

**NAME**

`rgbds` — object file format documentation

**DESCRIPTION**

This is the description of the RGB object file format that is output by `rgbasm(1)` and read by `rgblink(1)`.

**FILE STRUCTURE**

The following types are used:

`LONG` is a 32-bit integer stored in little-endian format. `BYTE` is an 8-bit integer. `STRING` is a 0-terminated string of `BYTE`. Brackets after a type (e.g. `LONG[n]`) indicate *n* consecutive elements (here, `LONGs`). All items are contiguous, with no padding anywhere—this also means that they may not be aligned in the file!

`REPT n` indicates that the fields between the `REPT` and corresponding `ENDR` are repeated *n* times.

All IDs refer to objects within the file; for example, symbol ID \$0001 refers to the second symbol defined in *this* object file’s “Symbols” array. The only exception is the “Source file info” nodes, whose IDs are backwards, i.e. source node ID \$0000 refers to the *last* node in the array, not the first one. References to other object files are made by imports (symbols), by name (sections), etc.—but never by ID.

**Header**

```
BYTE Magic[4]
      "RGB9"
LONG RevisionNumber
      The format's revision number this file uses. (This is always in the same place in all revisions.)
LONG NumberOfSymbols
      How many symbols are defined in this object file.
LONG NumberOfSections
      How many sections are defined in this object file.
```

**Source file info**

```
LONG NumberOfNodes
      The number of source context nodes contained in this file.
REPT NumberOfNodes
    LONG ParentID
      ID of the parent node, -1 meaning that this is the root node.
      Important: the nodes are actually written in reverse order, meaning the node with ID 0 is the last one in the list!
    LONG ParentLineNo
      Line at which the parent node's context was exited; meaningless for the root node.
    BYTE Type
      Bits 0–6 indicate the node's type:
      Value Meaning
      0    REPT node
      1    File node
      2    Macro node
      Bit 7 being set means that the node is "quieted" (see "Excluding locations from backtraces" in rgbasm(5)).
    IF Type ≠ 0
      If the node is not a REPT node...
        STRING Name
          The node's name: either a file name, or the macro's name prefixed by its definition's file name (e.g. src/includes/defines.asm::error).
    ELSE
      If the node is a REPT, it also contains the iteration counter of all parent REPTs.
```

```

    LONG Depth
    LONG Iter[Depth]
        The number of REPT iterations, by increasing depth.

    ENDC
ENDR

Symbols
REPT NumberOfSymbols
    STRING Name
        This symbol's name. Local symbols are stored as their full name (Scope .symbol).
    BYTE Type
        Value Meaning
        0     Local symbol only used in this file.
        1     Import of an exported symbol (by name) from another object file.
        2     Exported symbol visible from other object files.

    IF Type ≠ 1
        If the symbol is defined in this object file...
        LONG NodeID
            Context in which the symbol was defined.
        LONG LineNo
            Line number in the context at which the symbol was defined.
        LONG SectionID
            The ID of the section in which the symbol is defined. If the symbol doesn't belong to any specific section (i.e. it's a constant), this field contains -1.
        LONG Value
            The symbol's value. If the symbol belongs to a section, this is the offset within that symbol's section.

    ENDC
ENDR

```

**Sections**

```

REPT NumberOfSections
    STRING Name
        The section's name.
    LONG NodeID
        Context in which the section was defined.
    LONG LineNo
        Line number in the context at which the section was defined.
    LONG Size
        The section's size, in bytes.

    BYTE Type
        Bits 0–2 indicate the section's type:
        Value Meaning
        0     WRAM0
        1     VRAM
        2     ROMX
        3     ROM0
        4     HRAM
        5     WRAMX
        6     SRAM
        7     OAM

        Bit 7 being set means that the section is a "union" (see "Unionized sections" in rgbsasm(5)). Bit 6 being set means that the section is a "fragment" (see "Section fragments" in rgbsasm(5)). These two bits are mutually exclusive.

```

**LONG Address**

Address this section must be placed at. This must either be valid for the section's *Type* (as affected by flags like `-t` or `-d` in *rgblink(1)*), or -1 to indicate that the linker should automatically decide (the section is "floating").

**LONG Bank**

ID of the bank this section must be placed in. This must either be valid for the section's *Type* (with the same caveats as for the *Address*), or -1 to indicate that the linker should automatically decide.

**BYTE Alignment**

How many bits of the section's address should be equal to *AlignOfs*, starting from the least-significant bit.

**LONG AlignOfs**

Alignment offset. Must be strictly less than  $1 \ll \text{Alignment}$ .

**IF** *Type* = 2 || *Type* = 3

If the section has ROM type, it contains data.

**BYTE Data[Size]**

The section's raw data. Bytes that will be patched over must be present, even though their contents will be overwritten.

**LONG NumberOfPatches**

How many patches must be applied to this section's *Data*.

**REPT NumberOfPatches****LONG NodeID**

Context in which the patch was defined.

**LONG LineNo**

Line number in the context at which the patch was defined.

**LONG Offset**

Offset within the section's *Data* at which the patch should be applied. Must not be greater than the section's *Size* minus the patch's size (see *Type* below).

**LONG PCSectionID**

ID of the section in which PC is located. (This is usually the same section within which the patch is applied, except for e.g. LOAD blocks, see "RAM code" in *rgbasm(5)*.)

**LONG PCOffset**

Offset of the PC symbol within the section designated by *PCSectionID*. It is expected that PC points to the instruction's first byte for instruction operands (i.e. `jp @` must be an infinite loop), and to the patch's first byte otherwise (`db`, `'dw'`, `'d1'`).

