

vlink portable multi-format linker

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1 General

1.1 Introduction

`vlink` is a portable linker which can be configured to support multiple input and output file formats at once. It even allows to link input files with a different format in a single run and generate the output file format of your choice from it.

The linker supports linking with objects, object archives (static libraries) and shared objects or libraries. It can generate an executable file with or without additional information for dynamic linking, a shared object, or a new object suitable for another linker pass.

Empty sections and other unused data are deleted to achieve a size-optimized output.

1.2 Legal

`vlink` is copyright 1995-2020 by Frank Wille.

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An exception for commercial usage is granted, provided that the target OS is AmigaOS/68k. Resulting binaries may be distributed commercially without further licensing.

In all other cases you need my written consent.

1.3 Installation

`vlink` comes as a stand-alone program, so no further installation is necessary. To use `vlink` with `vbcc`, copy the binary to `vbcc/bin`, following the installation instructions for `vbcc`.

2 The Linker

2.1 Usage

`vlink` links the object and archive files given on the command line into a new object file. The output object file is either an executable program, a shared object suitable for loading at run-time, or an object file that can once again be processed by `vlink`.

Object files and archives are processed in the order given on the command line. Unlike other linkers you usually have to specify each library to link against only once, as `vlink` is smart enough to figure out all dependencies.

The file format of an input object file is determined automatically by the linker. The default output file format is compiled in (see `-v`) and may be changed by `-b`. Optionally, the default library search path can also be compiled in and is visible with `-v` as well.

The number of output file formats included is configurable at compile time.

2.2 Supported File Formats

The following file formats are supported:

`a.out` Currently supported:

- `aoutnull` (Default with standard relocations and undefined endianness)
- `aoutbsd68k` (NetBSD/68k)
- `aoutbsd68k4k` (NetBSD/68k 4K page size)
- `aoutsun010` (SunOS 68010 and AmigaOS/Atari 68000/010)
- `aoutsun020` (SunOS 68020 and AmigaOS/Atari 68020-68060)
- `aoutbsdi386` (NetBSD/i386)
- `aoutpc386`
- `aoutmint` (Embeds a.out in TOS format for Atari MiNT executables)
- `aoutjaguar` (M68k with special, word-swapped RISC relocations)

Small data offset: `0x8000` (unused). Linker symbols: `__GLOBAL_OFFSET_TABLE_`, `__PROCEDURE_LINKAGE_TABLE_`, `__DYNAMIC`.

`amigahunk`

The AmigaDos hunk format for M68k. Requires AmigaOS 2.04 with `-Rshort`. No shared objects. Small data offset `0x7ffe`. Linker symbols:

- `_DATA_BAS_` (PhxAss)
- `_DATA_LEN_` (PhxAss)
- `_BSS_LEN_` (PhxAss)
- `_LinkerDB`
- `__BSSBAS` (SASC/StormC)
- `__BSSLLEN` (SASC/StormC)
- `__ctors` (SASC/StormC)
- `__dtors` (SASC/StormC)

- _RESLEN (SASC)
- _RESBASE (SASC)
- _NEWDATA (SASC)
- __DATA_BAS (DICE-C)
- __DATA_LEN (DICE-C)
- __BSS_LEN (DICE-C)
- __RESIDENT (DICE-C)
- ___machtype (GNU-gcc)
- ___text_size (GNU-gcc)
- ___data_size (GNU-gcc)
- ___bss_size (GNU-gcc)

Automatic constructor/destructor function tables: `___ctors` and `___dtors` (will be mapped automatically to `__CTOR_LIST__` and `__DTOR_LIST__`).

Referencing `_RESLEN` switches the hunk-format output module into Resident mode, which will append a special relocation table to the initialized part of the data-bss section and warns about absolute references from other sections. This mode can be used to create reentrant, "pure" programs, for use with the AmigaOS `resident` command.

Supports `-Rstd` and `-Rshort`. `-hunkattr` can be used to overwrite the memory flags of an input section. This format was called "amigaos" in former `vlink` versions.

amigaehf	An extension of the AmigaDOS hunk format for the PowerPC, 32-bit, big endian, as introduced by Haage&Partner GmbH for WarpOS. No executables (they are in <code>amigahunk</code> format) or shared objects. The same linker symbols, constructors/destructors as under <code>amigahunk</code> are supported. Additionally, <code>@_name</code> symbols will be created on demand (when referenced). Supports <code>-Rstd</code> , <code>-Rshort</code> and <code>-hunkattr</code> .
amsdos	Absolute raw binary output, similar to <code>rawbin2</code> , but with a header for Amstrad/Schneider CPC computers.
applebin	Absolute raw binary output, similar to <code>rawbin1</code> , but with a header for Apple DOS 3.3 binary files, suitable for Apple II computers.
ataricom	Absolute raw binary output, similar to <code>rawbin1</code> , but with a file header and section headers for Atari 8-bit computers (Atari 400, 600, 800, etc.).
ataritos	Atari-ST TOS file format. Executables only at the moment. Symbol table in extended DRI format. Symbols may be section- or start-based (option <code>-tos-textbased</code>). The internal linker script defines <code>_LinkerDB</code> for small data and supports <code>vbcc</code> -style constructor/destructor tables in the data section (<code>__CTOR_LIST__</code> and <code>__DTOR_LIST__</code>).
bbc	Absolute raw binary output, but additionally writes an <code>.inf</code> -file for BBC Micro/Master emulators.

