

# GNU**United Nations**

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Software for maintaining [www.gnu.org](http://www.gnu.org) translations  
(for version 0.6, 28 June 2012)

by Yavor Doganov <[yavor@gnu.org](mailto:yavor@gnu.org)>

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This manual (updated 28 June 2012) is for GNUUnited Nations (version 0.6), a suite for maintaining translations of [www.gnu.org](http://www.gnu.org) essays and other articles.

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# 1 Introduction to GNUUnited Nations

GNUUnited Nations (abbreviated GNUN) is a collection of makefiles and scripts that are supposed to make the life of <http://gnu.org> translators easier. Although it is specifically developed for the GNU Project's website, it could be customized, at least in theory, to fit the needs of other internationalized sites. GNUN is in early stage of development, but if it proves useful, and if there is sufficient interest (and time), it is possible to develop a robust configuration interface that would be appropriate for general usage.

It is vitally important to understand that GNUN is *not* a silver bullet that solves all problems. If we have to be honest, deploying GNUN in fact even does create some (see [Section 1.4 \[Disadvantages\]](#), page 4).

GNUUnited Nations is free software, available under the GNU General Public License.

This manual is organized in way that is suitable both for translators and GNU Web Translation managers (plus eventually interested GNU Webmasters, if any). It may also serve as an introductory material and reference for new GNUN developers and contributors. Hopefully, it might be useful to people who customize and adopt the software for a third party site or for their own needs. Feel free to skip sections or entire chapters if they are irrelevant for your intended usage.

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## 1.1 Why GNUN is Being Developed

The GNU Project's website, <http://www.gnu.org>, has become considerably large over the years. Maintaining it requires significant effort, and sometimes a new web standard is developed faster than the time required to migrate all articles to the next widely adopted one.

When it comes to internationalization, the problems are so many that it is hard to enumerate them. It has become apparent that maintaining translations up-to-date is a major undertaking, involving tedious skimming through commit logs, reviewing diffs and other medieval techniques to catch up. Some translation teams have developed their own sets of scripts, but so far there has been no universal solution.

This unpleasant situation, combined with rapid and incompatible design changes, have lead some teams to neglect the important work of keeping their translation in line with the changing original articles. As a consequence, the GNU Project is facing the problem of maintaining them in suboptimal ways, in order to keep the information updated.

The reasons for developing GNUUnited Nations are very similar to those that lead to the inception of GNU gettext, or GNOME Documentation Utilities (`gnome-doc-utils`) some years later.

## 1.2 What GNUUnited Nations is and Should be

The basic concept behind GNUN is that localization of HTML articles is similar to localization of computer programs<sup>1</sup>. In articles, like in programs, not every string is considered translatable, so translatable strings must be identified first, and then collected in a file (called "PO template") for translation. Articles, like programs, tend to change in time, but not every change in the sources calls for a translation update. Sometimes the change does not affect the translatable

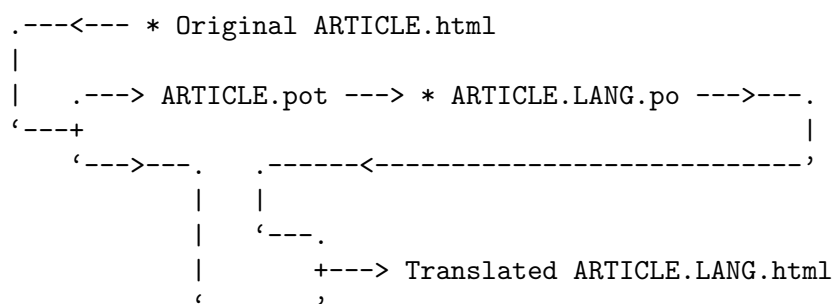
---

<sup>1</sup> Actually, it is much more closer to localization of software documentation, where typically strings (also known as "messages" in gettext's context) are longer than strings in programs. Nevertheless, all points raised still apply.

strings, but sometimes it does. So, translators must have means to identify those changes and apply the appropriate updates to the translation.

The GNU `gettext` package already provides the needed infrastructure for maintaining translations using PO files. See [Section “Introduction” in \*GNU gettext tools\*](#), for a basic overview. GNUnited Nations fills the gaps to apply this infrastructure to articles in <http://gnu.org> web site.<sup>2</sup>

The following diagram summarizes the relation between the files handled by GNUN. It is followed by somewhat detailed explanations, which you should read while keeping an eye on the diagram. Having a clear understanding of these interrelations will surely help translators and web maintainers.



The indication ‘\*’ appears in two places in this picture, and means that the corresponding file is intended to be edited by humans. The author or web maintainer edits the original ‘`article.html`’, and translators edit ‘`article.lang.po`’. All other files are regenerated by GNUN and any manual changes on them will be lost on the next run.

Arrows denote dependency relation between files, where a change in one file will affect the other. Those automatic changes will be applied by running ‘`make -C server/gnun`’. This is the primary way to invoke GNUN, since it is implemented as a set of recipes for GNU `make`.

