

# Mancoosi tools for the analysis and quality assurance of FOSS distributions

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# Joint work with the Mancoosi team at Paris-Diderot



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# Our research direction

## Our long-term goal

Apply tools and method from computer science to advance the quality of Free and Open Source Software.

## Why are we doing this?

- We are scientists working on formal methods
- We are users and/or contributors to FOSS projects

## Where we can help

Package-based software distributions:

- 1 Better tools to install packages
- 2 Better tools to assess the quality of distributions

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# (Binary) packages in Debian

Package = {  
  some files  
  some scripts  
  metadata

- Identification
- Inter-package rel.
  - Dependencies
  - Conflicts
- Feature declarations
- Other
  - Package maintainer
  - Textual descriptions
  - ...

## Example (package metadata)

```
Package: aterm
Version: 0.4.2-11
Section: x11
Installed-Size: 280
Maintainer: Göran Weinholt ...
Architecture: i386
Depends: libc6 (>= 2.3.2.ds1-4),
         libice6 | xlibs (>> 4.1.0), ...
Conflicts: suidmanager (<< 0.50)
Provides: x-terminal-emulator
...
```

# Installation process in Debian

Phase	Trace
User request	<pre># apt-get install aterm</pre>
Constraint resolution	<pre>Reading package lists... Done Building dependency tree... Done The following extra packages will be installed:   libafterimage0 The following NEW packages will be installed   aterm libafterimage0 0 upgraded, 2 newly installed, 0 to remove and 1786 not upgraded. Need to get 386kB of archives. After unpacking 807kB of additional disk space will be used. Do you want to continue [Y/n]? Y</pre>
Package retrieval	<pre>Get: 1 http://debian.ens-cachan.fr testing/main libafterimage0 2.2.8-2 [301kB] Get: 2 http://debian.ens-cachan.fr testing/main aterm 1.0.1-4 [84.4kB] Fetched 386kB in 0s (410kB/s)</pre>
Pre-Inst Script	<pre>{</pre>
Unpacking	<pre>  Selecting previously deselected package libafterimage0.   (Reading database ... 294774 files and directories currently installed.)   Unpacking libafterimage0 (from ../libafterimage0_2.2.8-2_i386.deb) ...   Selecting previously deselected package aterm.   Unpacking aterm (from ../aterm_1.0.1-4_i386.deb) ...</pre>
Post-Inst Script	<pre>Setting up libafterimage0 (2.2.8-2) ... Setting up aterm (1.0.1-4) ...</pre>

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## Meta-data of packages

- Core inter-package relationships :
  - Dependencies
  - Conflicts
  - Provides
- Optionally, less central relationships (recommends, etc.)

## Global analysis

- Looking at a *complete distribution*
- E.g.: take into account *dependency chains*
- In contrast to local-only checks (e.g. checking that all packages mentioned in metadata exist)

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# At the beginning: a quite basic problem

- Given a repository  $R$  of packages and a package  $p \in R$ , is  $p$  installable w.r.t.  $R$ ?
- That is: Does there exist  $I \subseteq R$  such that
  - $I$  is *in peace*: no conflicts inside  $R$ ;
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# Example

## Repository $R$

Package: a	Package: b	Package: d
Version: 1	Version: 2	Version: 3
Depends: $b (\geq 2) \mid d$	Conflicts: d	
Package: a	Package: c	Package: d
Version: 2	Version: 3	Version: 5
Depends: $c (> 1)$	Depends: $d (> 3)$	
	Conflicts: $d (= 5)$	

## Is a installable?

- $(a, 1)$  is installable. Why?
- $(a, 2)$  is *not* installable. Why?

