

HOW TO COPY ANSWERS TO THE CONFIGURATION QUESTIONS FOR DEBIAN PACKAGES

Human memory is sometimes unreliable, so it is not always possible to answer in the same way to the configuration questions. Fortunately, this process can be automated using **debconf** utilities.

How to print configuration

Use Pipe driver to **print** configuration settings matched by provided pattern to **standard output**.

```
$ sudo debconf-copydb configdb stdout \  
--config=Name:stdout          \  
--config=Driver:Pipe          \  
--config=InFd:none            \  
--pattern='^shared/default-x-display-manager'  
  
Name: shared/default-x-display-manager  
Template: shared/default-x-display-manager  
Value: slim  
Owners: gdm3, slim  
Flags: seen  
Variables:
```

```
choices = gdm3, slim
```

How to store configuration

Use File driver to **store** settings matched by provided pattern and **in specified file**.

```
$ sudo debconf-copydb configdb partialdb \  
--config=Name:partialdb          \  
--config=Driver:File             \  
--config=Filename:export.dat    \  
--pattern='^shared/default-x-display-manager'
```

How to import configuration

Import settings stored in specified file (*export.dat* in this example).

```
$ sudo debconf-copydb importmedb configdb \  
--config=Name:importmedb        \  
--config=Driver:File            \  
--config=Filename:export.dat
```

Copy settings matched by provided pattern **over SSH protocol** to different machine.

```
$ sudo debconf-copydb configdb pipe          \  
--config=Name:pipe                \  
--config=Driver:Pipe              \  
--config=Filename:export.dat
```

```
--config=InFd:none \
--pattern='^shared/default-x-display-manager' |\
ssh remotemachine debconf-copydb pipe configdb \
--config=Name:pipe \
--config=Driver:Pipe
```

Additional notes

Available databases are defined inside `/etc/debconf.conf` configuration file.

I am using above-mentioned techniques inside custom built shell scripts altogether with [apt-offline](#) utility to perform initial system setup and configuration using the method shown below.

```
[...]
debconf-copydb defaultdb configdb \
--config=Name:defaultdb \
--config=Driver:File \
--config=Filename:defaultdb.dat

apt-offline install --allow-unauthenticated system_packages/debian-update.zip
apt-offline install system_packages/debian-upgrade.zip

apt-get -y upgrade
```

```
apt-offline install system_packages/debian-packages.zip
```

```
export DEBIAN_FRONTEND=noninteractive
```

```
apt-get -y install task-desktop openbox openbox-themes obconf slim obmenu
```

```
[...]
```

Read `debconf-copydb`, `debconf` and `debconf.conf` manual pages for more information.

Source: <https://blog.sleeplessbeastie.eu/2015/05/04/how-to-copy-answers-to-the-configuration-questions-for-debian-packages/>