First, GNUN extracts all translatable strings from the original English article ‘`article.html`’ into ‘`article.pot`’. The resulted file is suitable for manipulation with the various GNU ‘`gettext`’ utilities. It contains all original article strings and all translations are set to empty. The letter `t` in ‘`.pot`’ marks this as a Template PO file, not yet oriented towards any particular language.

The first time though, there is no ‘`article.lang.po`’ yet, so a translator must manually copy ‘`article.pot`’ to ‘`article.lang.po`’, where *lang* represents the target language. See [Section 2.3.1 \[New Translation\], page 11](#), for details.

Then comes the initial translation of messages in ‘`article.lang.po`’. Translation in itself is a whole matter, whose complexity far overwhelms the level of this manual. Nevertheless, a few hints are given in some other chapter of this manual.

It is possible to make GNUN get translations for common strings from dedicated PO files, so called compendia. See [Section 2.3.8 \[Compendia\], page 22](#), for more information.

You may use any compatible PO editor to add translated messages into the PO file. See [Section “Editing” in \*GNU gettext tools\*](#), for more information.

When the PO file actually exists (hopefully populated with initial translations), GNUN generates ‘`article.lang.html`’ file. It takes its structure from the original ‘`article.html`’, but all translatable strings are replaced with their translations specified in ‘`article.lang.po`’.

Original articles sometimes change. A new paragraph is being added or a tiny change in the wording is introduced. Also, some articles are dynamic in nature, like ones containing news entries or a list of other articles. If the original article changes, GNUN will automatically rebuild

<sup>2</sup> The process of converting HTML to PO and the other way around is performed using `po4a` (“po for anything”), see <http://po4a.alioth.debian.org>.

`'article.pot'`, and will merge the changes to `'article.lang.po'`. Any outdated translations will be marked as fuzzy, any new strings will be added with empty translations, waiting to be translated. In the same run `'article.lang.html'` will be rebuilt so the relevant strings in the translation will be substituted with the original English text, until the translation teams update them in `'article.lang.po'`.

Those changes in the original article that do not affect the translatable strings will not lead to changes in `'article.lang.po'`. Thus, no actions from translators will be needed. `'article.lang.html'` will be automatically regenerated to reflect the changes.

The POT for every article under GNUN's control is kept in the 'www' repository under a special directory 'po/', which is a sub-directory of the relevant directory in the 'www' tree. So, for <http://www.gnu.org/philosophy/free-sw.html> that is 'philosophy/po/'. Except `'free-sw.pot'`, this directory holds the canonical source of every translation, like `'free-sw.bg.po'`, `'free-sw.ca.po'`, etc.

Several additional features are implemented, like automatic update of the list of the available translations. For example, if a new `'free-sw.ja.po'` translation is added, the list of translations included in `'free-sw.html'` and all translated `'free-sw.lang.html'` is updated. This saves a lot of tedious, repetitive work and eliminates a source of mistakes. There is a basic infrastructure to "inject" general information about a translation team—like a note how to contact the team, or how to report a bug/suggestion for improvement. Translators' credits are also handled, as well as translators' notes, if any.

## 1.3 Major Advantages of GNUN

Here is a simple list of situations where we hope this suite would prove to be useful.

- Automatic rebuild of all translations when the original article changes. This is the most important feature, as it prevents accumulation of seriously outdated translations.
- Global update of the whole site. Apply the previous point to the web server templates (under `'server/'` in the 'www' repository). A single change to such a file will affect literally *all* articles, translated or not.
- Urgent notices. Sometimes an "urgent" notice is added by the webmasters, which should appear on all pages. Typically this is about an event where urgent action is needed, although often it is only relevant to a single country or even a particular city. Such a notice will propagate to all pages, and translators may choose whether to translate it or not. For example, the Urdu translation team may conclude that there are only a few Urdu speakers in Massachusetts, to participate in an event that will happen in Boston, so translating the "urgent" notice may not be very "urgent" for Urdu. However, such notice will appear in all translated pages and people who usually read gnu.org pages in their native language will see it, so they can take action as necessary. When the notice is removed, often in a week or two, it will disappear without translators' intervention, whether they translated it or not.
- HTML validation. As a preliminary step, GNUN validates the English pages before updating the POT files, and the regenerated translations before committing them. It often detects typos and other errors in the markup.
- Simplification of the translation process—lots of errors and typos come from the fact that translators basically have to duplicate the whole HTML markup of the original. The PO files eliminate most of the basic markup, which is where most of the validation errors come from.
- Markup consistency site-wide—it would be substantially easier to update the site to a future standard, because translations will naturally follow the changes in the original articles. This also means that translation teams do not have to undergo the boring process of converting their articles to the new SSI-based layout; this will be done automatically.