- 2005: Tools `edos-debcheck` and `edos-rpmcheck`
- Very efficient, using SAT-solver technology, and caching of results obtained for various packages in the distribution.
- Today: `dose-distcheck`, part of the `dose3` tool suite.
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- Daily summary of uninstallable packages
- Differences between successive days
- Distinction between `arch=all` and arch-specific
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# More uses of distcheck in Debian

- `emdebian`: check installability of package before uploading new (versions of) packages to the archive
- Build-dependencies:

- `emdebian` at `emdebian.org`
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- Used by Debian auto-builders to avoid useless attempts to create build environments.

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# Detecting file conflicts

- Goal: detect cases where two packages can be installed at the same time, but doing so causes an error since one package tries to hijack a file owned by another package.
- Algorithm:
  - Look at the Debian Contents file, compute all pairs of packages that contain a common file (Debian sid:  $\sim 1000$  pairs)
  - Use `dose-debcheck` to select pairs that are installable together (Debian sid:  $\sim 170$  pairs)
  - Test installation in a `chroot`
- See the list of bugs on [edos.debian.net](http://edos.debian.net)

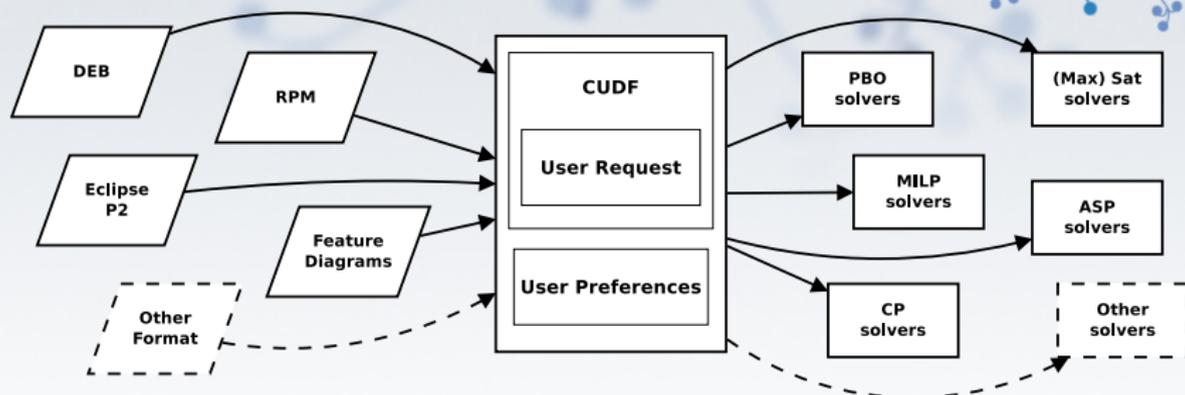
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# A Universal Format for Package Metadata



## Translators to CUDF know about ...

- specific format and semantics of version numbers  
(Is  $0:7.00008.a\sim-1 > 7.8.a-0.1$ ?)
- distribution-specific quirks  
(What does it mean for a package to conflict with itself?)
- the installation model  
(Is it possible to install two packages of same name and different version?)

# Installability is a hard problem

## What makes the problem hard

Two features that together make the problem NP-complete:

- Disjunctions in dependencies (may be implicit: Provides, or multiple available versions of packages)
- Conflicts (may be implicit: two packages of the same name and different version may be in implicit conflict)

## The good news

Modern solving techniques (SAT solvers, or others) cope very well with analyzing distribution files.

## Easy cases

The problem becomes computationally trivial when there are

- no disjunctions (explicit or implicit)
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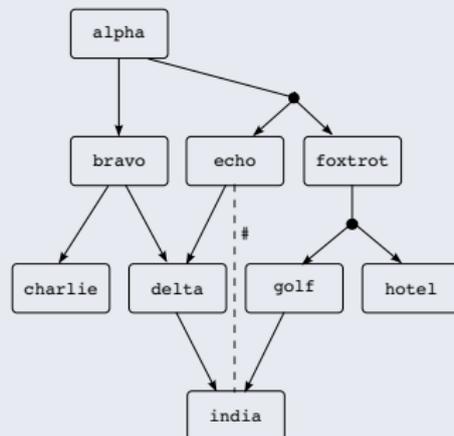
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# Finding strong dependencies

