

Activity Report

MiniDebConf Panamá 2010

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Central America Free Software Community

<http://www.softwarelibre.ca>

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I. Overview

- Activity Name: MiniDebConf Panamá 2010.
- Date: From March 19th to March 21st 2010
- Location: Knowledge City, Panama City.
- Responsible In Site: Anto Recio, CIDETYS.

II. Motivation

The MiniDebConf is an activity of huge importance to the Free Software Communities in Central America. The Debian Project is one of the largest and most important Free Software projects worldwide and the main goal of this event was to guide participants to join the development of this project and seek to promote collaboration by participants in this project in their countries of origin. The initiative came from Gunnar Wolf, a Mexican Debian Developer who has had close contact with the Free Software Community in Central America (SLCA), as a meeting point for working together, bringing together the different organized groups that work with Free Software in each of their respective countries and areas of interest, to communicate with each other, join forces, share knowledge and experiences, but above all, promote a Knowledge-based Society and the Freedom of Software.

The goals of this regional community are:

- Promote the use, study and development of Free Software in Central America.
- Promote the Free Software Philosophy.
- Promote the creation and strengthening of the Free Software User Groups in Central America.
- Generate technical and social ties around Free Software among communities in Central America.

Therefore, the MiniDebConf was supported by the SLCA as an activity that allows progress in meeting its goals. This support resulted in the organization and participation of members of the community in the activity. However, there were participants from other regions, especially, people already involved with the Debian Project.

III. Goal

The overall goal of the activity:

Encourage active participation of attending people in the Debian Project development.

Specific Goals:

1. Bring users, collaborators, maintainers and developers of the Debian Project together in a MiniDebConf in Central America.
2. Develop a process of training and working with people attending the MiniDebConf in Central America.
3. Generate a higher level of involvement of people attending the MinidebConf in the Central American region with the Debian Project.

“The event was a valuable opportunity to make an approach to the reality of the Debian community in Central America and parts of South America. In essence, the experience was beyond the technical to get to the social issue: Do they have the same needs users-developers of Debian in Central and South America that the rest of the world? That goes beyond technical skills, is know that we have different realities, cultural, political, etc.”

– Hector Colina, Venezuela

Scopes:

Give greater impetus for the coming years to organize the DebConf in a Central American country.

IV. Coordination

On August 14th, 2009, Gunnar Wolf sent the proposal for a MiniDebConf in Central America to the mailing list of the Central America Free Software Community. Gunnar had already talked with some people from the community about this idea, but that time was the official launch of the proposal.

From the beginning, the activity was extended to more countries than those that conform the Central American region. It then included: Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Venezuela, Peru and Ecuador. The invitation was open to people from other countries as well.

a) Choice of the location

An invitation was made to communities of each country to submit their proposals to host the event.

1. The Community of Nicaragua expressed its interest and stated that they were working on this since before the proposal was formally submitted.
2. The community of Panama also showed interest, recalling its previous experience with the attempt to organize a MiniDebConf in that country on 2007, which was not successful for

certain problems of coordination of the various parties involved.

3. The communities of Costa Rica and Guatemala also raised their interest.

October 14th was the deadline for proposals. Costa Rica and Nicaragua withdrew their offer, no proposals from Guatemala were received, and Panama maintained their intention to organize the activity.

On October 19th, 2009, Panama presented its proposal and was approved on October 20th. The event date was defined for March 19th, 20th and 21st, 2010.

The local team was primarily formed by Mauro Rosero from Panama. Subsequently (on September 28th, 2009) joined Anto Recio who was the team coordinator of the DebConf 2009 in Extremadura, and soon joined David Narváez. Outside of Panama, René Mayorga from El Salvador and Carolina Flores from Costa Rica were part of coordination. For personal and professional reasons, Gunnar Wolf and Mauro Rosero no longer been in the coortination team, although they continued working for the event.

The final organizing team was established as follows:

- Anto Recio
- David Narváez
- Mauro Rosero
- René Mayorga
- Carolina Flores

b) Sponsorship

The local team managed sponsorship with the following entities:

- 1.Cidetys: US \$2344
- 2.Technological University of Panama: US \$ 1500
- 3.City of Knowledge: US \$1000
- 4.Debian Project: US \$4800 *

* Gunnar Wolf and René Mayorga managed sponsorship with the Debian Project.

c) Costs

Costs of organizing the event were:

- Lodging: US \$1900
- Feeding: US \$1500
- Transport: US \$4800
- Total: US \$8200

V. Location

a) Place

The MiniDebConf Panama was held at the Training and Business Center of the City of Knowledge in Panama City¹.