cbmprg	Absolute raw binary output, similar to rawbin1, but with a header for Commodore 8-bit computers (PET, VIC-20, 64, etc.).
cbmreu	Writes multiple images files for the REU memory expansion. Only the first one has a Commodore PRG header.
cocoml	Absolute raw binary output, similar to rawbin1, but with segment headers and a trailer for Tandy Color Computer machine language files.
dragonbin	Absolute raw binary output, similar to rawbin1, but with a header for Dragon DOS binary files, suitable for Dragon 32 and 64 computers.
elf32amigaos	Identical to elf32ppcbe, but when doing dynamic linking it requires that also all references from shared objects are resolved at link time. This is due to a limitation of the AmigaOS4 dynamic link editor (elf.library).
elf32arm	ELF (executable linkable format) for the ARM architecture. 32-bit, little endian. Small data offset: 0x1000. Linker Symbols: <code>_SDA_BASE_</code> . Automatic constructor/destructor function tables will be placed into the sections <code>.ctors</code> and <code>.dtors</code> . Supports <code>-Rstd</code> and <code>-Radd</code> .
elf32aros	ELF i386 32-bit little endian like elf32i386, but generates relocatable object files as executables. This format is used for the AROS (Amiga Research OS) operating system. Supports <code>-Rstd</code> and <code>-Radd</code> .
elf32i386	ELF (executable linkable format) for Intel 386 and better, 32-bit, little endian. No small data. Automatic constructor/destructor function tables will be placed into the sections <code>.ctors</code> and <code>.dtors</code> . Supports <code>-Rstd</code> and <code>-Radd</code> .
elf32jag	ELF (executable linkable format) for Atari Jaguar RISC, 32-bit, big endian. Small data offset: 0. Linker symbols: <code>_SDA_BASE_</code> . Automatic constructor/destructor function tables will be placed into the sections <code>.ctors</code> and <code>.dtors</code> . Supports <code>-Rstd</code> and <code>-Radd</code> .
elf32m68k	ELF (executable linkable format) for Motorola M68k, 32-bit, big endian. Small data offset: 0x8000. Linker symbols: <code>_SDA_BASE_</code> . Automatic constructor/destructor function tables will be placed into the sections <code>.ctors</code> and <code>.dtors</code> . Supports <code>-Rstd</code> and <code>-Radd</code> .
elf32morphos	Nearly identical to elf32powerup. Only difference is that <code>.sdata</code> and <code>.sbss</code> sections will not be merged as the MorphOS loader will take care of it. This format is used for MorphOS.
elf32powerup	ELF PowerPC 32-bit big endian like elf32ppcbe, but generates relocatable object files as executables. This format is used for the PowerUp kernel. The linker symbol <code>_LinkerDB</code> is defined for vbccppc-compatibility. Small data offset: 0x8000. This format was also called <code>elf32amiga</code> in former <code>vlink</code> versions.

elf32ppcbe

ELF (executable linkable format) for PowerPC, 32-bit, big endian. Small data offset: 0x8000. Linker symbols: `_SDA_BASE_` and `_SDA2_BASE` (EABI only). Automatic constructor/destructor function tables will be placed into the sections `.ctors` and `.dtors`.

elf64x86 ELF (executable linkable format) for the x86_64 architecture. 64-bit, little endian. No small data. Automatic constructor/destructor function tables will be placed into the sections `.ctors` and `.dtors`. Supports `-Rstd` and `-Radd`.

ihex Intel Hex format. No symbols. Output format only. Without a linker script, the raw binary will be relocated to base address 0.

jagsrv Absolute raw binary output, similar to `rawbin1`, but with a header to make it load and execute via the Atari Jaguar SkunkBoard or the VirtualJaguar emulator.

os9-6809 OS-9 program modules for the 6809 processor, as defined by Microware Systems Corporation and the NitrOS-9 project. Code is always position-independant and reentrant. Relocation tables for data-text and data-data references are appended at the initialized data section in the module. These tables have to be processed by the program's startup code. `vbcc`-style constructor/destructor tables will be created and placed into the data section. By default, the module name will be the same as the output file name. No support for symbol tables.

rawbin1 Absolute raw binary file. The sections and base addresses have to be specified by a linker script (option `-T`). Gaps between sections are filled with 0-bytes. Without a linker script, the raw binary will be relocated to base address 0. When option `-q` (keep relocs) has been specified, the linker will not execute absolute address relocations, but append a relocation offset table at the end of the file. The width of a word in this table matches the target's address size and uses the target's endianess. The first word defines the size of the following table. You may reference it by using the `__end` symbol, which marks the end of the `bss` section. It follows a byte-stream for the relocation offsets. A byte between 1 and 255 represents the distance in bytes to the next relocation offset (starts at zero). A 0-byte indicates that the following word contains a distance greater than 255. Your startup code has to add the program's start address to the address values in all these locations. Warning: remaining relocations, like PC-relative, or other absolute relocations not matching the address size, will still be resolved by the linker! Which may be desired, or not.

