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Read the contents of a zipped file without extraction?

Asked 10 years, 5 months ago Modified 2 years, 5 months ago Viewed 347k times



How can I read the contents of a particular file in an archive without extracting the .zip it is contained within? I'm using the Linux command line.

225



An earlier [question](#) asks about viewing the directory of the archive. But for me it is not enough to see just a list of the files in the archive, I need to see the contents of a file in the archive.



linux zip

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edited May 1, 2017 at 10:07



kasperd

2,841 1 17 29

asked Aug 17, 2012 at 10:41



Shrikanth

2,251 2 13 3

2 Duplicity with superuser.com/questions/216617/zip-linux-view-files-in-archive – pevik Jul 3, 2014 at 12:37

@fixer1234 (and others): [The linked question](#) asks, "How can I view the files in a ZIP archive?" AFAIC, that's the same question as "How can I see the contents of a file ...?" It's unfortunate that many of the people who answered that question *interpreted it* as "How can I view the directory of the archive?" However, [Gilles's answer](#) (naturally) and [Rajasekhar Tolety's answer](#) (apparently) to that question provide answers to this question. – Scott - Слава Україні Apr 21, 2017 at 19:42

1 @Scott, maybe we should figure out how to merge the two questions so both topics are covered in one, or refocus the other to clearly be about the directory and then move answers between both places to match the questions. Right now, both are a mishmash. – fixer1234 Apr 21, 2017 at 20:12

@fixer1234: I agree, up to a point. The moderators are always telling us that duplicates are a good thing, because they provide a greater surface of exposure to the search engines (i.e., more chances that a search will find one of the questions). But there's the rub: if a user finds *one* of the questions, and the linkage isn't obvious (and nobody looks at the list only a – Scott

@Scott, I have either



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8 Answers



`unzip -l archive.zip` lists the contents of a ZIP archive to ensure your file is inside.

293

Use the `-p` option to write the contents of named files to stdout (screen) without having to uncompress the entire archive.

`unzip -p archi`

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For this kind of operation I always pipe the output to `less`, otherwise the whole file goes flying up the screen before you can read it.

BTW `zcat` is great for viewing the contents of `.gz` files without having to uncompress them first.

Edit: Changed this answer to use `-p` instead of `-c`. `-p` extracts the file byte-for-byte, while `-c` prints the filename and may do EOL conversion. Also, `unzip -p` lets you extract multiple files, but it does not output in the order given like `cat` does.

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edited Aug 2, 2020 at 17:13



Joey Adams

2,238 3 21 24

answered Aug 17, 2012 at 11:10



danielcraigie

3,271 1 14 10

10 At least in Ubuntu, `less` is somehow configured to do this by default - so `less archive.zip` actually shows the list of files. – [aviv](#) Mar 24, 2013 at 20:30

1 `bzcat` for viewing the contents of `bz2` files without having to uncompress them first... – [Justin E](#) Nov 12, 2014 at 19:37

5 `unzip -c` also shows the file name and some extra messages (sending them to stdout). Using `-p` instead only sends the file in binary format. That's more useful for piping – [Juan Calero](#) Mar 24, 2015 at 10:02

With your `$LESSOPEN` set to `lesspipe`, you can just `less foo.gz` to view the decompressed contents. (@aviv: this is the same thing that enables `less foo.zip` to pipe `unzip -l foo.zip` into itself). – [Peter Cordes](#) Jan 4, 2017 at 11:57

3 `unzip -p ...` will cat the contents of the files in the archive *without* inserting the file names into the output stream – [jvd10](#) May 24, 2019 at 21:19

`zipinfo` is another tool you might use, this is useful if you're on a locked-down system where `unzip` is not allowed.

9

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edited Aug 1, 2014 at 14:38



Jens Erat

17.2k 14 61 74

answered Aug 1, 2014 at 14:13



Nickolai

191 1 2

You can use [vim](#) to list content of the [zip](#) / [rar](#) / [tar](#) archive:

6

`vim archive.zip`

BTW: [here](#) is the same question.

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edited Feb 13, 2019 at 15:44

answered Feb 13, 2019 at 15:38



patryk.beza

1,441

4

20

30



4



If you're just looking

inside .zip , .rar , .cbr , and .cbz files without extracting.

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[Comix](#) to see images

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edited Nov 29, 2014 at 0:32

answered Mar 24, 2013 at 20:22



Kokizzu

1,645

3

15

26



2



Start Emacs in command-line and open your zip files with zip-Archive mode. Without any Emacs/elisp tuning (new users generally fear about), you will see file details like from zipinfo : modes, length, date, time

Then, you will be able to open files in buffers and even save your changes back to archive, with standard shortcuts:

- Enter on a file name in list to open it
- Edit and save with `ctrl-x ctrl-s`
- Kill buffer `ctrl-k` to go back to archive buffer and go on

When in Zip-Archive buffer, use `ctrl-h m` to get all shortcuts available in Help View.

Hope this may lead you to discover Emacs awesome features

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answered Sep 10, 2014 at 10:20



Yves Martin

542

6

13



1



A better way is just using `zmore` or `zless` , for example

`zmore syslog.2.gz`

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edited Feb 6, 2020 at 21:20



zx485

2,172

11

16

23



user1137450

11

1



0



I've found `less archive.zip` to be the easiest way to do this.

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answered Apr 25, 2019 at 9:21



RobertMyles

101

2



2 less archive.zip doesn't show the contents of a zipped file, it only shows the contents of a zipped archive. – karel Apr 25, 2019 at 11:22

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I think that what you're really trying to do would be the same as danielcraigie's answer. – karel Apr 25, 2019 at 11:22



-1



If the file is included in zip archive, that you need to extract only that file from archive (may depend on archive type, some archives can't extract files separately)

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answered Aug 17, 2012 at 10:46



blogger

590 2 6

1 Yes, but you can extract to stdout and pipe right into a pager. – Peter Cordes Jan 4, 2017 at 12:08

1 This is not a technical answer, it is more likely from a politician or a solicitor. Please be more specific! (show the command for example) – Hola Soy Edu Feliz Navidad Aug 21, 2018 at 15:56