The City of Knowledge is a center for business, science and technology which hosts many NGOs, international agencies, research centers, among others.

b) Place for meetings

The activity took place in a room equipped with projectors, screens, Internet access, wireless network, structured wiring and other conveniences. The facilities allowed for a smooth development of the event. The limitation was the usage schedule for the training room, since nighttime could not be used for BSP sessions, and poor Internet access in the bedrooms were not suitable for working outside the training room.

c) Lodging

The accommodation was in the villas area of the City of Knowledge. The villas had appropriate services for lodging. The limitations were: the poor Internet access and limitations with respect to visits and holding social or working meetings with people not staying at the villa. Alcohol prohibition is also a limitation of the place.

d) Feeding

The local team covered all food costs. The amount was somewhat few but that was not a major problem.

¹ <http://www.ciudadelsaber.org/services/training-business-center>

“The City of Knowledge complex was excellent for hosting this event, the comfort of quality accommodation and food was something that many appreciated, and the auditorium where the talks took place met all expectations. The hosting villas provide a good opportunity to share ideas in common, but unfortunately the Internet access was not very good in the rooms and common rooms for the night did not work on issues that require Internet access, but some peer work was achieved among participants in small sessions relating to team work in Debian, packaging and others”

– René Mayorga, El Salvador

e) Local Transport

No local transportation costs were covered.

VI. Results

a) Achievement of Goals

General Goal	Encourage active participation of the people present in the development of the Debian Project.
Specific Goal	Result
Bring people together – users, developers, package maintainers and developers of the Debian Project – in a MiniDebConf in Central America.	42 people attended, distributed as follows: Belize 3, Colombia 4, Costa Rica 13, El Salvador 6, Spain 1, Guatemala 3, Mexico 1, Nicaragua 1, Panama 8, Peru 1, Venezuela 1. Countries not represented (of those originally enrolled): Honduras and Ecuador.
Develop a training process and work together with people attending the MiniDebConf in Central America.	12 training sessions scheduled, a Key Signing Party, subgroups and team meetings.
Generate a higher level of involvement of people attending the MiniDebConf in the Central American region with the Debian Project.	This goal must be fulfilled in a medium term to know how many assistants contribute effectively in the development of the Debian Project, however, important fulfillment-oriented initiatives have emerged.
Medium-term scope:	Give greater impetus for the coming years to host a DebConf in a Central American country.

Announcement:

Success criteria: 30 to 40 people. Level of compliance: 100%

“Attending the MiniDebConf has been an inspiration to me, many people in my country and in neighboring countries with great experience, advanced knowledge and great social skills who wish to carrying out many Free Software projects, although some users are not Debian specific users because we use Debian derivative distributions, the collaborative spirit is evident.”

– Eivar Montenegro, Panamá

b) Attendance

Here is a list of attendants of the event:

First Name	Last Name	Country	Role
1. Enrique	Nabet	Belice	Participant
2. Rito	Fernandez	Belice	Participant
3. Sherel	Cocom	Belice	Participant
4. Alejandro	Ríos	Colombia	Speaker
5. Julián	Moreno	Colombia	Participant
6. Luis	Uribe	Colombia	Speaker
7. Rubén Darío	Molina	Colombia	Participant
8. Andrea	Torres	Costa Rica	Participant
9. Carlos Miguel	Jenkins	Costa Rica	Participant
10. Carolina	Flores	Costa Rica	Participant
11. Diego	Hurtado	Costa Rica	Participant
12. Jennifer	Vargas	Costa Rica	Participant
13. Leonardo	Arias	Costa Rica	Participant
14. Luis Alfonso	Aguilar	Costa Rica	Participant
15. Marcelo	Magallón	Costa Rica	Speaker
16. Moisés	Brenes	Costa Rica	Participant
17. Patricia	Araya	Costa Rica	Participant
18. Rodrigo	García	Costa Rica	Participant
19. Sergio	Morales	Costa Rica	Participant
20. Ángel	Salamanca	El Salvador	Participant
21. Enrique	Monge	El Salvador	Participant
22. José Edgardo	López	El Salvador	Participant
23. Rafael	Rivas	El Salvador	Speaker