rawbin2 Similar to `rawbin1`. The only difference is that a new output file will be created, for each section which caused a gap larger than 15 bytes to the previous section. The new file name will get the section's name appended after a dot.

rawseg Creates a raw binary file for each segment. Segments can be defined in a PHDR block of the linker script. It defaults to text and data segments. The segment names, their base address and length are written into the output file while the binary files get their segment name appended to the original file name. When option `-q` (keep relocs) has been specified, then additional files containing the relocation offsets are created. The first word in each file defines the number of

relocations. The width of all words in this table matches the target's address size. Note, that only simple address relocations with the full address size are supported (no halfwords, etc.), which makes it nearly useless for certain targets, like the 6502 or RISC CPUs.

srec19	
srec28	
srec37	Motorola S-Record format. No symbols. Output format only. Without a linker script, the raw binary will be relocated to base address 0.
vobj-le	
vobj-be	VOBJ file format, generated by the <code>vasm</code> assembler. VOBJ is a read-only object file format and is designed to support any little- or big-endian architecture with all their specific relocations.
xfile	Human68k XFile format, as used on Sharp X68000 computers. Executables only at the moment. Symbol table supports absolute symbols and relocatable symbols from the text, data and bss segment. The format has no differentiation between local and global scope. The internal linker script defines <code>_LinkerDB</code> for small data and supports <code>vbcc</code> -style constructor/destructor tables in the data section (<code>__CTOR_LIST__</code> and <code>__DTOR_LIST__</code>).

2.3 Linker Options

`vlink` command template:

```
vlink [-dhmnqrstvwxMRSX] [-B linkmode] [-b targetname]
[-baseoff offset] [-C constructor-type] [-Crel] [-D symbol=value]
[-da] [-dc] [-dp] [-EB] [-EL] [-e entrypoint] [-export-dynamic]
[-f flavour] [-fixunnamed] [-F filename] [-gc-all] [-gc-empty]
[-hunkattr secname=value] [-interp path] [-L library-search-path]
[-l library-specifier] [-minalign val] [-mrel] [-mtype] [-mall]
[-multibase] [-nostdlib] [-N old new] [-o filename]
[-rpath path] [-sc] [-sd] [-shared] [-soname name] [-static]
[-T filename] [-Ttext addr] [-textbaserel]
[-tos-flags/fastload/fastram/private/global/super/readable]
[-tos-textbased] [-u symbol] [-vicelabels filename]
[-V version] [-y symbol] [-P symbol]
input-files...
```

Usually options and input file names can be mixed. Order of options may be important (e.g. when specifying a library with `-l` or a search path with `-L`).

The following options are supported:

-Bdynamic

Specifies that linking against dynamic libraries can take place. If a library specifier of the form `-lx` appears on the command line, ld searches for a library of the form `libx.so.n.m` (see the `-l` option) according to the search rules in effect. If such a file can not be found a traditional archive is looked for. This option can appear anywhere on the command line and is complementary to `-Bstatic`.

-Bstatic The counterpart of **-Bdynamic**. This option turns off dynamic linking for all library specifiers until a **-Bdynamic** is once again given. Any explicitly mentioned shared object encountered on the command line while this option is in effect is flagged as an error.

-Bshareable

Instructs the linker to build a shared object from the object files rather than a normal executable image.

-Bsymbolic

This option causes all symbolic references in the output to be resolved in this link-edit session. The only remaining run- time relocation requirements are base-relative relocations, ie. translation with respect to the load address. Failure to resolve any symbolic reference causes an error to be reported.

-Bforcearchive

Force all members of archives to be loaded, whether or not such members contribute a definition to any plain object files. Useful for making a shared library from an archive of PIC objects without having to unpack the archive.

-b targetname

Specifies target file format for the output file. See also "Supported file formats".

-baseoff offset

Defines section offset for base-relative relocations. The default offset is target-dependant (e.g. 0x7ffe for amigaos and 0x8000 for elf32m68k).

-C constructor-type

Defines the type of constructor/destructor function names to scan for. Valid types are:

gnu GNU style constructors

vbcc vbcc style constructors: `__INIT[_<pri>]_<name>` / `__EXIT..`

vbccelf vbcc style constructors: `_INIT[_<pri>]_<name>` / `_EXIT..`

sasc SAS/C style constructors: `__STI[_<pri>]_<name>` / `__STD..`

-Crel

Function references in the constructor/destructor tables (see above) are written as relative offsets to their current table position instead of absolute pointers. Useful for PC-relative code.

-clr-adduscore

No longer add a preceding underscore for the symbols of the following objects on the command line.

-clr-deluscore

No longer delete a preceding underscore for the symbols of the following objects on the command line.

-D linkersymbol [=value]

Define the linker symbol `linkersymbol`, so it may be referenced by linker script expressions and from object code. The optional `value` is assigned to it, which defaults to 1.

