

Re: Request for Comments: libarchive, bsdtar

Source: <http://unix.derkeiler.com/Mailing-Lists/FreeBSD/arch/2004-01/0050.html>

From: Robert Watson (rwatson_at_freebsd.org)

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To: Tim Kientzle <kientzle@acm.org>

On Tue, 13 Jan 2004, Tim Kientzle wrote:

...

All this generally sounds good.

> *LIBARCHIVE BACKGROUND*

>

> *As many of you know, I've been working on a project to overhaul the pkg
> tools. Among many other things, this requires a library that can
> read/write tar archives. This avoids the significant overhead imposed
> from forking a separate tar program.*

If you become a bored person requiring entertainment, it might be quite interesting to create a read-only tarfs for use as a root file system loaded in an md device. While there's a lot more to it than this, one of the more irritating things about our current release build is that it requires privilege so that it can chroot(), but also so it can manage md devices and file system images. Just being able to use a tarball instead of a UFS image would go a long way, although presumably require changes to our loader as well. For work with diskless systems and network booting, I'd much rather stick a tarball on an NFS server than create UFS images.

I know NetBSD has a neat tool to create file systems from userspace without privilege, but my understanding is that it has to pull in a lot of code from the kernel in fairly messy ways. Since tar files are a well supported portable format... :-)

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