About sharing some packaging work between distros

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1 Current situation
Many artifacts

- Lots of packages (20000 in Debian)
- Many distros (I gave up counting)
- Many languages (human languages)

This is getting worse: many new packages, many new software to package
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Consequences

- More resources required for packaging
- Lower quality of descriptions and translation
- Eventually: less users?
First reflex:

- Try to reduce
  - the number of distros: not very healthy for open-source
  - the number of human languages: bad bad bad
  - the number of packages: well ... no

All above is outside control ...
What can be done

Share the work:
- package description and translation (cf Vincent Untz’s talks)
- package legal description (copyright, license ...)
- screenshots
- Maybe: dependency declaration

News:
- A lot of talks have recently begun http://www.enricozini.org/2011/debian/appinstaller2011/. Mostly focused on user experience.
- That’s excellent news

Issues:
- We don’t want to increase packaging workload in each team.
Current situation

What do we need

To share the work:

- An authoritative repository of common data (Freedesktop.org):
  - DB on network (SQL or noSQL... )
  - a way to update the data (from distro teams or a central team?)
  - a way to ”connect the dots” (e.g. dependencies) (cf Enrico Zini’s distromatchhttp://enricozini.org/2011/debian/distromatch/work)
- Tools to ease the merge of the common data and the distro-specific work.

First point is outside my ”jurisdiction”. But I can help on the 2nd point...
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But I can help on the 2nd point...
Well, a tool to edit/validate some Debian packaging files:
- control file (package description, dependencies, staff ...)
- copyright file (license and copyright of upstream project and package files)

So far, nothing fancy. But they are based on Config::Model:
- Designed to edit and validate with a model (description of structure and constraints)
- Model contains default values
- Model information is ”merged” with user information
- Information can be fetched on the network

Tools are Debian centric. But a tool for RedHat’s spec file is planned.
Tools: what do we have to merge data?

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In case I forget ... demo of Dpkg control editor,
what is possible?

Using an upstream project name and a centralized DB, the editor tool can provide:

- default value for a description
- description translation
- copyright/licence for upstream files

Using Enrico Zini’s work, editor can also provide:

- dependencies (expressed in ”common” package names)
- script snippets?
Current situation

What is missing?

- Spec file model
- "centralised data" model
- DB/remote backend for centralised data
- Links between "centralised data model" and Dpkg model
- Likewise for Spec file model
- Other packages specification? (gentoo?)
What would you need?
Let's talk...
Current situation

Links

- Config::Model site
  http://config-model.wiki.sourceforge.net
- Config::Model user mailing list
  https://lists.sourceforge.net/lists/listinfo/config-model-users
- Cross-distro meeting on application installer
  http://distributions.freedesktop.org/wiki/Meetings/AppInstaller2011