

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. Debian uses the Linux kernel (the core of an operating system), but most of the basic OS tools come from the GNU project; hence the name GNU/Linux.

Webpage: <http://www.debian.org/>

Current release: 5.0.3 (stable / lenny), September 2009

Future releases:

- squeeze (testing) : The "testing" distribution contains packages that haven't been accepted into a "stable" release yet, but they are in the queue for that. The main advantage of using this distribution is that it has more recent versions of software.
- sid (unstable) : The "unstable" distribution is where active development of Debian occurs. Generally, this distribution is run by developers and those who like to live on the edge.

Other distributions:

- SuSE
- RedHat / Fedora / CentOS
- Ubuntu (based on Debian)

Other Unixes:

- FreeBSD / NetBSD / OpenBSD
- Solaris
- SCO Unix
- Mac OS X
- AIX, HP-UX, ...

Debian "Cheat Card"

1) Important distribution-related directories / files

- /etc/apt/sources.list : software repositories

2) Package management

- apt-get update : refresh the local package list with online listings
- apt-get upgrade : upgrade packages with updates, if any available
- dpkg -l : list of all installed packages
- apt-cache search softwarename : to look for a specific kind of software
- apt-get install softwarename : to install a package from the online/cd repository
- apt-get remove softwarename : to remove a package but keep setup/configuration
- apt-get purge softwarename : to remove a package and all config files
- dpkg -i xyz.deb : to install a .deb package
- apt-get dist-upgrade : to upgrade to a newer release of debian

3) Services/Daemon/System management:

- /etc/init.d/servicename start | stop | restart : to stop/start a service
- init 0 : shutdown the system (power off)
- init 6 : reboot the system