- Easy updates by translators. Modified paragraphs, links, etc. will appear as “fuzzy” strings in the PO files, newly added ones will appear as “untranslated”, and deleted will appear as “obsolete”. It is substantially easier to update a PO file, where a keystroke takes you to the part that needs updating, whatever it may be.
- Reporting and statistics. Since the basis is standard PO files, which are the canonical source of the translations, it is easy to manipulate them and extract useful information.

## 1.4 Known Bugs and Limitations

As it happens in real life, we don’t wear pink glasses and are aware of certain limitations and annoyances of this semi-automatic system.

- The official build is invoked thrice daily<sup>3</sup>, because doing it more often will potentially generate more messages to the mailing list in the form of commit notifications. This has its drawback, since translators have to wait 8 hours until their PO files are updated, and another period for the ‘*.lang.html*’ articles to get generated, after they commit the updated POs. Additionally, any errors interrupt the build so they have to be fixed before the next articles are processed.

---

<sup>3</sup> The “no-grace” items are rebuilt hourly.



## 2 General Usage

If anything may go wrong, it will definitely go wrong.

—Murphy’s Law

Murphy is an optimist.

—O’Rielly’s Law

GNUN currently consists of a few makefiles, scripts and optional ‘`generic.lang.html`’ files, intended to contain article-independent but team-specific information. They are designed to reside in the ‘`server/gnun`’ directory, but this may change. In all examples in this manual, “invoking” means executing on the command line `make -C server/gnun [target] [variable=value ...]` while the working directory is the root in the ‘`www`’ web repository. For the purpose of brevity, we will refer to the above command as simply `make`, which is equivalent to `cd server/gnun; make`. It is desirable never to invoke `make` with the ‘`-k`’ (‘`--keep-going`’) option, because an eventual error in only one make recipe might create a mess in many articles, both original and translated. Do this with caution, and generally only when debugging in a safe environment.

The build process is intended to be invoked by a cron job, although manual intervention to a certain degree is possible.

### 2.1 Invoking GNUN

The central part of GNUUnited Nations is a makefile; actually a ‘`GNUmakefile`’ since it heavily relies on features and extensions available in GNU Make. Thus, invoking a build consists of typing `make` on the command line, or within cron. If you are deploying the software on a non-GNU machine, probably GNU Make is installed and available as `gmake` or `gnumake`. If not, you should consider installing it, since the build will fail otherwise. See <http://www.gnu.org/software/make> for information how to download and install GNU Make.

If you don’t specify a target, `make` by default builds the target `all`, which in this case is to rebuild all translations that are not up-to-date. However, there are special targets that do not depend on the standard `all` target, which can be built by `make target`. Some of the variables in the next section apply to them, and some do not.

Note that GNUN expects ‘`GNUmakefile`’, ‘`config.mk`’ and ‘`gnun.mk`’ to be *present* under ‘`server/gnun`’ of the ‘`www`’ web repository, otherwise `make` has no way to know what and how should be built. Another file, ‘`priorities.mk`’, is expected to be present under ‘`server/gnun`’ in order to define the priorities when reporting about the outdated translations. If absent, the `report` target will not sort the translations by priority. Since the location of the repository working copy is strictly user-specific and cannot be determined in any way, ‘`GNUmakefile`’ and ‘`config.mk`’ must be copied there manually after the package installation. For convenience, these files are installed in ‘`$(pkgdatadir)`’ (‘`/usr/local/share/gnun`’ with the default ‘`prefix`’) so you can just create symlinks pointing to them, e.g.:

```
ln -s /usr/local/share/gnun/config.mk /path/to/www/server/gnun/
ln -s /usr/local/share/gnun/GNUmakefile /path/to/www/server/gnun/
```

If next GNUN releases are installed with the same ‘`--prefix`’, you will always use the latest versions without the need for any manual intervention.

If you are playing with non-gnu.org setup, you also have to take care of ‘`gnun.mk`’ and put a modified version under ‘`server/gnun`’ of your hypothetical tree. (For gnu.org, that is not necessary since a proper ‘`gnun.mk`’ is maintained in ‘`www`’.)

### 2.1.1 Variables to Control the Build Process

The build process has several modes of operation, and they all relate to the handling of files that are to be added to the repository or performing certain sanity checks at build time. The variables are specified on the command line, after **make**, in the form **VARIABLE=value**, e.g. **make VCS=yes**. In the future, additional features will be implemented in a similar fashion.

**‘VCS=no’**  
**‘...’**

Do not add any files to the repository. This is the default. You may as well omit to define **VCS** entirely; there is no special code that expects assigning the value ‘no’.

**‘VCS=yes’** Automatically add any new files in the repository (CVS, Subversion or GNU Bazaar—the repository type is auto-determined at build time, **bzr** being a fall-back).<sup>1</sup> These are any POT files, if they are generated for the first time, and the translated articles (**.lang.html**) in HTML format. In addition, if there is no **‘server/gnun/generic.lang.html’** file for the specific language an article is being generated, an empty file will be added. Finally, any missing PO and their HTML counterparts of the server templates will be added, computed on the basis of the **template-files** variable.

