

## What is Debian GNU/Linux?

Debian is a Free operating system (OS) for your computer. An operating system is the set of basic programs and utilities that make your computer run. At the core of every operating system is the kernel, which is the most fundamental program on the computer that does all of the basic housekeeping and lets you start other programs. Debian's primary distribution is currently based on the Linux kernel and the GNU library, utilities and toolchain. The next stable version, Sarge, includes more than 14,400 packages, maintained by 1,300 maintainers, with over 25 GB of installed files.

# debian

## The Universal Operating System

**Freedom** Debian is comprised entirely of Free Software. By Free Software, we don't just mean zero cost, but also the Freedom to use it how and where you want, share it with your friends, read and modify the source code, and distribute those changes to other people. This means Debian can be used with no limitations – even in commercial environments! Debian is the largest collection of ready-to-install Free Software extant. The Debian Free Software Guidelines describe the criteria that licenses for software included in the Debian operating system must meet.

**Community** The Debian project is a 100% volunteer effort aiming at producing a world class Free Software operating system. There are currently about 1,300 people from around the world developing Debian, each with roles ranging from package development to quality assurance to security to policy, and even strategy. The Debian project is engaged to the principles of software freedom and openness. The project's commitment is plainly stated in the Debian Social Contract published at [http://www.debian.org/social\\_contract](http://www.debian.org/social_contract).

**Continuity** The Debian packaging system permits a seamless transition to newer program versions without the requirement to begin a new installation from scratch, and it won't delete your old configuration. Dependencies between programs are handled automatically: If a package which you want to install requires another package, the installer takes care of it. You can install and upgrade using disks, CD-ROMs, or over a network connection.

**Stability** Debian is free from commercial pressures. This means that Debian will not release a version of Debian that is not ready for use by the public simply to protect Debian's bottom line, or because shareholders want to profit (Debian doesn't have either!) Debian is tested thoroughly, and a new version is only released when it is ready. Debian Developers use Debian in production throughout the planet, and like you, they realize that untested software is expensive. Security updates for the stable distribution are also available, to keep your system secure.

**Portability** Debian is available and runs equally well on the following architectures: Alpha, ARM, HP PA-RISC, IBM S/390, Intel x86, Intel IA-64, Motorola 68k, MIPS/MIPSel, PowerPC, SPARC.

## Included with Debian GNU/Linux

The new version of Debian GNU/Linux barely fits on 14 CDs (architecture-dependent precompiled binaries, even more CDs with source). Inside you'll find:

- ▶ the full set of GNU utilities, editors (emacs, vi, ...), network clients (telnet, ftp, finger, ...), web browsers, privacy tools (gpg, ssh, ...), email clients, and every little tool you can think of
- ▶ full set of network protocols (PPP, TCP/IP, Apple™ EtherTalk, Windows™ SMB, Novell™, ...)
- ▶ development tools for the major programming languages (and some of the more obscure ones as well) like: C, C++, Objective-C, Java, Python, Perl, PHP, Ruby, Nickle, Smalltalk, Lisp, Scheme, Haskell, Ada, R, and more
- ▶ the X Window System, complete with dozens of window managers and the two leading desktops: Gnome and KDE
- ▶ the T<sub>E</sub>X/L<sub>A</sub>T<sub>E</sub>X document preparation system, PostScript™ and Type1 fonts and tools, the Ghostscript PostScript™ interpreter, and a complete XML/SGML/HTML development environment
- ▶ the GIMP (GNU Image Manipulation Program), several vector-based drawing and illustration tools, and support for a wide range of scanners and digital cameras
- ▶ a complete set of office applications: abiword, OpenOffice.org, LyX, emacstex, gnumeric, KOffice, etc.
- ▶ relational databases, like PostgreSQL, MySQL and development tools (application servers, server side scripting languages)

## Want to know more?

Simply point your browser at <http://www.debian.org/>. If you need any information or help you can join the IRC channel #debian on [irc.debian.org](irc://irc.debian.org), or one of the Debian mailing lists. See <http://lists.debian.org> for instructions.

If you want to install Debian GNU/Linux, you can download the install floppies from <ftp://ftp.debian.org/> and then go for a network install, or order some Debian CDs. Debian does not sell CDs itself but provides Official CD Images that numerous vendors print and sell. For details about the Official CD Images simply go to <http://www.debian.org/CD/>. Be sure to read the detailed installation manual at <http://www.debian.org/releases/stable/installmanual>.