**BYTE Type****Value Meaning**

0 Single-byte patch

1 Little-endian two-byte patch

2 Little-endian four-byte patch

3 Single-byte 'jr' patch; the patch's value will be subtracted to PC + 2 (i.e. `jr @` must be the infinite loop 18 FE).

**LONG RPNSize**

Size of the *RPNExpr* below.

**BYTE RPNExpr[RPNSize]**

The patch's value, encoded as a RPN expression (see "RPN expressions").

**ENDR**

ENDC

### Assertions

LONG *NumberOfAssertions*

How many assertions this object file contains.

REPT *NumberOfAssertions*

Assertions are essentially patches with a message.

LONG *NodeID*

Context in which the assertions was defined.

LONG *LineNo*

Line number in the context at which the assertion was defined.

LONG *Offset*

Unused leftover from the patch structure.

LONG *PCSectionID*

ID of the section in which PC is located.

LONG *PCOffset*

Offset of the PC symbol within the section designated by *PCSectionID*.

BYTE *Type*

Describes what should happen if the expression evaluates to a non-zero value.

#### Value Meaning

0 Print a warning message, and continue linking normally.

1 Print an error message, so linking will fail, but allow other assertions to be evaluated.

2 Print a fatal error message, and abort immediately.

LONG *RPNSize*

Size of the *RPNExpr* below.

BYTE *RPNExpr[RPNSize]*

The patch's value, encoded as a RPN expression (see "RPN expressions").

STRING *Message*

The message displayed if the expression evaluates to a non-zero value. If empty, a generic message is displayed instead.

ENDR

### RPN expressions

Expressions in the object file are stored as RPN, or "Reverse Polish Notation", which is a notation that allows computing arbitrary expressions with just a simple stack. For example, the expression 2 5 - will first push the value "2" to the stack, then "5". The '-' operator pops two arguments from the stack, subtracts them, and then pushes back the result ("3") on the stack. A well-formed RPN expression never tries to pop from an empty stack, and leaves exactly one value in it at the end.

RGBDS encodes RPN expressions as an array of BYTES. The first byte encodes either an operator, or a literal, which consumes more BYTES after it:

#### Value Meaning

\$00 Addition operator ('+')

\$01 Subtraction operator ('-')

\$02 Multiplication operator ('\*')

\$03 Division operator ('/')

\$04 Modulo operator ('%')

\$05 Negation (unary '-')

\$06 Exponent operator ('\*\*')

\$10 Bitwise OR operator ('|')

\$11 Bitwise AND operator ('&')

\$12 Bitwise XOR operator ('^')  
 \$13 Bitwise complement operator (unary '~')  
 \$21 Logical AND operator ('&&')  
 \$22 Logical OR operator ('| |')  
 \$23 Logical complement operator (unary '!')  
 \$30 Equality operator ('==')  
 \$31 Non-equality operator ('!=')  
 \$32 Greater-than operator ('>')  
 \$33 Less-than operator ('<')  
 \$34 Greater-than-or-equal operator ('>=')  
 \$35 Less-than-or-equal operator ('<=')  
 \$40 Left shift operator ('<<')  
 \$41 Arithmetic/signed right shift operator ('>>')  
 \$42 Logical/unsigned right shift operator ('>>>')  
 \$50 **BANK**(*symbol*); followed by the *symbol*'s LONG ID.  
 \$51 **BANK**(*section*); followed by the *section*'s STRING name.  
 \$52 PC's **BANK()** (i.e. BANK(@)).  
 \$53 **SIZEOF**(*section*); followed by the *section*'s STRING name.  
 \$54 **STARTOF**(*section*); followed by the *section*'s STRING name.  
 \$55 **SIZEOF**(*sectiotype*); followed by the *sectiotype*'s BYTE value (see the *Type* values in "Sections").  
 \$56 **STARTOF**(*sectiotype*); followed by the *sectiotype*'s BYTE value (see the *Type* values in "Sections").  
 \$60 ldh check. Checks if the value is a valid ldh operand (see "Load Instructions" in *gbz80(7)*), i.e. that it is between either \$00 and \$FF, or \$FF00 and \$FFFF, both inclusive. The value is then ANDed with \$00FF (& \$FF).  
 \$61 rst check. Checks if the value is a valid rst vector (see "RST vec" in *gbz80(7)*), that is, one of \$00, \$08, \$10, \$18, \$20, \$28, \$30, or \$38. The value is then ORed with \$C7 (| \$C7).  
 \$62 bit/res/set check; followed by the instruction's BYTE mask. Checks if the value is a valid bit index (see e.g. "BIT u3, r8" in *gbz80(7)*), that is, from 0 to 7. The value is then ORed with the instruction's mask.  
 \$70 HIGH byte.  
 \$71 LOW byte.  
 \$72 BITWIDTH value.  
 \$73 TZCOUNT value.  
 \$80 Integer literal; followed by the LONG integer.  
 \$81 A symbol's value; followed by the symbol's LONG ID.

**SEE ALSO**

*rgbasn(1)*, *rgbasn(5)*, *rgblink(1)*, *rgblink(5)*, *rgbfix(1)*, *rgb gfx(1)*, *gbz80(7)*, *rgbds(7)*

**HISTORY**

*rgbasn(1)* and *rgblink(1)* were originally written by Carsten Sørensen as part of the ASMotor package, and was later repackaged in RGBDS by Justin Lloyd. It is now maintained by a number of contributors at <https://github.com/gbdev/rgbds>.