**‘VCS=always’**

Because GNU Make considers the targets up-to-date after a successful build, if it was performed with no VCS interaction, the important newly created files will not be added (and committed when you do **cvs|svn|bzr commit**) in the repository. Assigning this value enables additional check and forcefully adds all files. Use it sparingly, since it is very slow and generally less reliable.

**‘VALIDATE=no’**

**‘...’** Does not perform validation of the HTML articles and PO files. This is the default, and not defining this variable has the same effect.

**‘VALIDATE=yes’**

Validates all original articles before generating the POTs, to ensure that the ultimate source is valid (X)HTML. Also, validates all generated translations in HTML format and all PO files. It is highly recommended to run the build this way, even if it is a bit tedious to fix the errors that are reported as a result of enforcing validation.

Articles defined in the variable **no-validate-articles** are never checked for HTML validity. Its purpose was to skip validation of HTML 5 articles, until the command-line validation tools are updated to parse files that comply with this new standard. As of version 0.5 GNUN supports HTML 5, so resorting to **no-validate-articles** should not be necessary.

**‘NOTIFY=no’**

**‘...’** Do not send email notifications about errors. This is the default.

**‘NOTIFY=yes’**

If an error occurs, send a mail with a meaningful subject and the error message as body to the concerned party. The variables **devel-addr**, **web-addr** and **transl-addr** control the recipients; normally they should be set to the GNUN maintainers, webmasters and translators accordingly. These variables are defined in the configuration file **‘gnun.conf’** and by default are set to **bug-gnun@gnu.org**.

---

<sup>1</sup> When GNU Bzr is used, files are added locally only; you need to take care to use **bzr push** manually (or via cron) to take care of effectively adding them to the public repository. See [Section 2.1.2.5 \[triggers\]](#), page 9, for a short explanation.

**‘ANNOUNCE=yes’**

If defined, automatic announcements for new translations will be sent to the address defined in the `ann-addr` variable (in `gnun.conf`). The email messages contain the translated article title as Subject, and the URL of the translation as its body. For the official GNUN build, they are delivered to the `trans-coord-news@gnu.org` mailing list and each language has its own Mailman *topic*. It is possible to subscribe to the list and receive only traffic related to a specific language. See [Section “Mailing Lists” in GNU Web Translators Manual](#).

The default behavior is not to send such announcements.

**‘VERBOSE=yes’**

If defined, the value of the variables `templates-translated`, `home-translated`, `ALL_POTS`, `articles-translated` and `gnunews` will be printed to the standard output. This is off by default, but recommended in general since it will show a bug in the computation of the basic variables.

**‘GRACE=days’**

If defined, ordinary articles that have fuzzy strings and are not older than *days* will not be regenerated. This functionality is implemented specifically to prevent gratuitous replacement of translated strings with the English text when there are only minor formatting changes in the original. The translator has time (the “grace” period as defined in this variable) to review the changes and unfuzzy the strings, while keeping the online translation intact. Note that this variable has no effect on the homepage, the server templates, gnunews and all articles defined in the variable `no-grace-articles`.

**‘OUTDATED-GRACE=days’**

Grace period for the out-of-date notice. When the variable `GRACE` is defined, `OUTDATED-GRACE` defaults to 60 days (see [\[grace period\]](#), [page 7](#)). The out-of-date notice is a special text (`server/outdated.html` in the ‘www’ repository) that is inserted into every outdated translation when the period defined in this variable is over; its purpose is to inform the reader that the translation may not correspond to the original English article.

**‘TEAM=lang’**

The translation team whose articles need to be checked for completeness. This variable is applicable only for the `report` target, and is mandatory for it. See [Section 2.1.2.4 \[report\]](#), [page 8](#).

Note that `VCS=yes,always` is a valid combination: because POT files of the server templates are not handled by `always`, running the build this way will commit any newly added files as specified in `TEMPLATE_LINGUAS` and will perform additional check at the end, `cvs|svn|bzip2` adding all necessary files.

When validation is enabled (i.e. with `VALIDATE=yes`), the original English articles are validated first, before any commands that generate the other files, and `make` exits with an error on the first encountered article. This is done on purpose, to prevent the propagation of an eventual error in the markup of the original article to all translations.

Validation of the translated `‘.lang.html’` is performed after it is preliminarily generated as a temporary file. When no errors are found, the translation is updated; otherwise the real file is not changed (and it is not added if absent)—the build will fail and further processing of the remaining articles will not be performed. The translator has time until the next run to fix the error—usually by modifying the corresponding `‘.lang.po’` file.

If notification is enabled (`NOTIFY=yes`), and the build system encounters errors (mostly when validating articles), email messages will be sent to the party that is expected to fix the error. The subject of the messages always includes the problematic article, for example:

Subject: [GNUN Error] gnu/gnu.fa.html is not valid HTML

## 2.1.2 Targets Specified on the Command Line

Some targets are not built by default, because they are only useful under certain circumstances. Think of them like semi-automated commands or canned command sequences that are more complicated, and more importantly, whose arguments are variables computed at the time `make` reads the makefiles—the filesets they affect are specific and already defined, one way or another.

