
Use R on Debian: Past, Present and Future

Douglas Bates, Dirk Eddelbuettel and Albrecht Gebhardt

bates@stat.wisc.edu, edd@debian.org, albrecht.gebhardt@uni-klu.ac.at

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Use R on Debian: Why would you?

- Why Debian? Installation may matter less than long-run administration; where Debian excels
- Why is packaging CRAN as Debian packages worth doing ?
 1. Error-free builds: External packages dependencies at build time enables error-free package compilation
 2. Ease of maintenance: if you already know `apt-get`, also doing `update.packages()` inside **R** is an extra step.
 3. Quality Control: Automated Debian build process helps greatly in finding errors
 4. Scalability: Having binary packages helps with maintaining multiple machines or sharing with co-workers or students
 5. Re-use: It allows use in Debian-derivatives (such as Lindows/Linspire, Xandros, Knoppix, Quantian)

Use R on Debian: Status and Outlook

- **R** has been part of Debian since 1997 and the 0.61 release
- The packaging of **R** itself has evolved into a fairly flexible set of packages
- Several dozen CRAN packages have been 'debianized', aided more recently by a common framework of build files (c.f. draft of Debian R Policy)
- Based on work by Albrecht Gebhardt, we are beginning to have a system for building (almost) all CRAN packages.
- The goal is to be able to obtain any CRAN package in source or (Debian) binary format from CRAN or its mirror via `apt-get`
- We currently have about 270 (out of 350) packages autobuilt.