

## SLACKWARE TAGFILES: VERSION 1.0

For those of you who installed Slackware Linux, you might have noticed that during the installation, you were given the option of installing using "tagfiles". If you have no idea what tagfiles are and want to know what they are, then read on. Tagfiles are actually a way to quickly install Slackware without having to pick the individual packages you want to install. This is done by creating text files that tell the Setup program what packages to install and what packages to skip. The preparation is time consuming, but it's extremely beneficial if you plan on installing Slackware on multiple machines or for future reinstallations. So let's begin.

### Preparation

The first thing to do is to prepare the tagfiles for each package (eg: a1, ap1, d1, des1, etc...). If you have a Slackware CD, then open it up and go to the slakware directory. If you don't have a Slackware CD, just go to the FTP site you plan to get it from and go to the slakware directory. You should see many directories such as a1, ap1, d1, and so on. All the directories that end with a "1" have two tagfiles inside them. They are "tagfile" and "tagfile.org". We don't want "tagfile.org", just "tagfile". If you have access to a Linux system, you can do the following to speed things up. First mount a floppy disk:

```
mount -t vfat /dev/fd0 /floppy
mkdir /floppy/TagfileDirectory
```

Once that's done with, copy all the package directories in the slakware directory to /floppy/TagfileDirectory using the following command (make sure you are in the slakware directory!):

```
for i in *; do if [ -d "$i" ]; then mkdir /floppy/TagfileDirectory/$i; cp $i/tagfile
/floppy/TagfileDirectory/tagfile; fi; done
```

Ignore any errors telling you that a tagfile doesn't exist in certain directories. Tagfiles are only in directories that end with a "1". Now if it happens you don't have a Linux machine to help you do the above, then you'll need to do it the long way. In your floppy disk, create a directory called TagfileDirectory. Then copy every directory in the slackware directory to the TagfileDirectory. The only thing they need to contain is a tagfile, and nothing more! Now not all of them will contain a tagfile. As I said, only directories ending with "1" will contain a tagfile. When you're done, it's time to modify the tagfiles.

### Modifying the Tagfiles

This is the time consuming process. Here we will go through all the directories that you copied into TagfileDirectory and modify all the tagfiles in them. But before that, a short explanation on the format of the tagfiles. A tagfile generally looks like this:

```
# this is a comment
package_name: FLAG
```

Any statement preceded by a "#" is a comment and is ignored by the installer. "package\_name" is the name of the package that you want to install or skip. We won't touch that. The only thing we're concerned of here is the "FLAG". The flag can be one of four possible values:

```
ADD - automatically install the package
SKP - automatically skip over the package
REC - you are prompted to install the recommended package
OPT - you are prompted to install the optional package
```

The only flags you want to concern yourself with is ADD and SKP. So here's what a modified a1/tagfile looks like:

```
aaa_base: ADD
autolibs: ADD
bash: ADD
bash1: SKP
bin: ADD
bzip2: ADD
```

Now the above will cause all the packages except for bash1 to be installed during the installation. This is pretty simple. Whatever package you want installed, make sure the flag is ADD. Whatever you don't want installed, make sure it's SKP. Do this for all the tagfiles.

## **Installation**

When you're finally done, start the Slackware setup and go through it until you reach the Package Series Selection stage, where you get to pick whatever package you want to install. Pick them all. Continue on and you'll reach the Select Prompting Mode. When you get here, choose the option "tagpath". This will allow you to specify the directory where you currently have your custom tagfiles in. When you are asked to provide the path to your tagfiles, press Alt-F2. This will take you to virtual screen two. Login as root, and mount your floppy disk:

```
mount -t vfat /dev/fd0 /floppy
```

Now press Alt-F1 to return to the menu screen. In the place where you need to enter the path to your tagfiles, type:

```
/floppy/TagfileDirectory
```

Push "OK" and the installation should begin without prompting you for what packages you want. Go grab a cup of coffee or something. When the installation of packages finishes, you can continue with the Slackware setup.

## **Conclusion**

Don't throw away your custom tagfiles. Chances are you'll need to reinstall Slackware again for whatever reasons. With the tagfiles floppy, you can just insert it in, and you're on your way to a freshly installed system without the hassle of individual package choosing. Or if you need to make multiple installs of Slackware on many systems, just use your tagfiles and they'll all have the same software. Quick and easy.

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