

## Free Software with a Female Touch

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CrossBorder Linux OpenSource



# Gliederung

- 1 The Situation
- 2 Reasons
- 3 Countermeasures
- 4 Motivation



# Women in IT

The are few women in IT.

A few numbers:

- 14% female CS students in Germany in winter semester 2007/2008 (*BITKOM*)
- 9% female IT specialist apprentices in 2008 (*BITKOM*)
- Age of first computer use: (*FLOSSPOLIS*)
  - Male: 12 years
  - Female: 14.5 years
- Age of first computer possession: (*FLOSSPOLIS*)
  - Male: 15 years
  - Female: 19 years



# Women in F/LOSS

There are even fewer women in F/LOSS!

A few more numbers:

- 0.9% fully accredited Debian Developers (9 in 1020 of as of today) (*Debian, 2009*)
- 1.5% women in F/LOSS vs. 28% in proprietary software (*FLOSSPOLLS, 2005*)
- 2.4% in the general Ubuntu community (*Ubuntu Census Survey 2006*)
- Year of initial F/LOSS involvement
  - Male: 1996
  - Female: 1999



# Why are there so few women in IT?

- Social conditioning
- (Early) education (school, parents)
- No female role models / male role models (“Nerd-Image”) unappealing
- Going against the main stream
- Who choses voluntarily to be in a (possibly discriminated) minority?
- Male dominated environment



# Why are there so few women in F/LOSS?

Aaaaaaaall the reasons on the last slide plus a few extra ones:

- No invitations/easy entry
- “Doocracy”
- General atmosphere
  - Men among themselves, following thier hobby
  - Heavily task oriented, no “social blabla”
  - “Meritocracy”
- “hobby” vs. job



# So, what can we do about it?

- Mentoring eases entry
- Behave yourselves!
- Make the women you have more visible (*"The people behind \$foo"*)
- Maybe even given them a special place (\$foo-women)



# The questions no-one dares to ask ...

# Why bother?



# Why bother?

Several possible lines of reasoning:

- **Anti-Discrimination:** Being in IT is often advantageous and profitable. Women should have equal opportunities!
- **Equality:** A company/project should reflect the general society in its workforce
- **Sociology:** Women are generally more sociable.
  - Men behave friendlier when they are around
  - They tend to relieve conflicts
  - They like doing the things that are often neglected (artwork, documentation, user support, ...)



# Why bother?

There is some truth to all of this, but here comes the ultimate reason:



## Why bother?

There is some truth to all of this, but here comes the ultimate reason:

Because **YOUR** project  
needs them!



# Why bother?

Every F/LOSS project lacks people.

There are millions of potential coders, feature-adders, bug-fixers, documenters, designers, translators, supporters, website-updaters, quality-assurers, release-coordinators, administrators, etc. out there, who can be easily won over with only very little effort.

**Why miss out on them?**



# Thank you!

Questions? Comments?



## Some links

- <http://women.debian.org> – The Debian-Women Project
- <http://www.linuxchix.org> – The Linuxchix Project
- <http://flosspols.org/> – The EU research project FLOSSPOLS
- <http://www.technixen.net> – German mailing lists for women in Linux/general IT
- <http://www.haecksen.org> – Zusammenschluss weiblicher CCC Mitglieder

