

grml-live(8)

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1 Name

grml-live - build framework based on FAI for generating a Grml and Debian based Linux Live system (CD/ISO)

2 Synopsis

```
grml-live [-a <architecture>] [-c <classe[s]>] [-C <configfile>] [-e <extract_iso_name>] [-g <grml_name>] [-i <iso_name>] [-o <output_directory>] [-r <release_name>] [-s <suite>] [-t <template_directory>] [-v <version_number>] [-U <username>] [-AbBFnNqQuVz]
```

3 Description

grml-live provides the build system for creating a Grml and Debian based Linux Live-CD. The build system is based on **FAI** (Fully Automatic Installation). grml-live uses the "fai dirinstall" feature to generate a chroot system based on the class concept of FAI (see later sections for further details) and provides the framework to be able to generate a full-featured ISO. It does not use all the FAI features by default though and you don't have to know FAI to be able to use it.

The use of FAI gives you the flexibility to choose the packages you would like to include on your very own Linux Live-CD without having to deal with all the details of a build process.



Caution

grml-live does **not** use `/etc/fai` for configuration but instead (unless overridden using the `'-D'` option). This ensures that it does not clash with default FAI configuration and packages, so you can use grml-live and FAI completely independent at the same time!

Note

Please notice that you should have a fast network connection as all the Debian packages will be downloaded and installed via network. If you want to use a local mirror (strongly recommended if you plan to use grml-live more than once) check out `mkdebmirror` (see `/usr/share/doc/grml-live/examples/mkdebmirror`), `debmirror(1)`, `reprepro(1)` (see `/usr/share/doc/grml-live/examples/reprepro/` for a sample configuration), `apt-cacher(1)` and `approx(8)`. To avoid downloading the base system again and again check out [the base tar.gz feature](#).

4 Options

-A

Clean up all output directories before running the build process. After finishing, clean up the Chroot target and Build target directories.

-a ARCHITECTURE

Use the specified architecture instead of the currently running one. This allows building a 32bit system on a 64bit host (though you can't build a 64bit system on a 32bit system/kernel of course). Please notice that real crosscompiling (like building a ppc system on x86) isn't possible due to the nature and the need of working in a chroot. Currently supported values: `i386` and `amd64`.

-b

Build the ISO without updating the chroot via FAI. This option is useful for example when working on stable releases: if you have a working base system/chroot and do not want to execute any further updates (via `"-u"` option) but intend to only build the ISO.

-B

Build the ISO without touching the chroot at all. This option is useful if you modified anything that FAI or grml-live might adjust via Grml's FAI scripts. It's like the *-b* option but even more advanced. Use only if you really know that you do not want to update the chroot.

-c CLASSES

Specify the CLASSES to be used for building the ISO via FAI. By default only the classes GRMLBASE, GRML_FULL and I386/AMD64 (depending on system architecture) are assumed, resulting in a base system of about 350MB total ISO size. If using a non-I386 system (like AMD64) you should specify the appropriate architecture as well. Additionally you can specify a class providing a grml-kernel (see [the CLASSES section in this document](#) for details about available classes). So instead of GRML_FULL you can also use GRML_SMALL and GRML_FULL.

**Important**

All class names should be written in uppercase letters. Do not use a dash, use an underscore. So do not use "amd64" but "AMD64", do not use "FOO BAR" but "FOO_BAR".

-C CONFIGURATION_FILE

The specified file is used as configuration file for grml-live. By default */etc/grml/grml-live.conf* is used as default configuration. If a file named */etc/grml/grml-live.local* exists it is used as well (sourced after reading */etc/grml/grml-live.conf* meant as main file for local configuration). As a last option the specified configuration file is sourced so it is possible to override settings of */etc/grml/grml-live.conf* as well as of */etc/grml/grml-live.local*. Please notice that all configuration files have to be adjusted during execution of grml-live, so please make sure you use */etc/grml/grml-live.conf* as a base for your own configuration file (usually */etc/grml/grml-live.local*). Please also notice that the configuration file specified via this option is **not** (yet) */etc/grml/grml-live.local* for configuration stuff used inside

-d DATE

Use specified date as build date information on the ISO instead of the default. The default is the date when grml-live is being executed (retrieved via executing *date +%Y-%m-%d*). The information is stored inside the file */GRML/grml-version* on the ISO, */etc/grml_version* in the squashfs file and in all the bootsplash related files. This option is useful if you want to provide an ISO with release information for a specific date but have to build it in advance. Usage example: *-d 2009-10-30*

-D CONFIGURATION_DIRECTORY

The specified directory is used as configuration directory for grml-live and its FAI. By default */etc/grml/fai* is used as default configuration directory. If you want to have different configuration scripts, package definitions, etc. with without messing with the global configuration under */etc/grml/fai* provided by grml-live this option provides you the option to use your own configuration throughout this documentation.