### 2.1.2.1 The `no-grace-items` Target

The `no-grace-items` target regenerates a limited set of articles that are not affected by the grace period, namely, the homepage, the server templates, gnunews, and all articles defined in the variable `no-grace-articles` (see [\[`grace period`\]](#), [page 7](#)).

This target can be rebuilt more often than `all`; it is invoked hourly by the official GNUN cron job.

### 2.1.2.2 The `update-localized-URLs` Target

The `update-localized-URLs` target invokes a script that generates the `'localized-urls.mk'` file. This file includes the list of URLs that should be localized, it is extracted from special comments in the HTML source (see [Section 2.4.4 \[`Localized URLs`\]](#), [page 23](#)).

This target is meant to be rebuilt nightly.

### 2.1.2.3 The `sync` Target

The `sync` target has a simple task: synchronize the *original English* articles from a canonical repository, like `'www'`. It is very important that such synchronization happens, because it is desirable to develop the software and add more features in a testbed, while the 'official instance' operates on the official repository in a predictable way.

It is recommended that you 'build' the `sync` target from a cron job, some time before the general build occurs. That way, prerequisites (e.g. original `'html'` articles) will be updated from the canonical repository and the subsequent `make` invocation, possibly run by cron as well, will update all translations.

The `VCS` variable affects the behavior: if it is defined to `'yes'` then the synchronized files are committed to the 'testing' repository, i.e. the *destination*. In addition, if a file meant to be synchronized disappeared from the *source*, a warning mail will be sent to the address defined in the `devel-addr` variable (defined in `'gnun.conf'`). The build will continue without failure, and will sync and commit all other files, but will send the same email message again if the file is still present in the `files-to-sync` variable during a subsequent invocation.

In addition, `sync` synchronizes all "verbatim" server templates that are not under GNUN's control, such as `'server/header.html'`, `'server/banner.html'`, `'server/footer.html'` and their translations, as defined in the `verbatim-templates` variable. This is important, as these files may change in the master repository, while the validation of the HTML files in the development repository will be performed with the old templates expanded, thus making this specific test more or less bogus.

`VCS=always` has no effect on this target, as well as `VALIDATE`.

### 2.1.2.4 The `report` Target

This target exists solely for convenience to translators, enabling them to check which articles are not 100% translated and have to be updated. The way to check this is by running `make report`

`TEAM=lang`, where *lang* is the language code, as usual. Thus, to check all French translations, one would run

```
make report TEAM=fr
```

**Caution:** This target checks only the PO files; if there are translations that are maintained in the old-fashioned way, they are not reported since there is no reasonable way to check if they are up-to-date. In fact, this is one of the main reasons GNUN is being developed, if you recall.

When present, `'priorities.mk'` defines four classes of articles by priority: *priority-articles* for the most important translations, *important-articles* for the second priority level, *important-directories* for the directories with important articles; all other translations are reported as less important.

### 2.1.2.5 The triggers Target

This is a special target intended to be run by the automatic build after the main build and *after* `cvs|svn|bzip commit`.

The `triggers` target currently executes the files named `'article.lang.html.hook'` in the `'server/gnun'` directory—these files are created during the main build and each of them contains the command to update the timestamp of the prerequisite based on the timestamp of the target that must be rebuilt. Finally, it deletes all those `'*.hook'` files.

This is the rule that takes care of actually sending the announcements if `ANNOUNCE=yes`. Since it is a completely valid scenario to have a new translation which is initially invalid HTML, the canned command sequence for announcements is recorded in `'*.hook-ann'` files, and they are treated by `triggers` in a different way. A newly added `'lang.po'` file may be invalid, in which case the HTML file is not added, and it is not appropriate to announce it as a new translation as it is completely useless for the general public. The `triggers` rule detects this case, and postpones the announcement to the next build attempt, when the generated HTML translation is supposed to be human-readable.

To summarize, for effective operation GNUN should be invoked automatically as `make; cvs|svn|bzip commit -m ...; make triggers`. To illustrate this, here is a concrete example showing the official job running at [fencepost.gnu.org](http://fencepost.gnu.org):

```
25 4,12,20 * * * cd $HOME/projects/www; cvs -q update &>/dev/null; \
    make -j1 -C server/gnun VCS=yes VALIDATE=yes; \
    NOTIFY=yes VERBOSE=yes GRACE=5000; ANNOUNCE=yes; \
    cvs commit -m \
    "Automatic update by GNUUnited Nations."; \
    make -C server/gnun triggers
```

The above example is for CVS; if the underlying repository is Subversion, they need to be amended accordingly. If it is GNU Bzr, remember to add a `bzip push` after commit (in the usual scenario), otherwise changes will be committed only locally. Since a distributed Version Control System can be used in multiple (sometimes radically different) ways, this step cannot be anticipated and therefore cannot be automated. Adding the `push` command in the makefile rules would not work if a so called “bound branch” is used, for instance.

