is adequate for every dietary requirement, and from checking the hotel's electrical layout can withstand literally hundreds of people simultaneously using their computer, to getting hard-to-find computer supplies in a rural area – and it spans over two weeks of constant activity. Most conferences only deal with arranging space for talks, maybe a special dinner, and getting the attendees in touch with the accommodation facilities. Our goal in this section is to show some of the diversity we deal with, as well as the sheer size of DebConf.

Attendees

Our conference is aimed at making Debian better, providing a proper environment where intensive work sessions can take place. Our direct target audience is, of course, the official Debian Developers (DDs) spread all around the world. Debian does, however, get important contributions from people who have not yet completed the Debian New Maintainer process, as well as from people whose strongest ties are with other, related projects. And, of course, we are interested in growing, so interested non-maintainers and volunteers are more than welcome to share with us. Just over 40% of our attendees were official Debian Developers – together with the non-DD maintainers, over half of the attendees are already active in Debian.

Please note that the numbers here shown reflect our database records. Attendance was open, so we didn't turn away people who had not registered; while some people had problems getting their Mexico entry visas, so they were registered and confirmed but did not arrive in the end. The following numbers should, anyway, not be too far from the truth.

A few DebConf6 attendees

Count	Attendee type
104	Debian Developer
31	Non-DD maintainer
68	Non-maintainer but interested
10	Accompanying
46	Volunteer

Our community is highly participative. We defined the highly ambiguous *volunteer* task, for which 46 out of the total 259 attendees (almost 20%) registered. Why is it ambiguous? Because it basically means 'I'm willing to do whatever the organisers request of me': all kinds of infrastructural and organisational support work. As we expected, we had a high level participation from interested locals. Many of them have noticeably increased their involvement and participation in Debian in particular, and in Free Software activities in general, in their home communities.

volunteers	Country of origin
18	Mexico
8	Salvador
3	Brazil
3	Norway
2	United States
2	Germany
1	Finland
1	United Kingdom
1	Bosnia and Herzegovina
1	Belgium

Our conference is aimed at making Debian better – providing a proper environment where intensive work sessions can take place.

We strive not to hold DebConf in the same continent two years in a row, in order to help people coming from different geographic areas to attend. As this DebConf was held in a Latin American country, a region of the world with a very scarce presence of Debian Developers, we chose to prioritise sponsoring people from this region (even over the much more active and developed USA and Canada) interested in getting more involved in our project. We had very interesting results. The countries from which more than one person attended are:

participants	country
44	Mexico
42	United States
23	Germany
14	United Kingdom
14	Finland
14	El Salvador
13	Venezuela
12	Italy
9	Spain
8	France
7	Brazil
7	Argentina
5	Belgium
5	Japan
4	Norway
4	Canada
3	Peru
3	Switzerland
3	Austria
3	Colombia
3	Belize
2	Australia
2	Sweden
2	Netherlands

The diversity in Debian can be very well represented by the food requeriments expressed by the attendees. Quite a bit of planning goes into assuring that everybody gets food appropriate for their health and ethical standards:

count	food preferences
204	Regular
27	Vegetarian
13	No food requested
5	Vegan (strict vegetarian)
3	Other (contact committee)

We strive not to hold DebConf two years in a row in the same continent, in order to help people coming from different geographic areas to attend.

Our team's communication is also quite varied. We use several means of communication. The most important one is, undeniably, the use of several mailing lists, addressing our various topics. During the period between Debconf 5 (July 2005) and Debconf 6 (May 2006), besides the (not really quantifiable) real-time meetings we held in IRC channels, we exchanged quite a number of e-mail messages:

month	localteam	discuss	infrastructure	team	video	website
2005-08	0	33	0	53	46	0
2005-09	0	15	0	34	31	0
2005-10	0	0	0	103	7	0
2005-11	0	0	0	63	2	0
2005-12	60	0	0	132	0	9
2006-01	83	11	0	58	8	1
2006-02	119	24	6	226	1	13
2006-03	55	27	10	146	24	0
2006-04	215	134	11	346	14	2
2006-05	60	274	26	134	33	1

Money money money, must be funny, in the rich men's world

Joerg Jaspert

Sponsorship committee

The Debian Conference has a growing number of attendees, so naturally the amount of money involved is getting larger and larger each year. The first DebConf was held in 2000, with 30

attendees; by Mexico in 2006 we had reached 310 attendees.

Year	Venue	People	Budget (USD)
2000	Bordeaux, France	30	0
2001	Bordeaux, France	50	0
2002	Toronto, Canada	90	5,000
2003	Oslo, Norway	130	25,000
2004	Porto Alegre, Brazil	150	75,000
2005	Helsinki, Finland	300	130,000
2006	Oaxtepec, Mexico	310	150,000

A lot of time and effort was spent managing the conference budget. The travel sponsorship requests made totalled more than half of the budget; in the end we spent about 27% of the budget in this area. Travel sponsorship was paid out partly through the U.S.-based SPI, and partly via a money transfer from SPI to myself and then using E.U. money transfers to reimburse people.