-e EXTRACT_ISO_NAME

The squashfs inside the specified ISO will be extracted and used as the chroot. This option is useful for remastering, in combination with *-A* and *-b* or *-u*.

-F

Force execution and do not prompt for acknowledgment of configuration.

-g GRML_NAME

Set the grml flavour name. Common usage examples: *grml*, *grml-small*, *grml64*. Please do NOT use blanks and any special characters like */*, *;* inside GRML_NAME, otherwise you might notice problems while booting.

-h

Display short usage information and exit.

-i ISO_NAME

Specify name of ISO which will be available inside *\$OUTPUT_DIRECTORY/grml_isos* by default.

-I CHROOT_INSTALL

Specify name of source directory which provides files that should become part of the chroot/ISO. Not enabled by default. Note: the files are installed under */* in the chroot so you have to create the rootfs structure on your own.

- n**
Skip creation of the ISO file. This option is useful if you want to build/update the chroot and/or recreate the squashfs file without building an ISO file.
- N**
Bootstrap the chroot without building bootloader, squashfs, or finalizing the ISO. Use this option if installation of some packages fails, you want to run custom commands or similar. The main use of this option is to save time by skipping stages which aren't necessary for bootstrapping the chroot and which would get executed more than once when iterating through the initial bootstrapping. Alternatively, use this option as a test run of grml-live. Once you are satisfied with the state of your grml_chroot, use grml-live **-u** to build the remaining stages and finalize the ISO.
- o OUTPUT_DIRECTORY**
Main output directory of the build process of FAI. Some directories are created inside this target directory, being: grml_cd (where the files for creating the ISO are located, including the compressed squashfs file), grml_chroot (the chroot system) and grml_isos (where the resulting ISO is stored).
- q**
Build the ISO without (re-)creating the squashfs compressed file using mksquashfs. This option is useful if you just want to update parts outside the chroot in the ISO. Consider combining this option with the build-only option *-b*.
- Q**
Build the ISO without generating a netboot package.
- r RELEASENAME**
Specify name of the release.
- s SUITE**
Specify the Debian suite you want to use for your live-system. If unset defaults to "testing". Supported values are: stable, testing, unstable (or their corresponding release names like "wheezy"). Please be aware that recent Debian suites might require a recent base.tgz debootstrap.
- t TEMPLATE_DIRECTORY**
Specify place of the templates used for building the ISO. By default (and if not manually specified) this is /usr/share/grml-live/templates/.
- u**
Update existing chroot instead of rebuilding it from scratch. This option is based on the softupdate feature of FAI.
- U USERNAME**
Sets ownership of all build output files to specified username before exiting.
- v VERSION_NUMBER**
Specify version number of the release.
- V**
Increase verbosity in the build process.
- z**
Use ZLIB instead of LZMA/XZ compression in mksquashfs part of the build process.

5 Usage examples

To get a Debian-stable and Grml-based Live-CD using /grml/grml-live as build and output directory just run:

```
# grml-live
```

To get a 64bit Debian-testing and grml-small based Live-CD using /srv/grml-live as build and output directory use the following command line on your amd64 system:

```
# grml-live -s testing -c GRMLBASE,GRML_SMALL,AMD64 -o /srv/grml-live
```

Note

If you have enough RAM, just run "mount -t tmpfs none /media/ramdisk" to get a tmpfs ("RAMDISK"), and use /media/ramdisk as build and output directory - this results in a very fast build process. Note that these files will be gone when rebooting.

6 Main features of grml-live

- create a Grml-/Debian-based Linux Live-CD with one single command
- class based concept, providing a maximum of flexibility
- supports integration of own hooks, scripts and configuration
- supports use and integration of own Software and/or Kernels via simple use of Debian repositories
- native support of FAI features

7 The class concept

grml-live uses FAI and its class based concept for adjusting configuration and setup according to your needs. This gives you flexibility and strength without losing the simplicity in the build process.