In the future, this target may be extended further to do other useful things that should be “triggered” after the main build.

### 2.1.2.6 The validate-all Target

The `validate-all` target validates all HTML pages under GNUN’s control. It is needed because GNUN doesn’t track dependencies on the included files, so errors in those included files could pass unnoticed.

This target is invoked once a day by the official GNUN cron job.

## 2.2 Defining Articles to be Built

The file ‘gnun.mk’ contains variable definitions, based on which almost all other important variables are computed. In other words, the variables defined in that file directly affect the overall behavior of the build process.

There are two types of variables, which are specifically separated in order to make translators’ life easier: variables that translators are free to modify and variables that are modified by the web-translators staff<sup>2</sup>, ideally after performing some local tests. A translation team leader should update only FUZZY\_DIFF\_LINGUAS, TEMPLATE\_LINGUAS and HOME\_LINGUAS; everything else is supposed to be built automatically, without manual intervention. If not, that is a bug that should be reported and fixed.

### ‘TEMPLATE\_LINGUAS’

A space-separated list with languages. Add here your language code *if and only if* you have all the SSI templates translated, and have already committed all template files:

- ‘server/po/head-include-2.lang.po’
- ‘server/po/body-include-1.lang.po’
- ‘server/po/body-include-2.lang.po’
- ‘server/po/footer-text.lang.po’
- ‘server/po/outdated.lang.po’,

as well as the templates that are not under GNUN’s control and are translated manually, like

- ‘server/header.lang.html’
- ‘server/head-include-1.lang.html’
- ‘server/html5-header.lang.html’
- ‘server/html5-head-include-1.lang.html’
- ‘server/banner.lang.html’
- ‘server/footer.lang.html’.

Additional templates can be defined via the *extra-templates* variable in ‘server/gnun/gnun.mk’.

### ‘FUZZY\_DIFF\_LINGUAS’

Add your language code here if you want GNUN to add differences to previous msgids in your PO files. The differences are shown in the default *wdiff* format. See [Section “The word difference finder” in GNU wdiff](#), for more information.

### ‘HOME\_LINGUAS’

Add your language code if you have already committed ‘po/home.lang.po’, that way the homepage for your language will be built. It is not acceptable to have your language code defined in this variable, but not in TEMPLATE\_LINGUAS.

### ‘ROOT’

Add here articles that are in the server root, like ‘keepingup.html’ and ‘provide.html’. Always write only the basename of the article, i.e. if you add these two articles, the value of ROOT should be **keepingup provide**. This is true for all the variables that expect values in the form of article names.

### ‘ALL\_DIRS’

The list of directories containing articles, like ‘philosophy’, ‘gnu’, ‘licenses’, etc.

---

<sup>2</sup> Only because presumably, they are more familiar with GNU United Nations’ internals. From a purely technical point of view, there is no difference.

```
'gnu'
'philosophy'
'...directory...'
```

A space-separated list of basenames for articles residing in *directory*, for which POTs will be generated and updated when the original article changes. If an article is missing here, there is no way its translations to be maintained via GNUN.

## 2.3 Working with PO Files

We anticipate that some gnu.org translators will find this format odd or inconvenient, if they never happened to work with PO files before. Don't worry, you will soon get accustomed to it. It is the established format for translations in the Free World, and you should have no problems if you have translated software before.

The most efficient way to edit a PO file is using a specialized PO editor, because each of them represents and treats gettext messages in a consistent and predictable way. It is possible to edit a PO file with an ordinary plain text editor, but extra effort would be necessary to make it valid. Here is a list of widely used PO editors:

- PO mode. We recommend using GNU Emacs in PO mode, because Emacs is the program that is suitable for performing any task when it comes to maintaining the GNU Project's website. Provided that you have GNU gettext installed, any '.po' file you visit should automatically switch to PO mode. You can enable/disable it with `M-x po-mode RET`. On some GNU/Linux distros such as gNewSense, PO mode is available in a separate package, `gettext-el`. See <http://www.gnu.org/software/gettext>.
- Gtranslator—the GNOME PO editor. See <http://projects.gnome.org/gtranslator/>.
- Lokalize—the KDE 4 editor. See <http://userbase.kde.org/Lokalize>.
- KBabel—the KDE 3 editor. No longer supported, but might be available on some old systems.
- Poedit—another popular editor that is based on the wxWidgets graphical toolkit. See <http://www.poedit.net>.
- Virtaal—a relevantly new editor that supports also the XLIFF format and uses the Translate Toolkit API. See <http://translate.sourceforge.net/wiki/virtaal>.
- po.vim—ftplugin for the Vim editor. The best option for people who use Vim as their editor. See [http://www.vim.org/scripts/script.php?script\\_id=2530](http://www.vim.org/scripts/script.php?script_id=2530).
- Various web-based editors. See Section “Savannah VCS” in *GNU Web Translators Manual*.

