

APT-Pinning

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3 releases in Debian GNU/Linux

Debian has 3 releases at a given time:

- 1 **stable**: release approx. 25 months
- 2 **testing**: next stable release
- 3 **unstable**: takes min. 10 days to enter testing

Normally you stick with one release version. For some users this is sometimes not enough.

APT

APT Pinning enables using one release but having packages of other releases installed.

Configuration of installation sources happens in `/etc/apt/sources.list`.

You can add more repositories to install from.

You configure APT from which sources to install in

`/etc/apt/preferences`.

Configuring to install some package from a certain release we call **Pinning to that release**.

apt_sources.list and apt_preferences

APT-Sources List: `/etc/apt/sources.list`

```
1
2 ##### testing #####
3 deb http://ftp.us.debian.org/debian testing main contrib non-free
4
5 ##### unstable #####
6 deb http://ftp.us.debian.org/debian unstable main contrib non-free
```

APT-Preferences: `/etc/apt/preferences`¹

```
1 Package: *
2 Pin: release a=testing
3 Pin-Priority: 900
4
5 Package: *
6 Pin: release a=unstable
7 Pin-Priority: 800
```

¹http://www.debian.org/doc/manuals/debian-reference/ch02.en.html#_the_apitude_regex_formula

Pin Priorities

Higher Priority gets installed, if two packages have the same priority the higher version will be installed.

priority	behaviour
1	packages not installed and not automatically upgraded
100	installed packages that will be automatically upgraded
500	packages not installed that do not belong to the target release
990	packages not installed that belong to the target release
1000	never downgrade this package
-1	never upgrade this package

Installation of packages

This command tells you what will be selected when installing `<package>`:

```
1 apt-cache policy <package>
```

Install `<package>` from unstable, but do not upgrade any package to another release:

```
1 # aptitude install <package>/unstable
```

Install `<package>` from unstable with all dependencies, even if they are from another release:

```
1 # aptitude -t unstable install <package>
```

Sources and documentation

- **Debian GNU/Linux**
<http://www.debian.org/>
- **Debian Package Management**
<http://www.debian.org/doc/manuals/debian-reference/ch02.en.html>
- **Manual page for /etc/apt/preferences**
man 5 apt_preferences
- **Apt Pinning on Debian Wiki**
<http://wiki.debian.org/AptPreferences>

but wait there is more...

1
2
3
4
5
6
7

