Foreword

In January 1993, while browsing USENET news one evening after work, I ran across a thread with a subject line that read, simply, "LINUX." I'm not sure what it was about the word "LINUX" that made me hit Enter, but I did, and within a few minutes, it was clear to me that I had to have it.

Unfortunately, that's about where I hit a brick wall. I had just enough information about Linux to whet my appetite, but there was precious little more of it to be found. Over the course of the next few weeks, I hunted down and pieced together the rest of what I needed to know: where to find it, how to download it, how to install it, and what I could do with it once I had installed it.

It was a tedious process, because only scraps of information were available, and those scraps were scattered about all over the place — a bit on a USENET group here, a bit more on an FTP site there. And even when found and pieced together, the scraps did not form a complete picture — I had to fill in large gaps for myself. All in all, it was a tremendous learning experience, but it was also a tremendously frustrating and time-consuming experience, and if presented with the same obstacles today, I likely would not have had the time or the inclination to overcome them.

Fortunately, becoming a Linux user is much easier today than it was in 1993. The software itself has come a long way, and a wide range of books on the subject are available, from installation and use to programming to administration and management. These days, the local bookstore has all the information you need to get started and become productive as a Linux user.

One subject that has not been covered as extensively as others, a subject near and dear to my heart, is Debian, a project I founded not long after discovering Linux. Debian has much to offer the Linux user — a huge selection of software, an open development process that leads to rapid bug fixes and improvements, an unparalleled software management facility that allows software to be installed easily and systems to be upgraded non-disruptively, and much more — but it has long remained a daunting prospect to piece together the information you need to get there.

And, so, I am extremely pleased to see books such as my friend Steve Hunger's *Debian GNU/Linux Bible. Debian GNU/Linux Bible* contains all the information you need to know to get the most out of Debian, from installing it to using its powerful package management system to install software and upgrade your system to setting up a Web server and other advanced topics. With *Debian GNU/Linux Bible* by your side, you will be well prepared to join the large and growing group of users that call Debian home. I hope this book serves you well.

Ian Murdock
Founder of Debian and Co-founder of Progeny Linux Systems, Inc.