Collaborative Maintenance

Open Discussion: Infrastructure for collaborative maintenance by external contributors

Debian QA mini-conf 2005

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Overview

- Lifecycle of orphaned packages

- What could be better?

- Our proposal: Using SVN and external maintainers

- Interesting side-effects
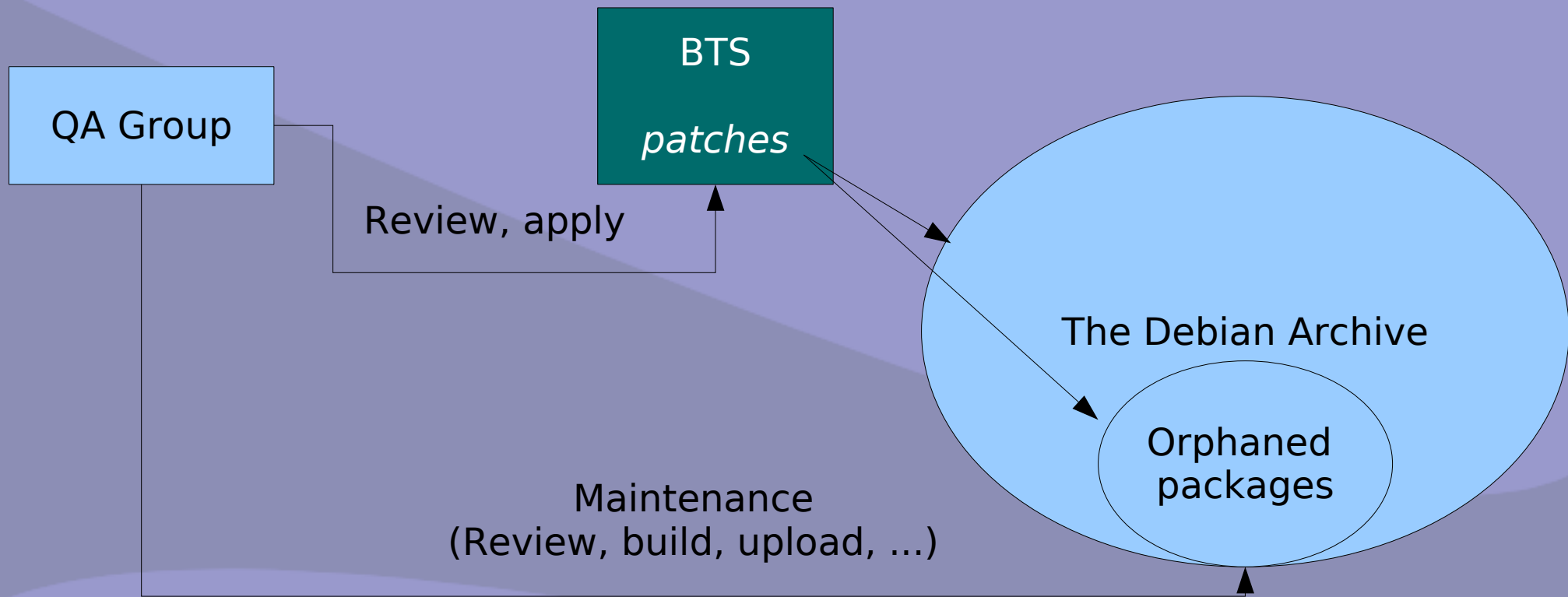
- What is done, what remains to do

- Questions

Lifecycle of Orphaned Packages

- The maintainer orphans the package

- The QA Group maintains it

- External volunteers may submit patches in the BTS

- The QA Group may apply BTS' patches and upload a new version

- … until the package gets adopted or removed

Lifecycle of orphaned packages
The current process...

What Could Be Better?

- There is not always a new Debian maintainer for adopting an orphaned package

- Patches may sleep for a while in the BTS

- There might be volunteers outside of Debian, wanting to give a hand, without wanting to go through NM

The Proposal: *Welcoming external contributions*

- A SubVersioN repository in the middle

- A transparent wrapper between the Debian archive and this repository

- External contributors allowed to commit (ACL)

- QA Group's role: reviewing svn repositories for orphaned packages, uploading the resulting package

The Proposal:
Why is That Better than Before?

- Avoiding removing used packages without a permanent Debian maintainer

- Attracting new contributors to orphaned packages, without blasting them out with NM

- Enhancing and simplifying the task of maintaining orphaned packages, we use a RCS!