## Definition

**Strong dependency:** A dependency that is a logical consequence of all the package relations.

## Example



alpha strongly depends on foxtrot

# Learning from the future of a distribution

Two different questions that we have worked on:

- If we upgrade a particular package  $p$ , what are the other packages that (in their current version) become uninstalleable? These are the packages that will have to be upgraded together with  $p$
- If the current version of a package  $p$  is found uninstalleable w.r.t. the current repository: can this be solved by upgrading *other* packages in the distribution? If not, that means that  $p$  has to be upgraded!

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# What's the future of a distribution?

- New packages may be created
- Packages may be removed
- Infinitely many possible future versions of packages
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## Example 1: Is $(foo,1)$ installable?

**Package:** foo

**Version:** 1

**Depends:** baz (= 2.5) | bar (= 2.3),  
bar (> 2.6) | baz (< 2.3)

**Package:** bar

**Version:** 2

**Package:** baz

**Version:** 2

**Conflicts:** bar (< 3)

## Example 1: Is *(foo,1)* outdated?

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## Example 2: Is *(foo,1)* outdated?

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**Depends:** baz (= 2.5) | bar (= 2.3),  
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**Package:** bar

**Version:** 2.3

**Package:** baz

**Version:** 2.5

**Conflicts:** bar (> 2.6)

# Results: challenging packages in Debian

Source	Version	Target Version	#(BP)
python-defaults	2.5.2-3	$\geq 3$	1079
python-defaults	2.5.2-3	$2.6 \leq . < 3$	1075
e2fsprogs	1.41.3-1	any	139
ghc6	6.8.2dfsg1-1	$\geq 6.8.2+$	136
libio-compress-base-perl	2.012-1	$\geq 2.012.$	80
libcompress-raw-zlib-perl	2.012-1	$\geq 2.012.$	80
libio-compress-zlib-perl	2.012-1	$\geq 2.012.$	79
icedove	2.0.0.19-1	$> 2.1-0$	78
iceweasel	3.0.6-1	$> 3.1$	70
haskell-mtl	1.1.0.0-2	$\geq 1.1.0.0+$	48
sip4-qt3	4.7.6-1	$> 4.8$	47
ghc6	6.8.2dfsg1-1	$6.8.2dfsg1+ \leq . < 6.8.2+$	36

# Understanding co-installability issues

## Identify co-installability issues

Find quickly and concisely all pairs of components that are incompatible.

## Graphical visualisation and debugging of repositories

Present the co-installability issues to the repository maintainer in a compact and usable way, to allow him to focus on the real problem, and non on traversing a huge graph.

## Base for further future analyses

Develop tools and theory that allow to manipulate co-installability issues efficiently, to enable more complex analysis, typically for repository evolution.

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# The tool

## Main techniques

- drop package relations that are irrelevant for co-installability
- identify packages that behave the same w.r.t. co-installability

## Results on Mainstream GNU/Linux Distributions

	Debian		Ubuntu		Mandriva	
	before	after	before	after	before	after
Packages	28919	1038	7277	100	7601	84
Dependencies	124246	619	31069	29	38599	8
Conflicts	1146	985	82	60	78	62
Median cone size	38	1	38	1	59	1
Avg. cone size	66	1.7	84	1.3	153	1.1
Max. cone size	1134	15	842	4	1016	5
Running time (s)		10.6		1.19		11.6

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# Funded Research Projects

Past and present projects:

- 1/2004 → 6/2007 :   
www.edos-project.org
- 2/2008 → 5/2011 :   
managing software complexity
- 12/2010 → 3/2014 : Aeolus

Thanks to our sponsors!



- Center for Research and Innovation on Free Software
- Founders: Universities Paris 6 and 7, INRIA
- Recent activities : Mozilla performance week, European LLVM conference, FusionForge developers meeting, LibreOffice conference, GNU hackers meeting, ...