- d**
- dc**
- dp** Force allocation of common symbols, even when producing relocatable output (-r option).
- da** Force allocation of address symbols (PowerOpen), even when producing relocatable output (-r option).
- e entrypoint**
 - Defines the entry point of an executable and may be either a symbol or an absolute address. The linker will set the entry point by trying each of the following methods in order, stopping when the first succeeds:
 1. -e option
 2. ENTRY() command in a linker script
 3. value of the symbol `_start`, if defined
 4. start of the first executable code section
 5. address 0
- EB** Presets big-endian mode for reading input and writing output.
- EL** Presets little-endian mode for reading input and writing output.
- export-dynamic**
 - Put all global symbols of the output file into the dynamic symbol table, making them visible for shared objects loaded on demand (e.g. by `dlopen()`).
- f flavour**
 - Adds a library-flavour. All flavours are cumulatively appended to each library search-path, whenever a library was specified with -l. Example: One search path and two flavours will search in:
 1. <lib-path>,
 2. <lib-path>/<flavour1> and
 3. <lib-path>/<flavour1>/<flavour2>
- F filename**
 - A list of object file names is read from the specified file. Useful, if the number of objects exceeds the length of the command line.
- fixunnamed**
 - All unnamed sections will get a default name according to their section type (.text, .data and .bss).
- gc-all** Section garbage collection. Starting from the executable's entry point, determine all referenced sections and delete the unreferenced ones.
- gc-empty**
 - Delete all empty sections from an executable, which are not referenced from anywhere in the linked input files. Note: Before V1.5d vlink tried to do that always, but it didn't work in any case.
- h** Prints a short help text.

-hunkattr secname=value

Overwrite the memory attributes of all input sections named `secname` with `value`. For example allocate the `DATA` section in Chip-RAM: `-hunkattr DATA=2`. Extended memory attributes are supported. Only valid for AmigaDOS hunk format and WarpOS EHF.

-interp interpreter-path

Defines the name of the interpreter, which is usually the dynamic linker for dynamically linked ELF executables. Defaults to `/usr/lib/ld.so.1`.

-k

Keeps the original section order as found in the object files from the command line. Otherwise vlink links all code sections first, then all data and finally all bss, even when the first object starts with data. Has no meaning when using a linker script!

-L library-search-path

Add path to the list of directories to search for libraries specified with the `-l` option. When a default search path was compiled in (see `-v`), then it is searched last.

-l library-specifier

This option specifies a library to be considered for inclusion in the output. If the `-Bdynamic` option is in effect, a shared library of the form `lib<spec>.so.m.n` (where `m` is the major, and `n` is the minor version number, respectively) is searched for first. The library with the highest version found in the search path is selected. If no shared library is found or the `-Bstatic` option is in effect, an archive of the form `lib<spec>.a` is looked for in the library search path. For `amigaos/amigaehf` file formats, the libraries are called `<spec>.lib`.

-M[file name]

Produce output about the mapping of sections of the input files and the values assigned to symbols in the output file. When the optional `file name` is missing output goes to stdout.

-m

Enable special treatment of feature-mask suffixes in symbol names. A decimal number after the last '.' in a symbol name is stored as a feature-mask for symbol definitions. The masks in references to the symbol's name (sans suffix) are combined to a common requirement mask, which is used to find the best symbol to fulfill this requirement (i.e. the smallest mask which has still all bits of the requirement-mask set).

-malign alignment

Set a minimum alignment (number of bits which have to be zero) for all imported sections. The specified `alignment` value will only take effect when higher than the section's current alignment. It defaults to 0.

-mrel

Automatically merge sections, when there are PC-relative references between them.

-mtype

Merge all sections of the same type (code, data, bss), even when their names or attributes differ.

-mall

Merge all sections into a single output section.

-multibase

The default behaviour of `vlink` is to merge all sections which are accessed base-relative. This guarantees a single small data section, which can be accessed through a base register. If this is not desired - maybe you have several base registers and small data sections - you can disable this behaviour by specifying **-multibase**.

-N oldname newname

Rename all input sections named `oldname` into `newname`. This setting is valid for all the following input files and libraries on the command line and can be disabled with **-N oldname oldname**. Multiple **-N** options are allowed.

-n

No page alignment of sections or segments in the final executable (NMAGIC).

-nostdlib

Ignore default library search path, if one was compiled in.

-o filename

Specifies the name of the output file. Defaults to `a.out`.

-osec

Output each section as an individual file. The file name given with **-o** will be ignored. Only available for some target formats: rawbin1, rawbin2, amsdos, cbmprg.

-osec=basename

Works like **-osec**, but each output file name will be preceded by "basename".

-os9-mem=val [K]

Defines the size of the stack and the parameter area, which the linker will add to the permanent storage size in the module header. The value given in `val` is in bytes. You may specify the value in K-bytes by appending a 'k' character. The size of the stack and parameter area defaults to 1024 bytes for OS9/6809.

-os9-name=modname

Set the name of the OS-9 module to `modname`. Otherwise it defaults to the name of the output file or may be specified in the code, labeled by the symbol `__modname`.

-os9-ns

Declare the OS-9 module as non-shareable and non-reentrant. It resets the shareable-flag in the module header, which is set otherwise.

-os9-rev=val

Set the revision in the OS-9 module header to `val`. Must be a value between 0 and 15. Defaults to zero.

-P symbol

Protect a symbol from stripping. This doesn't work for all targets!

-q

Emit relocations, even for absolute executables.

-R format

Sets the relocation table format. Usually there is no need to change the default format defined by the target (**-b** option). Valid format strings are:

`std` standard format with addends in the code

`add` addends are stored in the relocation table

short relocation table with short offsets (e.g. 16 bit)

Note that most targets only support one or two of those formats.