The main and base class provided by grml-live is named GRMLBASE. It's strongly recommended to **always** use the class GRMLBASE when building an ISO using grml-live, as well as the architecture dependent class which provides the kernel (being *I386* for x86_32 and *AMD64* for x86_64) and a GRML_* class (like GRML_SMALL, GRML_MEDIUM or GRML_FULL). The following files and directories are relevant for class GRMLBASE by default:

```
{GRML_FAI_CONFIG}/config/scripts/GRMLBASE/  
{GRML_FAI_CONFIG}/config/debconf/GRMLBASE  
{GRML_FAI_CONFIG}/config/class/GRMLBASE.var  
{GRML_FAI_CONFIG}/config/hooks/instsoft.GRMLBASE  
{GRML_FAI_CONFIG}/config/package_config/GRMLBASE
```

Take a look at the next section for information about the concept of those files/directories.

If you want to use your own configuration, extend an existing configuration and/or add additional packages to your ISO just invent a new class (or extend an existing one). For example if you want to use your own class named "FOOBAR" just set CLASSES="GRMLBASE,GRML_SMALL,AMD64,FOOBAR" inside /etc/grml/grml-live.local or invoke grml-live using the classes option: "grml-live -c GRMLBASE,GRML_SMALL,AMD64,FOOBAR ...".

More details regarding the class concept can be found in the documentation of FAI itself (being available at /usr/share/doc/fai-doc/).

8 Available classes

The package selection part of the classes can be found in selected. The following classes are predefined:

- DEBORPHAN: get rid of all packages listed in output of deborphan
 - FRESHCLAM: execute freshclam (if it's present) to update clamav definitions (increases resulting ISO size ~70MB). By default it's skipped to avoid bigger ISO size.
 - GRMLBASE: the main class responsible for getting a minimal subset of what's defining a Grml system. Important parts of the buildprocess are specified in this class as well, so unless you have a really good reason you should always use this class.
 - GRML_FULL: full featured Grml, also known as the "normal", full grml as introduced in December 2011 (~350MB ISO size).
-

- **GRML_MEDIUM**: medium sized Grml version, used to be known as grml-medium until December 2011 (~220MB ISO size).
- **GRML_SMALL**: minimum sized Grml version, known as grml-small (~110MB ISO size).
- **GRML_XL**: large size Grml version, used to be known as "full grml" until December 2011 (~700MB ISO size).
- **LATEX**: LaTeX(-related) packages like auctex, texlive,... (which used to be shipped by grml before the LaTeX removal)
- **LATEX_CLEANUP**: get rid of several very large LaTeX directories (like some /usr/share/doc/texlive-*, /usr/share/doc/texmf,...)
- **LOCALES**: use full featured locales setup (see /etc/locale.gen.grml). This avoids to get rid of /usr/share/locale - which happens by default otherwise - as well.
- **NO_ONLINE**: do not run scripts during the chroot build process which require a network connection
- **RELEASE**: run some specific scripts and commands to provide the workflow for an official grml release
- **REMOVE_DOCS**: get rid of documentation directories (like /usr/share/doc, /usr/share/man/, /usr/share/info,...)
- **SOURCES**: retrieve Debian source packages after installation. Files will be placed in the output directory under grml_sources.
- **XORG**: providing important packages for use with a base grml-featured X.org setup

9 Files

Notice that grml-live ships FAI configuration files that do not use the same namespace as the FAI packages itself. This ensures that grml-live does not clash with your usual FAI configuration, so instead of /etc/fai/fai.conf (package below. To get an idea how another configuration or example files could look like check out /usr/share/doc/fai-doc/examples/simple/ (provided by Debian package fai-doc). Furthermore /usr/share/doc/fai-doc/fai-guide.html/ch-config.html provides documentation regarding configuration possibilities.

```
/usr/sbin/grml-live
```

Script for the main build process. Requires root permissions for execution.

```
/etc/grml/grml-live.conf
```

Main configuration file for grml-live which should be considered as a reference configuration file only. Please use /etc/grml/grml-live.local for local configuration instead.

```
/etc/grml/grml-live.local
```

