

## Debian, for the elderly

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## Oh the times! Oh the customs!



Cicero was born in Italy in year (-106).  
He was aged 63 when he died. All students who learned Latin knew his prose.

*O TEMPORA O MORES* was his expression, to deplore the viciousness and corruption of his age (speaking about younger people, of course).

As reported by [en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org), many elderly people used the same words, to speak about insolent youngsters, when those had some power.



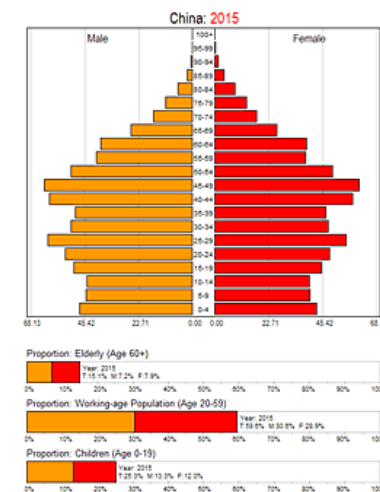
## Table of contents

- 1 O TEMPORA O MORES
  - The past
  - The present
  - Future
- 2 Elderly people, scrutinized by an insider
  - About the author
  - Fifties against nineties
  - Club *Les Libertés Numériques*
- 3 Credits



## Is old the new young?

In some countries, elderly people become numerous

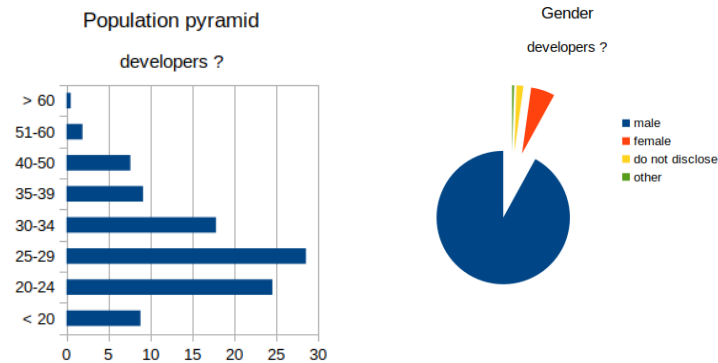


[www.china-profile.com](http://www.china-profile.com)



## Age and gender profile of developers?

Here are results gathered by [stackoverflow.com](https://stackoverflow.com) three years ago. The responses are biased by some factors which are discussed in the introduction of the [article](#).



## Age matters: do you know how?

As far as I could predict, I am twice as old as the attendance of the present speech. I was born in the fifties, you were born in the eighties or nineties, don't you? However, as a teacher in a public school, I have some knowledge about people younger than you.

- Beware!
- You were insolent youngsters ...
- They are worse!



## A teacher, not yet retired



## Fifties VS nineties

I apologize in advance: when I prepared my talk, I decided to write it for some "average" attendee. But, are you an "average" attendee?

If you were born in the nineties, I was already forty. My world had changed a lot since my birth date, but we still share much in common.

- The first computer I saw was "nowhere": just a punch card reader, and a noisy printer, responsive after a few minutes. It was in *École Normale Supérieure* and I was postgraduate.
- The first computer you saw was probably "there", maybe in front of your parents, at home. Maybe they were playing with joysticks, did they?
- However at that time, phones were just ... phones.



## Fifties VS nineties

A few obvious differences:

- People born in the fifties are less fluent with smartphones
- People born in the fifties often ask for detailed explanations
- People born in the fifties have often known a single job
- People born in the fifties have often been shorter in schools
- People born in the fifties have known dangerous diseases in their childhood
- People born in the fifties are more than sixty years old. Can you imagine that you may reach such an age?
- Active people born in the fifties are often women.



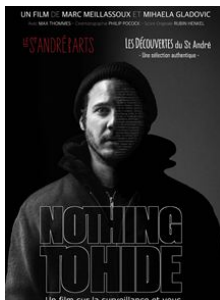
## Les Libertés Numériques : Digital Freedoms

I shall talk you a short while about a club of old timers, named “Les Libertés Numériques”, which has met a few times from last March, once a month. My purpose, which I explained thoroughly to members, was to introduce them to new techniques in computer science, with Debian, while exploring how we can protect our privacy, and how far the smartphones and laptops are invading our life.

Some reports and a time schedule are available in the French website [citoyenne.freeduc.science](http://citoyenne.freeduc.science)



## First meeting: NOTHING TO HIDE



The first

meeting was dedicated to Marc Meillassoux' excellent film “NOTHING TO HIDE”. A young German artist agrees with a group of hackers to allow an application on his phone, which has “ordinary access permissions” to his private data, like geolocalization, and metadata about communications.

The attendance was most captivated by some testimonials of people who had lived in totalitarian areas of Europe, and

comparisons between the work made by the STASI, the East-German secret police, and the level of details which GAFAM companies can access nowadays.



## Further meetings: Firefox and the privacy

As announced during the presentation of the film “NOTHING TO HIDE”, the club was invited to install Firefox on each own laptop, and plugins to enhance the privacy or learn more about it, like **UBlock Origin** and **LightBeam**.

