

Some Initiatives Resulting From DebConf10

I attended [DebConf10](#) in early August at [Columbia University](#) in New York City. I thought I'd document some of the initiatives that resulted from that event.

I attended the [Debian Policy BoF](#). It inspired me to start reviewing [Debian Policy](#) and led to my submission of a [bug report to improve the description of the archive areas in Debian](#). In the [BoF \(Birds of a Feather\)](#) session, [Russ Allbery](#) requested help from everyone including non DDs (Debian Developers) to make policy clearer and more descriptive, so I obliged. I see that the negotiated text has been accepted and included in the [git](#) repository for the next release.

During the [Debian Science](#) sessions that I attended (see especially the video from the [Debian Science Round Table](#)), the idea of engaging upstream providers (software projects that are packaged by [integrators](#) like Debian) more effectively was discussed. This led me to draft a proposal that I posted to the [Debian Project](#) mailing list: [Improving coordination / support for upstreams](#). There was precious little feedback, but I think it is a profoundly important issue: how do we improve coordination of upstreams with projects like Debian that integrate their software. So far there is very little infrastructure or knowledge about this important issue in the management of FOSS (Free and Open Source Software). How do you think we should start to address this problem?

I helped with the herculean task of getting [Sage](#), a FOSS mathematics system, back into Debian. After discussing the issue during the [Debian Science track at DebConf10](#), I met [Lucas Nussbaum](#) in the hacklab and he (with help from Luca Falavigna) managed to get the [old buggy version of Sage](#) removed from unstable (apparently, this version was causing support issues for the upstream Sage community, so this was a positive step forward). I also submitted five bugs ([#592349](#), [#592354](#), [#592425](#), [#592426](#), and [#592429](#)) about new upstream versions that are needed. I posted two [detailed reports of work needed on packaging Sage for Debian](#) to appropriate mailing lists. Getting Sage into Debian is the kind of big FOSS management challenge that I'm excited about. But I will need a lot of help to make progress. Let me know if you are interested in contributing to the effort!

Finally, for the record, here are links to the sessions where I participated in the discussion (video is available): [Bits from the DPL](#), [SPI BOF](#), [Enterprise Infrastructure BOF](#), [Mathematical Software in Debian](#), [Overall presentation of Debian Science](#), and [Debian Science Round Table](#).

Posted by CJ Fearnley in Conference, Debian, 0 comments