All the local configuration should go to this file. This file overrides any defaults of grml-live. Configurations via /etc/grml/grml-live.local are preferred over the ones from /etc/grml/grml-live.conf. If you want to override settings from /etc/grml/grml-live.local as well you have to specify them on the grml-live commandline.

```
${GRML_FAI_CONFIG}/fai.conf
```

Main configuration file for FAI which specifies where all the configuration files and scripts for FAI/grml-live can be found. By default the configuration variables are FAI_CONFIG_SRC=file:///etc/grml/fai/config and GRML_FAI_CONFIG=/etc/grml/fai/config - both pointing to a directory shipped by grml-live out-of-the-box so you shouldn't have to configure anything in this file.

```
${GRML_FAI_CONFIG}/config/
```

The main directory for configuration of FAI/grml-live. More details below.

```
${GRML_FAI_CONFIG}/config/class/
```

This directory contains files which specify main configuration variables for the FAI classes.

```
`${GRML_FAI_CONFIG}/config/debconf/
```

This directory provides the files for preseeding/configuration of debconf through files.

```
`${GRML_FAI_CONFIG}/config/hooks/
```

This directory provides files for customising the build process through hooks. Hooks are user defined programs or scripts, which are called during the installation process.

```
`${GRML_FAI_CONFIG}/config/package_config/
```

Directory with lists of software packages to be installed or removed. The different classes describe what should find its way to your ISO. When running "grml-live -c GRMLBASE,GRML_SMALL,AMD64 ..." only the configuration of GRMLBASE, GRML_SMALL and AMD64 will be taken. If you use *grml-live -c GRMLBASE,GRML_SMALL,AMD64,FOOBAR...* then the files of GRMLBASE, GRML_SMALL, AMD64 **plus** the files from FOOBAR will be taken. So just create a new class to adjust the package selection according to your needs. Please notice that the directory GRMLBASE contains a package list defining a minimum but still reasonable package configuration.

```
`${GRML_FAI_CONFIG}/config/scripts/
```

Scripts for customising the ISO within the build process.

```
`${GRML_FAI_CONFIG}/live-initramfs/
```

This directory provides the files used for building the initramfs/initrd via live-initramfs(8).

10 Available log files

Starting with grml-live version 0.17.0 you should find log files in a directory named *grml_logs* in the output directory (next to *grml_isos*, *grml_chroot*,...).

grml-live versions before 0.17.0 used to log into */var/log/grml-live.log* and */var/log/fai/grml*.

11 Requirements for the build system

- any Debian based system should be sufficient (if it doesn't work it's a bug, please send us a bug report then). Check out [How do I deploy grml-live on a plain Debian installation](#) for details how to set up grml-live on a plain, original Debian system.
- enough free disk space; at least 800MB are required for a minimal grml-live run (~400MB for the chroot [*\$CHROOT_OUTPUT*], ~150MB for the build target [*\$BUILD_OUTPUT*] and ~150MB for the resulting ISO [*\$ISO_OUTPUT*] plus some temporary files), if you plan to use *GRML_FULL* you should have at least 4GB of total free disk space
- fast network access for retrieving the Debian packages used for creating the chroot (check out "local mirror" to workaround this problem as far as possible)

For further information see next section.

12 Current state of grml-live with squashfs-tools and kernel

Use *squashfs-tools* >=4.2-1 (available from Grml repositories as well as from Debian) to build Grml (based) ISOs featuring kernel version 2.6.38-grml[64] or newer.

13 FAQ

13.1 How do I deploy grml-live on a plain Debian installation?

The easiest way to get a running grml-live setup is to just use Grml. Of course using grml-live on a plain, original Debian installation is supported as well. So there we go.

What we have: plain, original Debian wheezy (7.x).

What we want: build a Grml ISO based on Debian/wheezy for the amd64 architecture using grml-live.