-r Produce relocatable object file, suitable for another linker pass.

-rpath library-search-path

Add a directory to the runtime library search path. This is used when linking an ELF executable with shared objects. All **-rpath** arguments are concatenated and passed to the runtime linker, which uses them to locate shared objects at runtime.

-S Strip all debugger symbols from the output.

-s Strip all symbols from the output.

-sc Merge all code sections to a single code section (small code).

-sd Merge all data and bss sections to a single data-bss section (small data).

-set-adduscore

Start adding a preceding underscore for the symbols of the following objects on the command line.

-set-deluscore

Start deleting a preceding underscore for the symbols of the following objects on the command line.

-shared Instructs the linker to build a shared object from the object files rather than a normal executable image.

-soname name

Sets the "real name" of a shared object or library. For ELF this will create the **SONAME** tag in the **.dynamic** section.

-T script Specifies a linker script, which defines the mapping of input sections and their absolute locations in memory. The command language used is meant to be nearly identical to that used in GNU linker scripts, although not everything is implemented and there are a few additional commands. See Chapter 3 [Linker Scripts], page 15.

-Ttext addr

Set the base address of the first section. It can be overridden by a linker script.

-t Trace the linker's file accesses.

-textbaserel

Allow base-relative access on code sections. Otherwise the linker will display a warning.

-tos-flags value

Set the 32 bit flags field of the Atari TOS header to **value**. All **-tos** options are only valid for the targets **ataritos** and **aoutmint**.

-tos-fastload

Sets the fastload bit (0) in the TOS header.

- tos-fastram**
Sets the fastload bit (1) in the TOS header.
- tos-fastalloc**
Sets the fastload bit (2) in the TOS header.
- tos-private**
Sets the flags in the TOS header to mark memory space as private.
- tos-global**
Sets the flags in the TOS header to mark memory space as global (read/write by any process).
- tos-super**
Sets the flags in the TOS header to mark memory space as read-writeable by processes in supervisor mode only.
- tos-readable**
Sets the flags in the TOS header to mark memory space as read-only for other processes.
- tos-textbased**
Writes text-based (offset to program start) DRI symbols to a TOS executable, like Devpac. Otherwise symbol offsets are based on the section they are defined in.
- u symbol** Marks symbol as undefined in the first section which was found on the command line. This might trigger linking of additional modules from standard libraries. This is equivalent to the linker script command EXTERN.
- V version**
Minimum major version of shared object to be linked behind this option.
- v** Prints vlink version string, default library search path and implemented target file formats.
- vicelabels filename**
Generates a label address mapping file for the VICE debugger.
- w** Suppress all warning messages.
- X** Discard local symbols in the input files that start with the letters 'L' or 'l', or with a dot.
- x** Discard all local symbols in the input files.
- y symbol** Trace the manipulations inflicted on symbol.
- Z** Do not delete trailing zero-bytes at the end of a section in executable output files. Usually the uninitialized part of a section is determined by the difference between the section's real size and file size (for those file formats which support it).

3 Linker Scripts

3.1 Memory Layout

By default sections may be allocated in all available memory. You can define specific memory regions by using the `MEMORY` command. The syntax is:

```
MEMORY {
    memblockname (attr) : ORIGIN = org, LENGTH = len
    ...
}
```

Defines one of more memory regions with start address `org` and a length of `len` bytes. The attributes in `(attr)` are optional and will be ignored by vlink, when specified (just for compatibility, at the moment). The keywords `ORIGIN` and `LENGTH` may be abbreviated down to a single character (`o=` and `l=`). Once a memory region is defined as `memblockname` the output of sections can be redirected into it by appending `>memblockname` at the end of a section definition.

3.2 Output Sections

```
SECTIONS {
    ...
}
```

This is the only mandatory block in each linker script and is used to define the mapping of input sections to output sections, as well as their location in memory.

Within this block there may be symbol assignments, also for the location counter `(.)`, commands and output section definitions.

A symbol assignment looks like

```
symbol = expression;
```

where `expression` may contain the usual arithmetic operations, other symbols and functions (See Section 3.5 [Functions], page 19). The special symbol `.` (dot) is the location counter and defines the current address (VMA) in memory where the following sections and data are placed.

An optional symbol assignment looks like

```
symbol =? expression;
```

where the only difference to a normal symbol assignment is, that `symbol` will only be defined with the expression when it was not already defined before (in a line above, or on the command line with option `-D`).

All valid linker-script commands are described here: See Section 3.4 [Commands], page 17.

An output section definition has many optional attributes and looks like this in its complete form:

```
secname vma (type) : AT(lma) {
    file/section-patterns and commands
    ...
} >region AT>lma-region :phdr =fill
```

Mandatory are only **secname**, the colon and the curly-braces. Everything else is optional.

secname Name of the output section to create at the address of the current location counter.

vma When given, defines the section's start address (VMA) as **vma** and also redefines the location counter.

(type) Optional. The only valid **type** in vlink is **NOLOAD**, which avoids writing the section's contents into the output file. Usually this makes sense for uninitialized sections, like BSS.

AT(lma) Optionally sets the load-address (LMA) of the section to **lma**. Useful for initialized data loaded into ROM, which is copied to its real address in RAM during startup.