The Proposal:
The SVN repository

- The hierarchy: 3 main sections
  - orphaned (packages orphaned)
  - deb-maint (packages adopted by a Debian maintainer)
  - ext-maint (packages orphaned for which one or more external volunteers commit)
- svn-buildpackage is our friend
- archive2svn makes the Archive transparent

The Proposal:
archive2svn, the wrapper

- Grabs one or more orphaned source package from the unstable archive

- Uses svn-inject for putting it in the svn repository
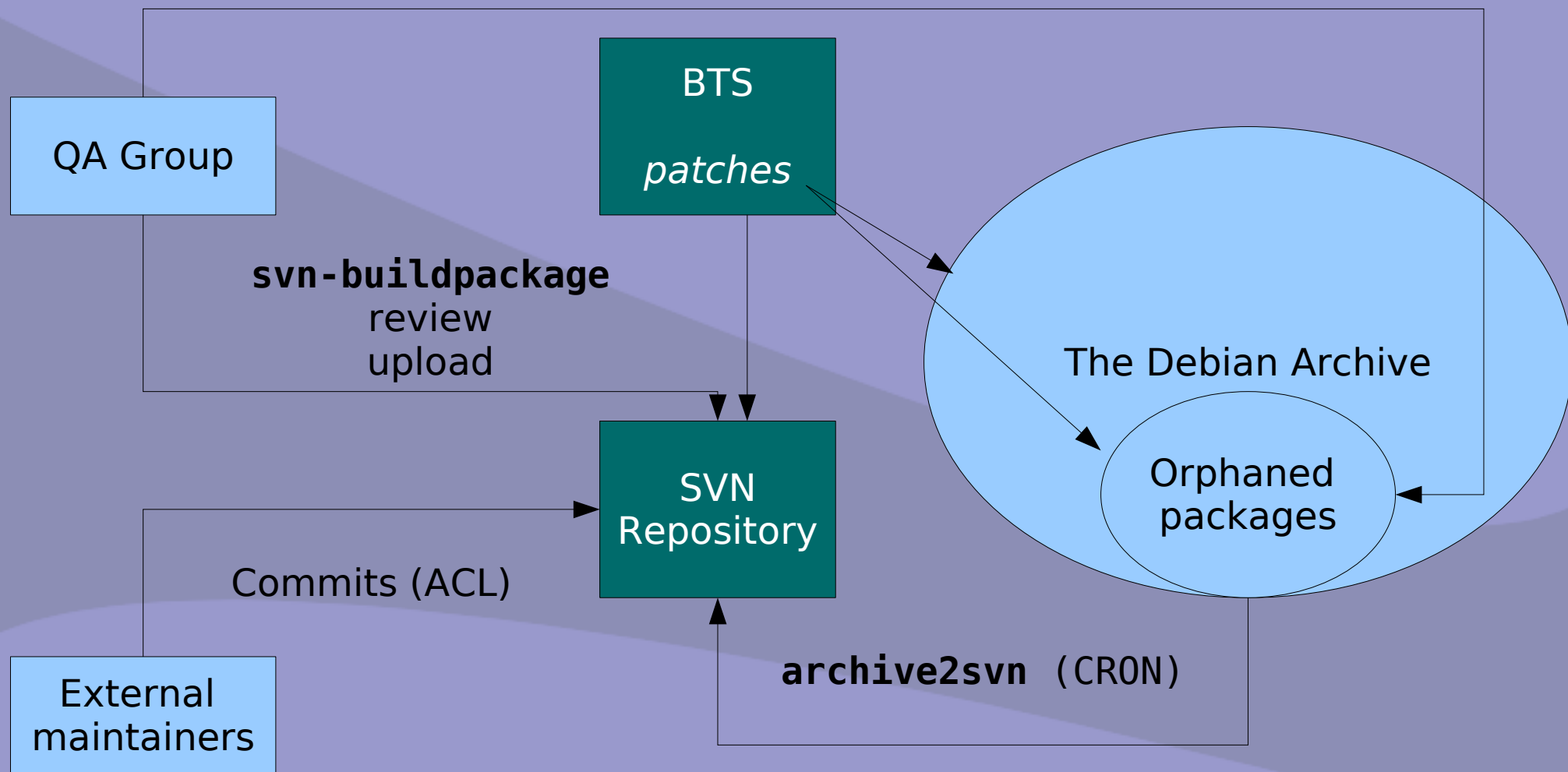
- Can be run interactively or not

The Proposal:
External contributors, who?

- They are users of an orphaned package

- They know how to patch it

- They'd like to contribute to the Debian package

- They don't want to go through NM

- They don't want the package to be removed

Lifecycle of orphaned packages
... With SVN in the middle

QA Group

BTS
patches

The Debian Archive

svn-buildpackage
review
upload

Orphaned
packages

**SVN
Repository**

Commits (ACL)

archive2svn (CRON)

**External
maintainers**

Interesting side-effects

- The NM process could find here a new playground

- This will provide a set of generic tools to help sponsoring packages

- Users can grab the patched sources from SVN and have access directly to the orpahned package, with the patches.

What's done?

- SVN repository and Alioth project
  - `collab-maint`
- archive2svn
- This talk ;)

What remains to be done?

- Communication (within QA Group, patches submitters)
- PTS integration
- Some tweaks on archive2svn, new tools

Questions ?

This is the time for questions...