

Little-known APT utilities for Debian desktop users

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The Advanced Packaging Tool (APT) is a distinguishing feature of Debian-based systems. APT was the first major alternative in GNU/Linux to boast automatic dependency resolution. Most GNU/Linux users know it through the `apt-get` command, a utility that calls on the lower-level `dpkg` command. However, other APT-based utilities remain largely unknown to desktop users. Some of these utilities offer a range of functionality far beyond those of the basic tools.

These functions include setting up package sources (`apt-cdrom` and `apt-spy`), querying package information (`apt-cache` and `apt-rdepends`), extracting the latest list of bugs associated with a package (`apt-listbugs`), and receiving automatic updates (`apt-watch`). Many can be run from any account; you need the root account only for the final stages of configuration or the installation and removal of packages.

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