>region Optionally redirects this output section into memory region **region** (defined by the **MEMORY** command, See Section 3.1 [Memory], page 15). Each memory region has its own location counter!

AT>lma-region

Optionally load this output section into memory region **lma-region** (defined by the **MEMORY** command, See Section 3.1 [Memory], page 15). Each memory region has its own location counter!

:phdr Defines that the output section should go into program segment **phdr**. PHDR segments are used in ELF executables and in vlink's **rawseg** output target. Optional. Uses the last **phdr** when omitted.

=fill **fill** optionally defines a 16-bit pattern used to fill skipped or undefined regions in the output section (refer to **FILL16**).

Between the curly-braces there may be linker-script commands (See Section 3.4 [Commands], page 17), symbol assignments and one or multiple input section specifications. An input section specification consists of a single file-pattern and one or multiple section-patterns, which looks like: **fpat(spat1 spat2...)**.

To match multiple files or sections the usual wildcards may be used for file- and section-patterns. The wildcard capabilities depend on the host operating system vlink is running on, so do not expect that anything more than '*' (match any string) and '?' (match any character) will work.

The matching input files and their matching input sections will be included into the output section at this point.

The following functions are valid when specifying input section patterns:

KEEP(fpat(spat...))

Always keep these input sections in the output. Never delete them by any form of garbage collection (e.g. **-gc-all** or **-gc-empty**).

SORT(fpat)(spat...)

Sort the file names to include sections from.

fpat(SORT(spat...))

Include matching input sections sorted.

3.3 Program Headers

```
PHDRS {
    phdrname type FILEHDR PHDRS AT(addr) FLAGS(flags);
    ...
}
```

Program headers are also known as segments and mainly used in ELF executables. Segments define a block of multiple sections with similar attributes (e.g. executable and read-only or read-write). The linker defines reasonable default Program Headers, but you may want to overwrite the default.

- phdrname** Defines the segment's name, which may be used in an output section definition, using the `:phdrname` syntax.
- type** The segment type may be `PT_LOAD`, `PT_DYNAMIC`, `PT_INTERP`, `PT_NOTE`, `PT_SHLIB` or `PT_PHDR`. Refer to the ELF-ABI documentation for a precise description. `PT_LOAD` defines a segment which is loaded into memory. `PT_PHDR` defines a segment which includes the program header itself.
- FILEHDR** Set this optional attribute when the segment includes the (ELF) file header information.
- PHDRS** Set this optional attribute when the segment includes the program header table. Typically set together with `FILEHDR`.
- AT(addr)** Optionally defines the segment's start address to be `addr`.
- FLAGS(flags)** Optionally defines the segment permission as `flags`, where bit 0 means executable, bit 1 means writable and bit 2 means readable.

3.4 Commands

The following commands are currently supported in vlink linker scripts:

- ASSERT(expression, "message")**
Evaluate `expression` and print an assertion error, including the optional `message`, when zero.
- BYTE(expression)**
Insert a byte at the current section address and assign the value of `expression` to it.
- CONSTRUCTORS**
Set the constructor/destructor function collection strategy to GNU-style constructors. They are usually already placed into `.ctors` and `.dtors` sections.
- ENTRY(symbol)**
`symbol` defines the entry point of program execution, which may be used by some executable file formats. It is also used to define the starting point for section garbage collection (`-gc-all` option).
- EXTERN(symbol [symbol ...])**
Define one or multiple symbols as undefined, which might trigger linking of additional modules from standard libraries. Refer to option `-u`.

FILL8(expression)

Specify an 8-bit fill-pattern, which is used to fill skipped regions in a section (e.g. by alignments or setting a new location counter).

FILL16(expression)

Specify a 16-bit fill-pattern, which is used to fill skipped regions in a section (e.g. by alignments or setting a new location counter). The **expression** is always written in big-endian order.

GROUP(file [file...])

For compatibility. Works just like **INPUT** in vlink.

INPUT(file [file...])

Define input files, which has exactly the same effect like on the command line. Specifying libraries needs a **-l** prefix. When there are also input files on the command line, the files specified here will be appended.

LONG(expression)

Insert a 32-bit word the current section address and assign the value of **expression**, using the target's endianess, to it.

OUTPUT_ARCH()**OUTPUT_FORMAT()**

No meaning in vlink. Just for compatibility. Refer to option **-b** to define the output file format.

PROVIDE(symbol = expression)

The **symbol** will only be defined with **expression** when it is referenced from anywhere in the input files.

QUAD(expression)

Insert a 64-bit word the current section address and assign the value of **expression**, using the target's endianess, to it.

RESERVE(space)

Reserve **space** bytes at the current location counter, which are filled with the value given by **FILL8()** or **FILL16()** (defaults to zero).

SEARCH_DIR(path)

Appends **path** as an additional library search path. Has the same effect as **-L**.

SHORT(expression)

Insert a 16-bit word the current section address and assign the value of **expression**, using the target's endianess, to it.

SQUAD(expression)

Insert a 64-bit word the current section address and assign the value of **expression**, using the target's endianess, to it.

VBCC_CONSTRUCTORS

Set the constructor/destructor function collection strategy to vbcc-style constructors (**__INIT[_<pri>]_<name>** / **__EXIT..**) and put them into the current section.

