

**NAME**

deb-substvars - Debian source substitution variables

**SYNOPSIS**

substvars

**DESCRIPTION**

Before **dpkg-source**, **dpkg-gencontrol** and **dpkg-genchanges** write their control information (to the source control file **.dsc** for **dpkg-source** and to standard output for **dpkg-gencontrol** and **dpkg-genchanges**) they perform some variable substitutions on the output file.

A variable substitution has the form `${variable-name}`. Variable names consist of alphanumeric, hyphens and colons and start with an alphanumeric. Variable substitutions are performed repeatedly until none are left; the full text of the field after the substitution is rescanned to look for more substitutions.

After all the substitutions have been done each occurrence of the string `${}` (which is not a legal substitution) is replaced with a **\$** sign.

While variable substitution is done on all control fields, some of those fields are used and needed during the build when the substitution did not yet occur. That's why you can't use variables in the **Package**, **Source** and **Architecture** fields.

Variable substitution happens on the content of the fields after they have been parsed, thus if you want a variable to expand over multiple lines you do not have to include a space after the newline. This is done implicitly when the field is output. For example, if the variable `${Description}` is set to `foo is bar.${Newline}foo is great.` and if you have the following field:

```
Description: foo application ${Description} More text.
```

It will result in:

```
Description: foo application foo is bar.  foo is great.  More text.
```

Variables can be set using the **-V** common option. They can be also specified in the file **debian/substvars** (or whatever other file is specified using the **-T** option). This file consists of lines of the form `name=value`. Trailing whitespace on each line, blank lines, and lines starting with a **#** symbol (comments) are ignored.

Additionally, the following standard variables are available:

**Arch** The current build architecture (from **dpkg --print-architecture**).

**source:Version**

The source package version.

**source:Upstream-Version**

The upstream source package version, including the Debian version epoch if any.

**binary:Version**

The binary package version (which may differ from `source:Version` in a binNMU for example).

**Source-Version**

The source package version (from the changelog file). This variable is now **deprecated** as its meaning is different from its function, please use the **source:Version** or **binary:Version** as appropriate.

**Installed-Size**

The total size of the package's installed files. This value is copied into the corresponding control file field; setting it will modify the value of that field. If this variable isn't set **dpkg-gencontrol** will use **du -k debian/tmp** to find the default value.

**Extra-Size**

Additional disk space used when the package is installed. If this variable is set its value is added to that of the **Installed-Size** variable (whether set explicitly or using the default value) before it is copied into the **Installed-Size** control file field.

**F:***fieldname*

The value of the output field *fieldname* (which must be given in the canonical capitalisation). Setting these variables has no effect other than on places where they are expanded explicitly.

**Format**

The **.changes** file format version generated by this version of the source packaging scripts. If you set this variable the contents of the **Format** field in the **.changes** file will change too.

**Newline, Space, Tab**

These variables each hold the corresponding character.

**shlibs:***dependencyfield*

Variable settings with names of this form are generated by **dpkg-shlibdeps**.

**dpkg:Upstream-Version**

The upstream version of dpkg.

**dpkg:Version**

The full version of dpkg.

If a variable is referred to but not defined it generates a warning and an empty value is assumed.

**FILES****debian/substvars**

List of substitution variables and values.

**SEE ALSO**

[dpkg\(1\)](#), [dpkg-genchanges\(1\)](#), [dpkg-gencontrol\(1\)](#), [dpkg-shlibdeps\(1\)](#), [dpkg-source\(1\)](#).