

# Debian Social Contract - (v1.1)

Debian Project

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1    **Debian Social Contract**

**[Prefix]**

Version 1.1 ratified on April 26, 2004. Supersedes [Version 1.0](#) ratified on July 5, 1997. 2

Debian, the producers of the Debian GNU/Linux system, have created the **Debian Social Contract**. The [Debian Free Software Guidelines \(DFSG\)](#) part of the contract, initially designed as a set of commitments that we agree to abide by, has been adopted by the free software community as the basis of the [Open Source Definition](#). 3

4 **Social Contract with the Free Software  
Community**

5 **1. Debian will remain 100% free**

6 We provide the guidelines that we use to determine if  
a work is “free” in the document entitled “The Debian  
Free Software Guidelines”. We promise that the Debian  
system and all its components will be free according to  
these guidelines. We will support people who create or  
use both free and non-free works on Debian. We will  
never make the system require the use of a non-free com-  
ponent.

7 **2. We will give back to the free software  
community**

8 When we write new components of the Debian system,  
we will license them in a manner consistent with the De-  
bian Free Software Guidelines. We will make the best  
system we can, so that free works will be widely dis-  
tributed and used. We will communicate things such as  
bug fixes, improvements and user requests to the “up-  
stream” authors of works included in our system.

9 **3. We will not hide problems**

We will keep our entire bug report database open for 10  
public view at all times. Reports that people file online  
will promptly become visible to others.

11 **4. Our priorities are our users and free  
software**

We will be guided by the needs of our users and the 12  
free software community. We will place their interests  
first in our priorities. We will support the needs of our  
users for operation in many different kinds of computing  
environments. We will not object to non-free works that  
are intended to be used on Debian systems, or attempt  
to charge a fee to people who create or use such works.  
We will allow others to create distributions containing  
both the Debian system and other works, without any  
fee from us. In furtherance of these goals, we will provide  
an integrated system of high-quality materials with no  
legal restrictions that would prevent such uses of the  
system.

13 **5. Works that do not meet our free software  
standards**

We acknowledge that some of our users require the use of 14

works that do not conform to the Debian Free Software Guidelines. We have created “contrib” and “non-free” areas in our archive for these works. The packages in these areas are not part of the Debian system, although they have been configured for use with Debian. We encourage CD manufacturers to read the licenses of the packages in these areas and determine if they can distribute the packages on their CDs. Thus, although non-free works are not a part of Debian, we support their use and provide infrastructure for non-free packages (such as our bug tracking system and mailing lists).

**The Debian Free Software Guidelines (DFSG)** 15

**1. Free Redistribution** 16

The license of a Debian component may not restrict any party from selling or giving away the software as a component of an aggregate software distribution containing programs from several different sources. The license may not require a royalty or other fee for such sale. 17

**2. Source Code** 18

The program must include source code, and must allow distribution in source code as well as compiled form. 19

**3. Derived Works** 20

The license must allow modifications and derived works, and must allow them to be distributed under the same terms as the license of the original software. 21

**4. Integrity of The Author’s Source Code** 22

The license may restrict source-code from being distributed in modified form only if the license allows the 23

distribution of “patch files” with the source code for the purpose of modifying the program at build time. The license must explicitly permit distribution of software built from modified source code. The license may require derived works to carry a different name or version number from the original software. (This is a compromise. The Debian group encourages all authors not to restrict any files, source or binary, from being modified.)

24 **5. No Discrimination Against Persons or Groups**

25 The license must not discriminate against any person or group of persons.

26 **6. No Discrimination Against Fields of Endeavor**

27 The license must not restrict anyone from making use of the program in a specific field of endeavor. For example, it may not restrict the program from being used in a business, or from being used for genetic research.

28 **7. Distribution of License**

29 The rights attached to the program must apply to all to

whom the program is redistributed without the need for execution of an additional license by those parties.

**8. License Must Not Be Specific to Debian** 30

31 The rights attached to the program must not depend on the program’s being part of a Debian system. If the program is extracted from Debian and used or distributed without Debian but otherwise within the terms of the program’s license, all parties to whom the program is redistributed should have the same rights as those that are granted in conjunction with the Debian system.

**9. License Must Not Contaminate Other Software** 32

33 The license must not place restrictions on other software that is distributed along with the licensed software. For example, the license must not insist that all other programs distributed on the same medium must be free software.

**10. Example Licenses** 34

35 The ‹“GPL”›, ‹“BSD”›, and ‹“Artistic”› licenses are examples of licenses that we consider “free”.

36 *The concept of stating our “social contract with the free  
software community” was suggested by Ean Schuessler.  
This document was drafted by Bruce Perens, refined by  
the other Debian developers during a month-long e-mail  
conference in June 1997, and then `<accepted>` as the pub-  
licly stated policy of the Debian Project.*

37 *Bruce Perens later removed the Debian-specific refer-  
ences from the Debian Free Software Guidelines to create  
`<“The Open Source Definition”>`.*

38 *Other organizations may derive from and build on this  
document. Please give credit to the Debian project if you  
do.*

## Metadata

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### SiSU Metadata, document information

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Debian found at: [www.debian.org](http://www.debian.org)

## Links that may be of interest at Debian and elsewhere:

Authoritative Source Document

[http://www.debian.org/social\\_contract](http://www.debian.org/social_contract)

Debian Constitution @ SiSU

[http://www.jus.uio.no/sisu/debian\\_constitution\\_v1.3/sisu\\_manifest.html](http://www.jus.uio.no/sisu/debian_constitution_v1.3/sisu_manifest.html)

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Support

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

Developer's Corner

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

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