Meet the Debian Technical Committee

- David Bremner (`bremner`)
- Tollef Fog Heen (`tfheen`)
- Philip Hands (`philh`)
- Margarita Manterola (`marga, chair`)
- Simon McVittie (`smcv`)
- Didier Raboud (`odyx`)
- Niko Tyni (`ntyni`)
- Gunnar Wolf (`gwolf`)

(Red $\Rightarrow$ present at DC19)

- Sam Hartman (2015-03-08–2017-11-09)

- Keith Packard (2013-11-29–2017-12-31)

- Don Armstrong (2009-01-11–2016-12-31)

- Andreas Barth (2006-01-05–2016-12-31)

- Steve Langasek (2006-01-05–2015-12-31)

- Bdale Garbee (–2015-12-31)

- Colin Watson (2011-08-24–2015-03-05)

- Ian Jackson (–2014-11-19)

- Russ Allbery (2009-01-11–2014-11-16)

- Manoj Srivasta (–2012-08-12)

- Anthony Towns (2006-01-04–2009-01-05)

- Raul Miller (–2007-04-30)

- Wichert Akkerman (–2006-01-05)

- Jason Gunthorpe (–2006-01-05)

- Guy Maor (–2006-01-05)

- Dale Scheetz (–2002-09-02)

- Klee Dienes (–2001-05-21)

Debian Constitution §6.1
The Technical Committe may:

- §6.1.1 Decide on any matter of technical policy
- §6.1.2 & 6.1.3 Decide any technical matter where Developers' jurisdictions overlap
- Make a decision when asked to do so
  - Tie-breaking
- §6.1.4 Overrule a Developer
  - Requires a 3:1 majority
  - Last-resort
- §6.1.5 Offer advice

Constraints

Meet the
Debian
Technical
Committee

What is
tech-ctte

Recent
activity
(FSVO)

Fresh blood
wanted

Problems
with the TC

Q&A

- §6.3.3 Public discussion and decision-making
- §6.3.5 No detailed design work
- §6.3.6 TC makes decisions only as last resort

Picking options

- Constitutionally, we are asked to *break ties* amongst available options
- After all efforts to solve it via consensus have been *tried and failed*

Offer advice and make our views known

- We can offer advice at any point, but it's just advice.

- Self-nominated
- DPL-appointed
- Last resort
- Conflict resolution and advice-providing body

Decided

- #904302 Whether vendor-specific patch series should be permitted in the archive
  - Use of dpkg's vendor-specific patch series feature is a bug
- #914897 Should debootstrap disable merged /usr by default?
  - We declined to override the debootstrap maintainers.
  - We were tied for the other part of our decision, so a casting vote was necessary.
  - We decided the desired state for bullseye should be that both directory schemes are allowed, and packages (including official packages) can be built on hosts with either classical or "merged /usr schemes.

Closed without a formal resolution

- #904558 What should happen when maintscripts fail to restart a service
  - We declined to rule. Recommended that a new notification method gets developed
- #911225 Advice on stale libraries in a higher-precedence path entry
  - Advice was given.
- #919951 ocaml builder must not be called 'dune' or provide /usr/bin/dune
  - The issue was resolved without our intervention.
- #923450 requirements for being pre-dependency of bin:init
  - We declined to rule. Agreed that the maintainers of the init-system-helpers package have a gatekeeper role for this.

Current

- #932795 How to handle FTBFS bugs in release
  architectures

On January 1st of each year the term of any Committee member who has served more than 42 months (3.5 years) *and* who is one of the two most senior members is set to expire on December 31st of that year.

§6.2.1: The Technical Committee consists of up to 8 Developers, and should usually have at least 4 members.

We are roughly looking for 1-2 new members per year.

Term expiry (maybe)

Last year we got this wrong. Maybe this time we get it right...

- Dec 2019
  - Didier Raboud (2015-03-08)
  - Tollef Fog Heen (2015-03-08)
- Dec 2020
  - Phil Hands (2016-04-15)
- Dec 2021
  - Margarita Manterola (2016-07-07)
  - David Bremner (2017-04-13)
- Dec 2022
  - Niko Tyni (2017-06-21)
  - Gunnar Wolf (2018-01-02)
- Dec 2023
  - Simon McVittie (2018-03-16)

Things aren't going too well

- Escalations need to be done as last resort, which means that discussions have turned into a flamewar by the time they reach us.

- Some developers resent the TC and will straight away refuse to talk to us.

- Our main power is to overrule and as such people fear or dislike us.

- It can take months until we make a decision, sometimes this means it's already too late.

- Having a discussion in the open leads to exhausting flamewars.

We may decline to rule because:

- The escalation was done too quickly, not all avenues were exhausted.
- We're being asked to overrule a delegate (release team, ftp master team, etc) which we can't do.
- We can't do design work and the only answer is to design something.

- Changing how the TC works will probably require a constitutional change.
- Is there a way we could keep the purpose (solving disagreement) but avoid the flamewars and broken relationships?
- What can we do to ensure we can discuss matters without people shutting down?

Time for Q & A!

Thanks!

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