13.1.1 Instructions

```
# adjust sources.list:
cat >> /etc/apt/sources.list << EOF

# grml stable repository:
deb      http://deb.grml.org/ grml-stable  main
# deb-src http://deb.grml.org/ grml-stable  main

# grml testing/development repository:
deb      http://deb.grml.org/ grml-testing main
# deb-src http://deb.grml.org/ grml-testing main
EOF

# get keyring for apt:
apt-get update
apt-get --allow-unauthenticated install grml-debian-keyring

# optionally(!) install basefile so we don't have to build basic
# chroot from scratch, grab from http://daily.grml.org/
# mkdir -p /etc/grml/fai/config/basefiles/
# mv I386.tar.gz /etc/grml/fai/config/basefiles/
# mv AMD64.tar.gz /etc/grml/fai/config/basefiles/

# install relevant tools
apt-get --no-install-recommends install grml-live

# adjust grml-live configuration for our needs:
cat > /etc/grml/grml-live.local << EOF
## want a faster build process and don't need smaller ISOs?
## if so use zlib compression
# SQUASHFS_OPTIONS="-comp gzip -b 256k"
## want to use a specific squashfs binary?
# SQUASHFS_BINARY='/usr/bin/mksquashfs'
## install local files into the chroot
# CHROOT_INSTALL="/etc/grml/fai/chroot_install"
## adjust if necessary (defaults to /grml/grml-live):
## OUTPUT="/srv/grml-live"
FAI_DEBOOTSTRAP="wheezy http://http.debian.net/debian/"
# ARCH="amd64"
CLASSES="GRMLBASE, GRML_FULL, AMD64"
EOF
```

```
# just optional(!) - upgrade FAI to latest available version:
cat >> /etc/apt/sources.list.d/fai.list << EOF
deb      http://jenkins.grml.org/debian fai main
deb-src  http://jenkins.grml.org/debian fai main
EOF

# get gpg key of FAI repos and install current FAI version:
wget -O - http://jenkins.grml.org/debian/C525F56752D4A654.asc | sudo apt-key add -
apt-get update
apt-get install fai-client fai-server fai-doc
```

That's it. Now invoking `grml-live -V` should build the ISO. If everything worked as expected the last line of the shell output should look like:

```
[*] Successfully finished execution of grml-live [running 687 seconds]
```

and the ISO can be found inside `/grml-live/grml-live/grml_isos/` then.

13.2 What is `$GRML_FAI_CONFIG`?

The variable `$GRML_FAI_CONFIG` is pointing to the directory `/etc/grml/fai` by default. To provide you a maximum of flexibility you can set up your own configuration directory (e.g. based on `/etc/grml/fai`) and use this directory running `grml-live` with the `-D <config_dir>` option. Now `$GRML_FAI_CONFIG` points to the specified directory instead of using `/etc/grml/fai` and all the configuration files, scripts and hooks will be taken from your `$GRML_FAI_CONFIG` directory.

13.3 I've problems with the build process. How to start debugging?

Check out the logs inside the directory `grml_logs` next to your `grml_chroot`, `grml_isos`,... directories.

If you need help with `grml-live` or would like to see new features as part of `grml-live` you can get commercial support via [Grml Solutions](#).

13.4 How do I install further files into the chroot/ISO?

Just point the configuration variable `CHROOT_INSTALL` to the directory which provides the files you would like to install. Note that the files are installed under `/` in the chroot - so you have to create the rootfs structure on your own. Usage example:

```
echo "CHROOT_INSTALL=\$GRML_FAI_CONFIG/chroot_install" >> /etc/grml/grml-live. ↔
local
mkdir -p /etc/grml/fai/chroot_install/usr/src/
wget example.org/foo.tar.gz
mv foo.tar.gz /etc/grml/fai/chroot_install/usr/src/
grml-live ...
```

13.5 Can I use my own (local) Debian mirror?

Yes. Set up an according `sources.list` configuration as class file in `FAI_DEBOOTSTRAP` (if not already using a `base.tgz`) inside `/etc/grml/grml-live.conf[.local]`. If you're setting up your own class file don't forget to include the class name in the class list (`grml-live -c ...`).

If you want to use a local (for example NFS mount) mirror additionally then adjust `MIRROR_DIRECTORY` in `/etc/grml/grml-live.conf[.local]` as well.