As a matter of fact, the website [laposte.fr](http://laposte.fr) of the French Post, which is supposed to be tightly controlled by our government, exposes any citizen to no less than 8 “spying” websites when accessed without caution.

It is interesting to verify that the same is not true for the German Post's [website](http://www.post.de), which is quite clean from that point of view.

What about other national posts?



## Further meetings: Firefox and the privacy

Then another question arises:

### Is my computer spying me?

The discussion comes on the possible or impossible verification of software, and on prominent features of Free Software.

As announced previously, I proposed to sell USB live sticks with a Debian system to run in nomadic mode on computers, or to get empty sticks were I copy the same system for the next session.

Those live systems are based on Debian/Knoppix, with remastered contents, which are available at the website [usb.freeduc.org](http://usb.freeduc.org).



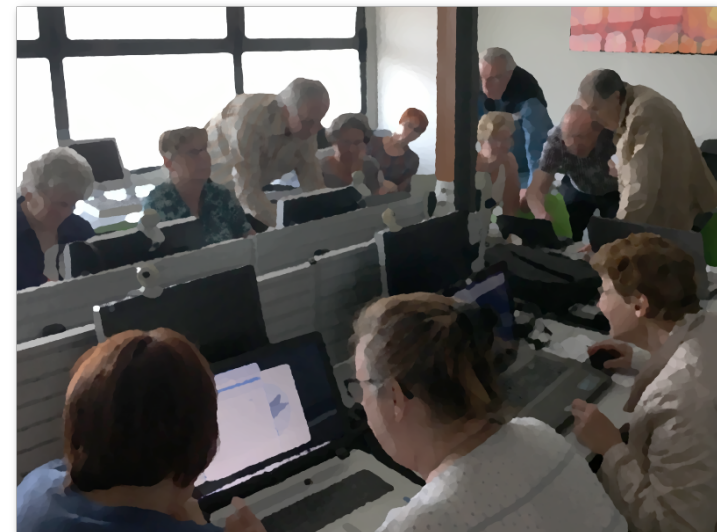
## Further meetings: Firefox and the privacy



## Further meetings: Firefox and the privacy



## Further meetings: Firefox and the privacy



## Further meetings: WebRTC VS Skype

When they have access to a high bandwidth, old people love video meetings with children and grandchildren.

The third meeting was dedicated to demonstrations of WebRTC, and discussions about the privacy of the video communication and of metadata exchanged before its startup.

Another big point of the club's discussion was about subtle tricks sometimes necessary to be able to run a system other than Windows on one's computer, and the level of "protection" which has been built to protect Microsoft against customers' freedom.



## Further meetings: WebRTC VS Skype

As a temporary conclusion, we found that WebRTC is fine because it's already built inside our web browser, and that some more testing was necessary: the bandwidth between the meeting room and Internet was rather tight, and even inside the local network, there were bottlenecks.

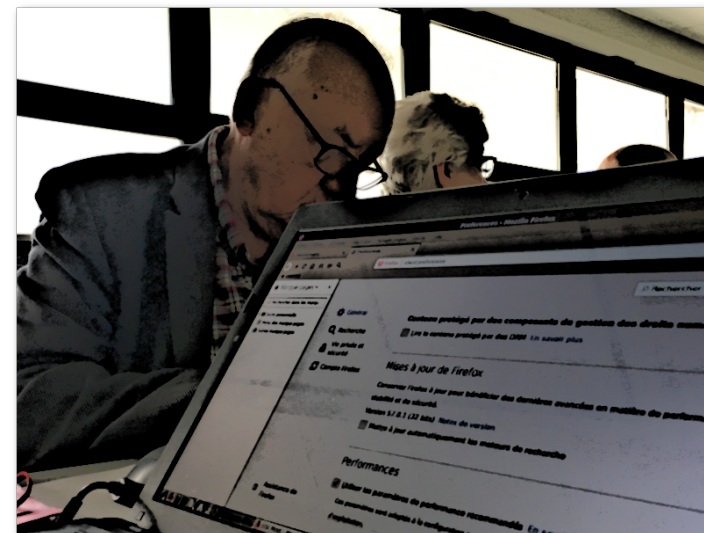
The most satisfactory was to discover that WebRTC was really agnostic about operating systems, and allowed an equal quality of communication, for example between a computer running Debian Knoppix and another running Windows, etc.



## Further meetings: WebRTC VS Skype



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## A conclusion

- Debian/Knoppix is well accepted by elderly people, provided they can be helped to overcome Microsoft's built-in protections
- The members of the club asked me more questions than young students usually do, and the questions were often wiser
- If you have watched the photos carefully, you probably noticed that old people are using paper and pencils
- I noticed that the members of the club were rather poorly impressed by bleeding-edge hardware, and rather proud when they could keep "old" machines working
- I got much more relevant questions from attendees when they were related to the film "NOTHING TO HIDE", and about privacy, than about difficulties about the user interface

Old people, like everybody, profoundly need to give sense to their practice.



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software can help their freedom.

## Further meetings: WebRTC VS Skype



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## A conclusion

# Questions?



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