

# CITS4407 Open Source Tools and Scripting

## Semester 1, 2021

### Week 10 workshop – Build automation

*Before starting this workshop, make sure you've reviewed the recommended reading for weeks 1–9, and completed the lab sheets for weeks 2–8.*

## 0. Required software

For this lab, you will need to ensure the `make` package is installed on Ubuntu. (You should know how to install Ubuntu packages from previous labs.)

You also will need to download Pandoc from the webpage at <https://github.com/jgm/pandoc/releases/tag/2.13> and place it on your PATH. (You should know how to download Pandoc and amend your PATH from last week's lab.)

## 1. Makefiles

*Make* is a build automation tool, which uses a configuration file called a Makefile. A Makefile contains rules consisting of a *target*, *dependencies*, and a *recipe*, describing what to build, and how to build it. Make uses the modification time of prerequisites to re-build targets only when needed.

Sometimes targets are *files* that need to be created; but sometimes they are best thought of as naming a set of tasks we would like done.

Building software artifacts using Makefiles has several advantages:

- Make is widely available
- Make is a standard build automation tool, which many software developers are familiar with. Using `make` instead of a less standard tool makes it easier for other people to build your project.
- Makefiles are written in plain text that is easily human-readable and -editable (at least when Makefiles are kept simple).
- Make does not place any restrictions on what tools or compilers your project uses.

## 2. Creating a Makefile

Clone the repository at <https://github.com/cits4407/workshop08.git>, and `cd` into it. (You should know how to do this from previous labs.)

Inside, you will find:

- an empty Makefile
- a data file, `data/ENROLMENTS-2017`.

In this lab, we will create a report written in Markdown using data contained in the data file, then convert it to HTML using Pandoc.

Edit the Makefile using your preferred editor. Add the following rule:

```
geng5505-students: data/ENROLMENTS-2017
    ./create_listing data/ENROLMENTS-2017 > geng5505-students
```

Note that on the second line of this rule, the first character **MUST** be a *tab* character (not a space). You can check whether it is by running the following:

```
$ cat --show-tabs Makefile
```

If you have correctly typed the rule, it should show up with the tab marked as “`^I`”:

```
geng5505-students: data/ENROLMENTS-2017
^I./create_listing data/ENROLMENTS-2017
```

Try running “`make geng5505-students`”. You should see that

- (a) Make reports that an error occurred – the command `./create_listing` is not found, since we have not created it yet.
- (b) An empty file `geng5505-students` is created (since that’s where we redirected output to).

Try running the same command again; you should see `make` claiming that “`geng5505-students` is up to date” – can you explain why?

This is undesirable behaviour – when something goes wrong with the `create_listing` command, we don’t want the target to be created.

Delete the empty `geng5505-students` file, and edit the Makefile by adding the following (either before or after our existing rule, but at the start of the file is conventional):

```
.DELETE_ON_ERROR:
```

Try running `make geng5505-students` again; this time, you should see that

- (a) Make reports that an error occurred – the command `./create_listing` is not found, since we have still not created it.
- (b) **No** empty file `geng5505-students` is left behind – `make` deletes it.

`DELETE_ON_ERROR` is a special target used by GNU Make; when it is added to a Makefile, `make` alters its normal behaviour.

### 3. Preparing data

You will need to create a script, `./create_listing`, which:

- Takes an argument on the command-line – an input file to read.
- Outputs (on standard output) all lines in the file containing the string `GENG5505-1`.

You should be familiar with how to do this based on previous workshops on creating scripts.

Once your script is ready, try running `make geng5505-students` again – if you have written the script correctly, the file `geng5505-students` should be created, containing the data we want.

#### Make special variables

The rule

```
geng5505-students: data/ENROLMENTS-2017
    ./create_listing data/ENROLMENTS-2017 > geng5505-students
```

could be made simpler – it needlessly repeats the name of the target, `geng5505-students`. Based on the material on `make` contained in the lecture slides and the lecture readings, how would you amend the Makefile to avoid this? (Avoiding unnecessary repetition in source code and data is sometimes called the “[DRY](#)” Principle – “Don’t Repeat Yourself”. The opposite of “DRY” is “WET” – “Write Everything Twice” or “We Enjoy Typing”.)

(Another question to consider in your own time: what about the “`data/ENROLMENTS-2017`” file – can we avoid mentioning it twice?)

### 4. Creating a report

Add a new rule to your Makefile:

```
geng5505-students.md: geng5505-students
    ./create_report > geng5505-students.md
```

Your task is to write a script, `create_report`, which will produce a report written in Markdown, based on data in the `geng5505-students` file. The script should print the report on standard output; our Makefile will redirect that to `geng5505-students.md`.

The report will need to use markup syntax covered in the lecture, lab and reading material on Markdown. The report should contain:

- A header, “GENG5505 Report”
- A summary line: “No. of GENG5505 students: *n*” (where *n* is the number of lines in our `geng5505-students` file).
- A *bulleted list* of all the student numbers (but *not* the GENG5505 code).

## 5. Self-study exercise

Try this in your own time (or in the lab, if you have time available).

Create a new rule which has as its target a file `output/geng5505-students.html`, and as dependency the file `geng5505-students.md`. The *recipe* in the rule should invoke Pandoc, to create HTML output from the Markdown file.

Lastly, try *generalizing* this rule.

Rather than having `geng5505-students.md` specifically as a dependency and `output/geng5505-students.html` as a target, amend your rule so it will work for *any* `.md` file in the current directory, and create a corresponding HTML file in the `output` directory.