### 2.3.1 Starting a New Translation

To start a new translation, the most simple way is to copy the existing POT as '`article.lang.po`', where *lang* is your language code. For example, to prepare for a new translation of the essay <http://www.gnu.org/philosophy/free-sw.html>, you can simply do `cd philosophy/po; cp free-sw.pot free-sw.lang.po` and then edit the latter. If '`free-sw.pot`' does not exist it is because either the article is not yet “templated” (i.e. migrated to the new style), or the GNUN maintainers have not yet added it to the value of the appropriate variable in '`server/gnun/gnun.mk`'. In that case, just ask them to do the necessary in order the POT to be generated.

You could also use the `msginit` utility that would populate the PO file header with the right information, provided your environment is set up correctly. See Section “`msginit` Invocation” in *GNU gettext tools*.

GNUN also provides a customized script to automatically fill more header fields. See Section 3.1.3 [gnun-init-po], page 25.

The PO file header as generated usually looks like this:



```
# SOME DESCRIPTIVE TITLE
# Copyright (C) YEAR Free Software Foundation, Inc.
# This file is distributed under the same license as the PACKAGE package.
# FIRST AUTHOR <EMAIL@ADDRESS>, YEAR.
#
#, fuzzy
msgid ""
msgstr ""
"Project-Id-Version: PACKAGE VERSION\n"
"POT-Creation-Date: 2008-02-06 16:25-0500\n"
"PO-Revision-Date: YEAR-MO-DA HO:MI+ZONE\n"
"Last-Translator: FULL NAME <EMAIL@ADDRESS>\n"
"Language-Team: LANGUAGE <LL@li.org>\n"
"MIME-Version: 1.0\n"
"Content-Type: text/plain; charset=CHARSET\n"
"Content-Transfer-Encoding: ENCODING\n"
```

You have to edit the header to match the already established conventions, and the rules for gnu.org translations. For reference, here is a list with all fields explained:

**‘Project-Id-Version’**

Add here the filename of the original article, without the sub-directory, like “body-include-1.html” or “free-sw.html”.

**‘POT-Creation-Date’**

Do not edit this field, it is already set when the POT is created.

**‘PO-Revision-Date’**

Likewise, do not edit. This field is automatically filled in when you save the file with any decent PO editor.

**‘Last-Translator’**

The name and email address of the last translator who has edited the translation. Pay attention that normally this is the name of a member of your team, it can be the translation team leader if he/she was the person who updated the translation. For example:

Elvis Parsley <king@grassland.com>

**‘Language-Team’**

This field should contain the mailing list on which the translation team can be reached—usually **www-LANG-...@gnu.org**. Example:

Czech <www-cs-general@gnu.org>

**‘MIME-Version’**

Leave it like it is.

**‘Content-Type’**

Usually this is **text/plain; charset=UTF-8**; change the charset accordingly.

**‘Content-Transfer-Encoding’**

Set this to **8bit**. Note that the PO file header ends with this field, and it should contain a newline (‘\n’). Unfortunately, some PO editors remove the newline, which causes an unnecessary revision when the file is automatically modified by GNUN’s rules.

Here is an example of a properly edited header:



```
# Bulgarian translation of http://www.gnu.org/philosophy/free-sw.html
# Copyright (C) 2008 Free Software Foundation, Inc.
# This file is distributed under the same license as the gnu.org article.
# Yavor Doganov <yavor@gnu.org>, 2008.
#
msgid ""
msgstr ""
"Project-Id-Version: free-sw.html\n"
"POT-Creation-Date: 2008-02-06 16:25-0500\n"
"PO-Revision-Date: 2008-02-09 15:23+0200\n"
"Last-Translator: Yavor Doganov <yavor@gnu.org>\n"
"Language-Team: Bulgarian <www-bg-list@gnu.org>\n"
"MIME-Version: 1.0\n"
"Content-Type: text/plain; charset=UTF-8\n"
"Content-Transfer-Encoding: 8-bit\n"
```

Notice the absence of the “fuzzy” marker; you should “unfuzzy” the header after entering the necessary information (this is done by simply pressing TAB in PO mode).

It is recommended that you wrap all lines in the comments to be less than 80 lines; that looks better from a purely aesthetic point of view and improves the performance of ‘GNUMakefile.team’s publish rule (see [Section 2.3.7.1 \[GNUMakefile.team Variables\]](#), page 20).

There are some special messages that appear in the POT and PO:

‘\*GNUN-SLOT: TRANSLATOR’S NOTES\*’

This is for translator’s notes that are injected in the resulting translation. See [Section 2.3.1.1 \[Notes Slot\]](#), page 14, for more information. If your translation does not have notes, you *must* translate this as a space, that is, SPC.

