

**NAME**

apt-file - APT package searching utility -- command-line interface

**SYNOPSIS**

**apt-file** [ **options** ] [ **action** ] [ **pattern** ]

**apt-file -f** [ **options** ] **search** [ **file ...** ]

**apt-file -D** [ **options** ] **search** [ **binary-package.deb ...** ]

**DESCRIPTION**

**apt-file** is a command line tool for searching files in packages for the APT package management system.

Some actions are required to run the search:

**find** Alias for **search**.

**list** List the contents of a package matching the **pattern** pattern. This action is very close to the **dpkg -L** command except the package does not need to be installed or fetched.

**purge** remove all *Contents-\** files from the cache directory.

**search** Search in which package a file is included. A list of all packages containing the **pattern** pattern is returned.

apt-file will only search for filenames, not directory names. This is due to the format of the *Contents* files it searches.

**show** Alias for **list**.

**update** Resynchronize the package contents from their sources. The lists of the contents of packages are fetched from the location(s) specified in */etc/apt/sources.list*. This command attempts to fetch the *Contents-<ARCH>.gz* files from remote sources. For downloading these uses either the curl or wget commands as specified in *apt-file.conf*.

**OPTIONS****-a, --architecture architecture**

Sets architecture to architecture. This option is useful if you search a package for a different architecture from the one installed on your system. It determines how the \$ARCH variable in sources.list is expanded (but it does not influence the search in any other way).

**-c, --cache cache-directory**

Sets the cache directory to *cache-directory* instead of its default. If executed as non-root user, the default is *\$HOME/.cache/apt-file* with fall-back to */var/cache/apt/apt-file*. The latter is also the default if apt-file is called as root.

**-d, --cdrom-mount cdrom-mount-point**

Use cdrom-mount-point instead of **apt**'s.

**-D, --from-deb**

Use contents of the given .deb archives(s) as patterns. Useful for searching for file conflicts with other packages. Implies **-F**.

**-f, --from-file**

Read patterns from the given file(s), one per line. Use - as filename for stdin. If no files are given, then the list will be read from stdin. This is much faster than invoking apt-file many times.

**-F, --fixed-string**

Do not expand search pattern with generic characters at pattern's start and end.

**-i, --ignore-case**

Ignore case when searching for pattern.

**-l, --package-only**

Only display package name; do not display file names.

**-N, --non-interactive**

Skip schemes that are listed in the interactive line in *apt-file.conf*. This is useful if you want to call 'apt-file update' in cron jobs and skip all schemes that may require user input.

**-s, --sources-list sources.list**

Sets the *sources.list* file to a different value from its default */etc/apt/sources.list*.

**-v, --verbose**

Run **apt-file** in verbose mode.

**-x, --regexp**

Treat pattern as a (perl) regular expression. See [perlref\(1\)](#) for details. Without this option, pattern is treated as a literal string to search for.

**-y, --dummy**

Run in dummy mode (no action).

**-h, --help**

Display a short help screen.

**CONFIGURATION FILE**

The **apt-file** configuration file can be found in */etc/apt/apt-file.conf*.

A string expansion is done on several values. See the string expansion section.

**destination**

This variable describes how cached files will be named.

**http | ftp | ssh | rsh | file | cdrom**

Defines the commands used to fetch files.

**STRING EXPANSION**

A *sources.list* entry is defined as:

```
deb uri dist component1 component2 ...
```

A uri is defined as:

```
proto://[user[:password]@]host[:port][/path]
```

**<host>** replace with the hostname

**<port>** replace with the port number

**<uri>** replace with full uri

**<path>** replace with full path (relative to / on the host)

**<dist>** replace with distribution name

**<comp>**  
replace with component name

**<cache>**  
replace with cache directory

**<dest>** replace with destination expanded value.

**<cdrom>**  
replace with cdrom-mount-point.

**BUGS**

The cdrom backend has not been tested.

Non-release lines in *sources.list* are not handled by **apt-file**.

There is only one Contents file per distribution that contains all components (i.e. main, contrib, and non-free). Therefore, **apt-file** will display search results from all components, even if not all components are

included in the `sources.list` file.

When a new line has been added to the `sources.list` and `apt-file` update has not been run, `apt-file` does not print a warning message.

Complex regular expressions that match the leading slash may not work correctly. As a workaround, try to pull the leading slash to the beginning of the regular expression. For example, use `"/(usr/bin/vim|sbin/lvm)"` instead of `"/usr/bin/vim|sbin/lvm"`.

## FILES

*/etc/apt/sources.list*

Locations to fetch package contents from.

*/etc/apt/sources.list.d/*

Directory with additional `sources.list` snippets

*/etc/apt/apt-file.conf*

Configuration file for **apt-file**.

## SEE ALSO

**auto-apt(1)**, **apt-cache(8)**, **apt-cdrom(8)**, **dpkg(8)**, **dselect(8)**, *sources.list(5)*, *apt.conf(5)*, **apt\_preferences(5)**.

The APT users guide in */usr/share/doc/apt/*

## AUTHOR

**apt-file** was written by Sebastien J. Gross <sjg@debian.org>.