24. René	Mayorga	El Salvador	Speaker
25. Víctor	Ostorga	El Salvador	Speaker
26. Anto	Recio	Spain	Participant
27. Damaris	Trujillo	Guatemala	Participant
28. Jorge	Dardón	Guatemala	Participant
29. Josué Miguel	Abarca	Guatemala	Speaker
30. Fernando	C. Estrada	Mexico	Speaker
31. Eduardo	Rosales	Nicaragua	Participant
32. Alejandro	Pérez	Panama	Participant
33. Cristian	Prediger	Panama	Participant
34. David E.	Narváez	Panama	Participant
35. Eivar	Montenegro	Panama	Participant
36. Diego	Tejera	Panama	Participant
37. Guillermo	García	Panama	Participant
38. Mario	Young	Panama	Participant
39. Mauro	Rosero	Panama	Participant
40. Mónica	Mora	Panama	Participant
41. Elías	Año	Peru	Participant
42. Héctor	Colina	Venezuela	Speaker

It is important to see that seven women attended the MiniDebConf Panama, which represent 16.6%, which is quite high for this type of activity.

c) *Working sessions*

Description of the working sessions:

Name	Speaker	Abstract
Get involved in the development of Free Software	Víctor Ostorga <vostorga@gentoo.org>	Tips and explaining facts of what it means to work in a Free Software project.
Debian Package Internals	René Mayorga <rmayorga@debian.org>	Analyze the structure of a binary package, source files, maintainer-scripts, versioning schema, etc.
Report Bugs	Marcelo E. Magallón <mmagallo@debian.org>	How and where to report a bug, learn to distinguish which bugs are reported to Debian and which are

		reported to Upstream.
Using the BTS	René Mayorga <rmayorga@debian.org>	How to use the Bug Tracking System.
Compiling the Kernel the Debian way	Héctor Colina <hcolina@gmail.com>	Compiling Kernels using kernel-package
Pbuilder: Tool to test your packages	Héctor Colina <hcolina@gmail.com>	Pbuilder is a tool for testing packages that are being built or debianized. The talk shows its installation, subsequent use, common mistakes and reports generated.
3.0 Quilt	Josué Abarca <jmaslibre@debian.org.gt>	Advantages, disadvantages and practical examples of the new source package format "3.0 Quilt"
Introduction to GnuPG	Fernando C. Estrada <fcestrada@fcestrada.com>	Notions of cryptography, web of trust, commands, key servers, useful applications, the package "signing-party", etc.
Maintaining Packages in Teams	Alejandro Rios <alerios@debian.org>	Advantages, disadvantages, differences between individual maintenance and other elements to take into account, experiences in the Pkg-VoIP Team.
Debian Translation	Luis Uribe <acme@eviled.org>	Know (and collaborate with) the process of translation in Debian (installer, debconf templates, documentation, website, etc.).
Selected Licensing Topics	Marcelo E. Magallón <mmagallo@debian.org>	How to evaluate a license for inclusion in Debian? What is meant by compatible or incompatible licenses? What is the role of debian-legal list, the ftp-masters, ...? How does this relate to main, contrib, non-free?
Joining Debian	Héctor Colina <hcolina@gmail.com>	Joining Debian formally implies a transit through a path and a formal process. This talk explains the process of becoming a maintainer

		(DM) and Developer (DD), the differences between them, and some tips for a successful journey.
Skolelinux	Rafael Rivas <tato@debian.org.sv>	Project Information and how to collaborate.
Proposal for a collaborative project in Hispanic America	Héctor Colina <hcolina@gmail.com>	Proposal to integrate us as a community in collaboration, event management, translation, etc.

“The content was very good, if measured according to the goals of the event: for those of us interested in having a better understanding from the structure of the Debian project to the various ways to cooperate, either as a packager, as a bug reporter, etc., the contents of the talks were always adjusted to that focus”

– David E. Narváez, Panamá

VII. Final Notes

It is important to list some of the changes that MiniDebConf made possible:

1. Since this activity, participants are thinking about similar events once a year.
2. Initiatives have been proposed to follow up issues raised in MiniDebConf and achieve greater contact between people interested in working with the Debian Project.
3. The organization of this activity in Panama has succeeded in strengthening the dissemination of free software in that country and achieved important contacts with institutions that can support activities related to these topics.
4. In Costa Rica, as part of a current project² that includes activities to support the Free Software communities in the promotion and diffusion of th distinct alternatives that this model offers, an event will be held, derived from the MiniDebconf. The goal is to allow people that could not assist to the MiniDebconf to know about the Debian Project and participate in a packaging workshop.

“Now I have better understanding of the organization and processes of development and maintenance of the Debian project. I am motivated to start my process as a Debian Maintainer,... I've been looking package(s) to adopt”

– Damaris Trujillo, Guatemala

² <http://www.progestic.una.ac.cr/softlibre/>