

Women in Free Software

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Women in Computing

- CS undergraduates: 10-20% (40% at CMU).
- IT/computing professionals: 20-35%.
- FLOSS development: \sim 1.5%.
 - Maastricht, 2002: 1.1% (2800 participants).
 - FLOSS US, 2003: 1.6% (1493 participants).
 - FLOSS Asia, 2004: 1.5% (138 participants).

Debian: A Universal Operating System?



- ~ 950 developers, 4 (to 8) women: < 1%.

Why?

- Many theories:
 - High level: genetics or society?
 - Lower level: hard to get involved?
- Do the reasons matter?
 - Yes and no.

Aims

- Balance and diversify free software projects.
- Encourage more women to participate in free software (developers).
- More visible women within free software (role models, mentoring).
- Provide fora for discussion of related issues.
- Try out alternative ways of working towards a common goal.

Collaboration vs. Competition

- “Excellence through competition”?
- Why not excellence through collaboration?
- Concentrate on the positive as well as the negative.
- Strive for transparency and better communication:
 - Better documentation.
 - Debunk the “free software is only for hardcore programmers” myth.
- Goals for everyone in free software.

What Next?

- Workshops for schools and universities.
- Articles to raise awareness.
- Collaboration with existing groups within and outside of the free software community.
- Ideas from *you*.
- Oh, and beer...