If you want to use a HTTP Proxy (like `apt-cacher-ng`), set `APT_PROXY`. Example:

```
APT_PROXY="http://localhost:3142/"
```

13.6 How do I add additional Debian package(s) to my CD/ISO?

Just create a new class (using the `package_config` directory):

```
# cat > /etc/grml/fai/config/package_config/MIKA << EOF
PACKAGES aptitude
```

```
vim
another_name_of_a_debian_package
and_another_one
EOF
```

and specify it when invoking `grml-live` then:

```
# grml-live -c GRMLBASE,GRML_SMALL,AMD64,MIKA
```

13.7 I fscked up my grml-live configuration. How do I reset it to the defaults?

Notice: this deletes all your `grml-live` configuration files. If that's really what you are searching for just run:

```
rm -rf /etc/grml/fai /etc/grml/grml-live.conf
dpkg -i --force-confnew --force-confmiss /path/to/grml-live_..._all.deb
```

13.8 How do I create a base.tgz?

First of all create the chroot using `debootstrap`:

```
BASECHROOT='/tmp/basefile'
debootstrap wheezy "$BASECHROOT" http://http.debian.net/debian
tar -C "$BASECHROOT" --exclude='var/cache/apt/archives/*.deb' -zcf base.tar.gz ./
```

Tip

By default `debootstrap` builds a chroot matching the architecture of the running host system. If you're using an `amd64` system and want to build an `i386` `base.tgz` then invoke `debootstrap` using the `--arch i386` option. Disclaimer: building an `AMD64` `base.tgz` won't work if you are using a 32bit kernel system of course.

Then move the `base.tar.gz` to `/etc/grml/fai/config/basefiles/$CLASSNAME.tar.gz`. Use e.g. `I386` as `$CLASSNAME` for `i386` chroots and `AMD64` for `amd64` chroots.

Now executing `grml-live` should use this file as base system instead of executing `debootstrap`. Check out the output for something like:

```
[...]
ftar: extracting //etc/grml/fai/config/basefiles//AMD64.tar.gz to /srv/ ↵
  grml64_testing/grml_chroot//
[...]
```

Tip

Existing `base.tgz` can be found at <http://daily.grml.org/>

13.9 Set up apt-cacher-ng for use with grml-live

Make sure `/etc/grml/grml-live.local` provides according `APT_PROXY` and `FAI_DEBOOTSTRAP`:

```
# cat /etc/grml/grml-live.local
[...]
APT_PROXY="http://localhost:3142/"
[...]
FAI_DEBOOTSTRAP="wheezy http://localhost:3142/http.debian.net/debian wheezy main ↔
contrib non-free"
```

Make sure `apt-cacher-ng` is running (`/etc/init.d/apt-cacher-ng restart`). That's it. All downloaded files will be cached in `/var/cache/apt-cacher-ng` then.

13.10 How do I revert the manifold feature from an ISO?

The so called manifold feature Grml ISOs use by default allows one to use the same ISO for CD boot and USB boot. If you notice any problems when booting just revert the manifold feature running:

```
% dd if=/dev/zero of=grml.iso bs=512 count=1 conv=notrunc
```

To switch from manifold to isohybrid mode (an alternative approach provided by `syslinux`) then just execute:

```
% isohybrid grml.iso
```

13.11 How do I create a base tar.gz (I386.tar.gz or AMD64.tar.gz)

Execute the following commands (requires root):

```
ARCH='amd64' # replace with i386 if necessary
SUITE='wheezy' # using the current stable release should always work
debootstrap --arch "$ARCH" --exclude=info,tasksel,tasksel-data "$SUITE" "$ARCH" ↔
http://debian.netcologne.de/debian
cd "$ARCH"
rm var/cache/apt/archives/*.deb
tar zcf ../"${ARCH} ".tar.gz *
```

And finally place the generated tarball in `/etc/grml/fai/config/basefiles/` (note that it needs to be uppercase letters matching the class names, so: `AMD64.tar.gz` for `amd64` and `I386.tar.gz` for `i386`).

14 Download / install grml-live as a Debian package

Debian packages are available through the grml-repository at deb.grml.org. If you want to build a Debian package on your own (using for example a specific version or the current development tree), just execute:

```
git clone git://git.grml.org/grml-live
cd grml-live
debuild -us -uc
```

15 Source

The source of grml-live is available at <https://github.com/grml/grml-live/>

16 Bugs

Please report feedback, [bugreports](#) and wishes [to the Grml team!](#)

17 Documentation

The most recent grml-live documentation is available online at <http://grml.org/grml-live/> and for offline reading also available in different formats:

- <http://grml.org/grml-live/grml-live.epub>
- <http://grml.org/grml-live/grml-live.pdf>

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