VBCC_CONSTRUCTORS_ELF

Set the constructor/destructor function collection strategy to vbcc-style ELF constructors (_INIT[_<pri>]_<name> / _EXIT..) and put them into the current section.

3.5 Functions

The following functions are currently supported in vlink linker scripts:

ADDR(sectionname)

Return the address (VMA) of the section named **sectionname**.

ALIGN(align)

Return the location counter (.), aligned to the next address which is a multiple of **align**.

LENGTH(memoryname)

Return the length of the memory region named **memoryname**.

LOADADDR(sectionname)

Return the loading-address (LMA) of the section named **sectionname**.

MAX(exp1,exp2)

Return the maximum value of the two expressions **exp1** and **exp2**.

MIN(exp1,exp2)

Return the minimum value of the two expressions **exp1** and **exp2**.

ORIGIN(memoryname)

Return the start address of the memory region named **memoryname**.

SIZEOF(sectionname)

Return the size of the section named **sectionname** in bytes.

SIZEOF_HEADERS

Return the size of the output file format's header in bytes.

4 Appendix

4.1 Known Problems

- Neither shared objects nor dynamically linked executables can be generated for `a.out` format.
- The following options are not really supported: `-S`, `-X`, `-Bsymbolic`
- Source level debugging support is missing for some formats.
- Many linker script commands are still missing.
- Default linker scripts are mostly missing, so you need to provide your own script when using the `-T` option.
- `PHDR` support for ELF is not perfect.

4.2 Credits

All those who wrote parts of the `vlink` distribution, made suggestions, answered my questions, tested `vlink`, reported errors or were otherwise involved in the development of `vlink` (in ascending alphabetical order, probably not complete):

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4.3 Error Messages

1. Out of memory
2. Unrecognized option '`%s`'
3. Unknown link mode: `%s`
4. Unknown argument for option `-d`: `%c`
5. Option '`-%c`' requires an argument
6. No input files
7. File `\"%s\\"` has a read error

8. Cannot open \">%s\": No such file or directory
9. Invalid target format \">%s\\"
10. Directory \">%s\\" could not be examined
11. %s: File format not recognized
12. \">%s\\" is already an executable file
13. %s: File format corrupted
14. %s (%s): Illegal relocation type %d at %s+%x
15. %s: Unexpected end of section %s in %s
16. %s: %s appeared twice in %s
17. %s: Misplaced %s in %s
18. %s: Symbol definition %s in %s uses unsupported type %d
19. %s: Global symbol %s from %s is already defined in %s
20. %s: Unresolved reference to symbol %s in %s uses unsupported type %d
21. %s (%s+0x%x): Reference to undefined symbol %s
22. Attributes of section %s were changed from %s in %s to %s in %s
23. %s: %s expected
24. %s (%s+0x%x): Illegal relative reference to %s+0x%llx
25. %s (%s+0x%x): %dbit %s reference to %s+0x%llx (value to write: 0x%llx) out of range
26. %s (%s+0x%x): Referenced absolute symbol %s=0x%llx + 0x%llx (value to write: 0x%llx) doesn't fit into %d bits
27. %s (%s+0x%x): Illegal relative reference to symbol %s
28. %s (%s+0x%x): Relative reference to relocatable symbol %s=0x%llx + 0x%llx (value to write: 0x%llx) doesn't fit into %d bits
29. Can't create output file %s
30. %s (%s+0x%x): Absolute reference to relocatable symbol %s=0x%llx + 0x%llx (value to write: 0x%llx) doesn't fit into %d bits
31. Error while writing to %s
32. Target %s: Unsupported relocation type %s (offset=%d, size=%d, mask=%llx) at %s+0x%x
33. Target %s: Can't reproduce symbol %s, which is a %s%ss%
34. Option '%s' requires an argument
35. %s (%s+0x%x): Calculated value 0x%llx doesn't fit into relocation type %s (offset=%d, size=%d, mask=0x%llx)
36. UNUSED
37. %s: Malformatted archive member %s
38. %s: Empty archive ignored
39. %s: %s doesn't support shared objects in library archives
40. %s: %s doesn't support executables in library archives
41. %s (%s): Illegal format / file corrupted

