Using Flex (the lexical analizer) on OS X

Asked 9 years ago   Modified 4 years, 4 months ago   Viewed 3k times

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I've got a file, test.lex, which I run through as

```
$ flex test.lex
```

That gives me lex.yy.c, which I try to compile with:

```
$ gcc lex.yy.c -lfl
```

This gives me the error ld: library not found for -lfl. I know the Flex specification is correct and lex.yy.c compiles fine on a Linux machine. Any suggestions?

Edit: I'm using the flex supplied by Apple.

macos   flex-lexer

Share Follow   edited Sep 26, 2014 at 19:53   asked Sep 26, 2014 at 16:24
                                                                            Haden Pike
                                                                            259 2 7

2 Answers

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Some systems make libfl a separate package from flex, as it is rarely needed. The libfl library just contains two functions:

```
int main() {
    while (yylex());
    return 0;
}

int yywrap() {
    return 1;
}
```

Normally you'll want your own `main` function rather than the one from `libfl`, and defining `yywrap` yourself is trivial. Alternately, you can use `%option noyywrap` and not need it at all.

In your case, try just getting rid of the `-lfl` option. If you get an error about `yywrap`, add

Chris Dodd
120k   13   136   226

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1   Interesting. I had to both add %option noyywrap to test.lex and leave off -lfl as one would expect, but I wonder why OS X couldn't find libfl? –   Haden Pike   Sep 26, 2014 at 17:55

probably because you don't have it installed. – Chris Dodd Sep 26, 2014 at 18:57

I assumed that since I have the flex binary, I have libfl. What I do have is libl.a, which seems to provide the same functionality. I'm using the flex supplied by Apple. –   Haden Pike   Sep 26, 2014 at 19:51

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old topic but accepted answer did not help me.
so I'm adding this answer.

on macos use -ll (as in "library lex").
valid for macos 10.14 mojave.

also as @Chris Dodd said you can get rid of this dependency by specifying `%option noyywrap` in `.l` file and providing own `main` routine `.y` file.

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edited May 15, 2019 at 8:09   answered May 11, 2019 at 4:53

vigilancer
1,456   14   15