

Is Debian dead?

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That the Ubuntu phone is dead and also the Ubuntu Unity desktop environment is well known by the users in the discussions groups. But what is the status of Debian in general? According to the last Debconf conference and the activities on many Linux days, Debian and Ubuntu are well alive. That means, they are attractive to many thousands of developers and new releases are published. But perhaps we should questioning the ideology behind the Debian project a bit in detail to answer the question if this makes sense. Debian was created with the idea in mind, that not only the software itself should be free, but also the community which is developing the software. That means, Debian is not a company, and it is not possible to buy the product.

Let us compare this with some projects in the context of Opensource and Open Knowledge. The Wikimedia Foundation has a yearly revenue of 75 million US\$, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikimedia_Foundation (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikimedia_Foundation) Google is earning 31\$ billion per year with the Android operating system, <https://www.theverge.com/2016/1/21/10810834/android-generated-31-billion-revenue-google-oracle> (<https://www.theverge.com/2016/1/21/10810834/android-generated-31-billion-revenue-google-oracle>) and Oracle makes also a huge profit with the Java programming language. All these projects have something in common. They are dealing with free software and Open Knowledge and at the same time, they are earning money.

In contrast, Debian and Ubuntu are earning nothing and they are proud of it. This makes no sense. If an opensource project earns no money, it is a failed project. Money is needed for paying the developers and money is needed if other companies are trying to buy the product. The inner working of the Debian community prevents to grow as a business. Debian is not a stock at Nasdaq, it is nothing. And that is the reason why I'm calling the project death. The people are engaged enthusiasts, but they are not able to bring Linux to the desktop, to the server or to a phone. A Linux distribution which is used by nobody isn't anymore a Linux distribution it is an anti-pattern.

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