42. %s: Consistency check for archive member %s failed
43. %s: Invalid ELF section header index (%d) in %s
44. %s: ELF section header # %d has illegal offset in %s
45. %s: ELF section header string table has illegal type in %s", EF_ERROR,
46. %s: ELF section header string table has illegal offset in %s
47. %s: ELF program header table in %s was ignored
48. %s: ELF section header type %d in %s is not needed in relocatable objects
49. %s: Illegal section offset for %s in %s
50. %s: ELF %s table has illegal type in %s
51. %s: ELF %s table has illegal offset in %s
52. %s: %s in %s defines relocations relative to a non-existing section with index=%d
53. %s: Symbol %s, defined in %s, has an invalid reference to a non-existing section with index=%d
54. %s: Illegal symbol type %d for %s in %s
55. %s: Symbol %s has illegal binding type %d in %s
56. %s: Symbol %s in %s is multiply defined
57. %s: Merging a code section with name \"__MERGED\"
58. Relative references between %s section \"%s\" and %s section \"%s\" (%s) force a combination of the two
59. Can't define %s as ctors/dtors label. Symbol already exists.
60. %s: ELF section header type %d in %s is not needed in shared objects
61. %s: Endianess differs from previous objects
62. Target file format doesn't support relocatable objects
63. Predefined limits of destination memory region %s for section %s were exceeded (0x%llx)
64. Section %s(%s) was not recognized by target linker script
65. %s line %d: Unknown keyword <%s> ignored
66. %s line %d: '%c' expected
67. %s line %d: Absolute number expected
68. %s line %d: Keyword <%s> expected
69. %s line %d: GNU command <%s> ignored
70. %s line %d: Unknown memory region <%s>
71. %s line %d: Multiple constructor types in output file
72. %s line %d: Unknown keyword <%s>
73. %s line %d: Assertion failed: %s
74. %s line %d: SECTIONS block defined twice
75. %s line %d: Segment %s is closed and can't be reused
76. %s line %d: Address overrides specified %cMA memory region
77. %s line %d: Segment %s must include both, FILEHDR and PHDR

78. %s line %d: Missing argument
79. %s line %d: Undefined section: <%s>
80. %s line %d: Section %s was assigned to more than one PT_LOAD segment
81. Multiple use of section <%s> in linker script
82. Intermediate uninitialized sections in ELF segment <%s> (first=<%s>, last=<%s>) will be turned into initialized
83. Section <%s> (0x%llx-0x%llx) conflicts with ELF segment <%s> (currently: 0x%llx-0x%llx)
84. %s: QMAGIC is deprecated and will no longer be supported
85. %s: a.out %s table has illegal offset or size in %s
86. %s: a.out %s table size in <%s> is not a multiple of %d
87. %s: a.out symbol name has illegal offset %ld in %s
88. %s: a.out symbol %s has illegal binding type %d in %s
89. %s: a.out relocations without an appropriate section in %s
90. %s: illegal a.out relocation in section %s of %s at offset 0x%08lx: <pcrel=%d len=%d ext=%d brel=%d jmptab=%d rel=%d copy=%d>
91. %s: illegal a.out external reference to symbol %s in %s, which is no external symbol
92. %s: illegal nlist type %lu in a.out relocation in section %s of %s at offset 0x%08lx
93. Target %s: Common symbol %s is unreferenced and will disappear
94. Target file format doesn't support executable files
95. %s: a.out relocation <pcrel=%d len=%d ext=%d brel=%d jmptab=%d rel=%d copy=%d> is treated as a normal relocation in section %s of %s at offset 0x%08lx
96. %s: size %d for a.out symbol %s in %s was ignored
97. Target %s: %s section must not be absent for a valid executable file", EF_FATAL,
98. Target %s: Section %s is overlapping %s
99. %s line %d: Illegal PHDR type: <%s>
100. %s line %d: <%s> behind SECTIONS ignored
101. %s line %d: Address symbol '.' invalid outside SECTIONS block
102. %s line %d: Reference to non-absolute symbol <%s> outside SECTIONS", EF_ERROR,
103. %s line %d: Division by zero
104. %s line %d: Unknown symbol or function: <%s>
105. %s line %d: No function-calls allowed here
106. %s line %d: Symbol <%s> is not yet assigned
107. %s line %d: Command <%s> not allowed outside SECTIONS block
108. %s line %d: Address symbol '.' cannot be provided
109. %s line %d: Symbol <%s> already defined
110. %s line %d: Only absolute expressions may be assigned outside SECTIONS block
111. %s line %d: Unknown PHDR: <%s>

112. %s (%s+0x%lx): Cannot resolve reference to %s, because section %s was not recognized by the linker script
113. %s (%s): %d bits per byte are not supported
114. %s (%s): %d bytes per target-address are not supported
115. %s (%s): Relocation type %d (offset=%lld, bit-offset=%d bit-size=%d mask=0x%llx referring to symbol <%s> (type %d) is not supported
116. %s (%s): Symbol type %d for <%s> in section %s is not supported
117. %s (%s+0x%lx): Cannot resolve %s reference to %s, because host section %s is invalid
118. %s: Malformatted ELF %s section in %s
119. %s: Ignoring junk at end of ELF %s section in %s
120. %s (%s+0x%lx): Relocation based on missing %s section
121. %s (%s+0x%lx): Base-relative reference to code section
122. Relocation table format not supported by selected output format - reverting to %s's standard
123. Unknown relocation table format '%s' ignored
124. Target %s: multiple small-data sections not allowed
125. .ctors/.dtors spread over multiple sections
126. Dynamic symbol reference not supported by target %s
127. %s: ELF symbol name has illegal offset 0x%lx in %s
128. %s: Unknown endianness defaults to %s-endian. Consider using -EB/-EL
129. Resetting the same attribute for section %s
130. Bad assignment after option '%s'
131. Need a valid symbolic entry when using -gc-all
132. Executable code section in first object required when using -gc-all
133. Unsupported absolute relocation (offs=%lld pos=%d siz=%d msk=0x%llx) in resident data section
134. %s (%s+0x%lx): Absolute reference to resident data section (%s)
135. %s line %d: Undefined memory region: <%s>
136. Target %s: multiple %s sections not allowed: <%s> and <%s>