We had a huge problem getting the money for the sponsorship reimbursements to Mexico in time.

Another large part of the budget is usually spent in the accommodation and food sector. This year those added up to 36% of our budget, not including the daytrip which took an additional 1%.

Getting Money - sponsors

Of course Debian does not have the money to pay for all this itself. So the Debian conference relies heavily on external sponsorship. Thirty-three different companies played a role in making the conference in Mexico happen by sponsoring it in various ways (a full list is on page 17). Most of the sponsoring companies gave cash, while others made contributions in kind, for example by providing the different kinds of hardware we need during the conference. Some also donated server facilities to DebConf, so we

can host information between conferences. All together there is a wide range of DebConf sponsorship options open to companies that are interested in helping Debian.

Part II

Credits

DebConf6 organising team

It would have been impossible to make such a large event a reality without the outstanding help of a great group of volunteers – starting with those whom we can't name here, since they just volunteered to do various tasks during the conference, and ending with the core team, who started organising DebConf6 straight after the last one ended.

It's impossible to list everyone who contributed to make this event happen; there are too many contributors. We are sorry for every name we forgot to mention here:

Core organising team

Main organiser: Andreas Schuldei (Stockholm)

Co-organisers: Gunnar Wolf (gwolf),   Joerg Jaspert (Ganneff),   Neil McGovern (maulkin), Alexander Schmehl (Tolimar) and Holger Levsen

Sponsor acquisition: Andreas Schuldei (Stockholm)

Website maintainer: Neil McGovern (maulkin)

Graphic artist: Agnieszka Czajkowska (pixelgirl)

Admin-master / BOFH: Joerg Jaspert (Ganneff) and Holger Levsen

Registration coordinators: Gunnar Wolf (gwolf) and Graham Wilson

Secretary: Marcela Tiznado (Asciigirl)

Debian Day: Marcela Tiznado (Asciigirl)

Committee members

Sponsorship committee: Joerg Jaspert (Ganneff),   Andreas Schuldei (Stockholm), Gunnar Wolf (gwolf),   Branden Robinson,   Neil McGovern (maulkin),   Amaya Rodrigo Sastre, Margarita Manterola, Marcela Tiznado and Faidon Liambotis

Academic committee: Joerg Jaspert (Ganneff),   Andreas Schuldei (Stockholm), Alexander Schmehl (Tolimar) and Meike Reichle (alphascorpii)

Local organising team

Mexican organisation representing DebConf6: AMESOL, President: José Luis Chiquete Valdivieso

Main local organisers: Gunnar Wolf (gwolf), Gabriela Manjarrez (Nadezhda)

Accountant: Gabriela Manjarrez (Nadezhda)

Facilities coordinator: Gabriela Manjarrez (Nadezhda)

Volunteer manager: Marcela Tiznado (Asciigirl)

Speaker team

Talks coordinators: Alexander Schmehl (Tolimar) and Don Armstrong (dondelelcaro)

Talk moderators: Nattie Mayer-Hutchings and Alexander Schmehl (Tolimar)

Speaker trainer: Meike Reichle (alphascorpii)

Editors of the proceedings: Alexander Schmehl (Tolimar)

Video Team

Video Team Coordinator: Holger Levsen

Editors: Herman Robak and Danny Cautaert

Camera Operators: Tore S Bekkedal (toresbe), Tássia Camões, Danny Cautaert (DaCa), Matthias Diana (bigbob), Christoph Fink (buffoon), Patrick Gasser (baddy), Matthäus Huber (usf), Michael Hofer (armaggeddon), Ben Hutchings (Womble2), Nattie Mayer-Hutchings (nattie), Neil McGovern (Maulkin), Mark Hymers (mhy), Holger Levsen (h01ger), Andrew McMillan, Annabelle Tully (pixie), Peter de Schrijver (p2-mate), Tiago Bortoletto Vaz (tiagovaz) Herman Robak (hermanr), Andreas Tauber (gidl),

Network Team

Conference network-team coordinators: Holger Levsen and Joerg Jaspert (Ganneff)

Network Team Helpers: Edward Castillo (Punk0), Faidon Liambotis, Ivan Alfredo Zenteno, Fabio Calderón Luciano Bello, Luk Claes and Alexander Schmehl (Tolimar)

. . . special thanks to the volunteers working on all aspects of free software all over the world!
The Debian Project couldn't exist without you!

Final report

Editors: Joerg Jaspert (Ganneff), Gunnar Wolf (gwolf), Pete Nuttall (psn)

Layout: Joerg Jaspert (Ganneff)

Proof-reading: Moray Allan, Steve McIntyre

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Pictures: Aigars Mahinovs, Joerg Jaspert (Ganneff), Moray Allan, Neil McGovern (Maulkin), Nattie Mayer-Hutchings

Part III

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Final Report

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