

# The Basics of Debian Package Management: DEB Packages [Linux 101]

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Linux proponents point to the fact that it can be customized for just about any purpose as one of its biggest strengths. On the other hand, this has led to a wide variety of distributions, each with different strengths and weakness than the last. DistroWatch itself is tracking some 733 different distributions of Linux. And one of the most basic things that separates these many distros is the package management system.

By and large, distros will use one of three package management systems:

- \* RPM, or the Red Hat Package Manager format, originally developed by Red Hat
- \* DEB, or Debian Package format, release with the initial version of Debian 1.0
- \* TGZ, the format used by Slackware, among others.

At one time, it is actually difficult to find DEB packages of some software. The conversion to the DEB format via the `?alien?` tool is one of the only options available, unless it was in one of the Debian repositories. With the entrance of Canonical and Ubuntu, packaging software in DEB format is much more common now. Let's take a look at how a DEB package is constructed.

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