‘\*GNUN-SLOT: TRANSLATOR’S CREDITS\*’

This is again optional, and should contain the name (and address) of the person who made the translation. “Translate” this string as a space (SPC) if you do not want your name to appear there. See [Section 2.3.1.2 \[Credits Slot\]](#), page 15.

Most of the PO editors do not wrap long lines that inevitably appear in `msgstrs`. If that happens, long lines make reading subsequent diffs harder, and are generally annoying for most people. If this issue bothers you, you can “normalize” the already finished PO translation by executing on the command line `msgcat -o file.po file.po`, before installing it in the repository. Either way, the build system will treat it as a valid PO file.

For those lucky Emacs users, here is a code snippet that you can put in your ‘.emacs’; doing `M-x po-wrap` while in PO mode will wrap all long lines:

```

(defun po-wrap ()
  "Filter current po-mode buffer through 'msgcat' tool to wrap all lines."
  (interactive)
  (if (eq major-mode 'po-mode)
      (let ((tmp-file (make-temp-file "po-wrap."))
            (tmp-buf (generate-new-buffer "*temp*")))
        (unwind-protect
          (progn
            (write-region (point-min) (point-max) tmp-file nil 1)
            (if (zerop
                (call-process
                 "msgcat" nil tmp-buf t (shell-quote-argument tmp-file)))
                (let ((saved (point)))
                  (inhibit-read-only t))
                (delete-region (point-min) (point-max))
                (insert-buffer tmp-buf)
                (goto-char (min saved (point-max))))))
            (with-current-buffer tmp-buf
              (error (buffer-string))))
          (kill-buffer tmp-buf)
          (delete-file tmp-file))))))

```

It is highly desirable that you check if the PO file you finished translating (or editing) is valid, before committing it. This is done by running `msgfmt -cv -o /dev/null file` or by simply pressing `V` in PO mode. The build system automatically verifies each PO file when invoked with `VALIDATE=yes`, but you won't get a warm and fuzzy feeling if a stupid typo you made halts the whole update of all translations. Such things happen to everyone, so it is a good practice to check before you actually commit.

### 2.3.1.1 The Special Slot for Translator's Notes

Sometimes it is necessary to complement the translation of an essay with translator's notes. The special message `*GNUN-SLOT: TRANSLATOR'S NOTES*` is designed to serve this purpose. If your translation doesn't have notes, you should "translate" the `msgstr` as a space (SPC)—otherwise the PO file will be considered incomplete, which is not what you want. Here is an example how to use translators' notes in a PO file:

```
# type: Content of: <p>
msgid ""
"To understand the concept, you should think of <q>free</q> "
"as in <q>free speech,</q> not as in <q>free beer.</q>"
msgstr ""
"Translated message, where you want to clarify beer<sup><a "
"href=\"#TransNote1\">1</a></sup>, presumably because the "
"expression in your language is different"
...
...
# type: Content of: <div>
#. TRANSLATORS: Use space (SPC) as msgstr if you don't have notes.
msgid "*GNUN-SLOT: TRANSLATOR'S NOTES*"
msgstr ""
"<h3>Translator's notes</h3>\n"
"<ol>\n"
"<li id=\"TransNote1\">Note clarifying the text.</li>\n"
"</ol>\n"
```

Certainly, everything in the `msgstrs` should be in your native language; we use English here in order the example to be understood by everyone. If you have more notes, each subsequent one should be with incremented number, i.e. ‘TransNote2’, ‘TransNote3’, etc. and you have to add them as more `<li>` elements accordingly.

Do not worry about the `\n` character—it is inserted automatically when you press `RET`. It is not compulsory that notes start on a new line, this is the recommended way simply because it is easier to edit them.

It is important to follow this specification, because notes will look consistently in all languages and will be clearly distinguishable from authors’ footnotes, if any. Furthermore, it would be easier to define a special CSS class for them, and also to convert the translations in other formats such as Texinfo—when these features are implemented.

### 2.3.1.2 The Special Slot for Translator’s Credits

Most of the translators usually put their name under the translation, in the “footer” area. This is entirely acceptable, since some readers prefer to send buguggestions directly to the translator. Also, giving credit where credit is due is a natural thing.

Like the previous slot, you should “translate” it as a `SPC` if you don’t want your name to appear there.

Here is an example of the recommended way to specify credits:

```
<b>Traduction</b>: Benjamin Drieu
<a href="mailto:foo@example.org">&lt;foo@example.org&gt;</a>,
2007, 2008.
```

It is highly desirable to use this form, but you may omit the email address or add a link to translator’s noncommercial personal home page, provided that the translation team leader ensures that it constantly meets the linking criteria for `gnu.org`. Please follow the FSF HTML Style Sheet when adding URIs or other information.

## 2.3.2 Transforming Existing Translation in PO Format

Migrating an existing translation to a PO file format is basically editing the header as described in the previous section, and populating each of the messages by copying the already translated text and/or markup from the existing translation in HTML format in the relevant message.

Typically, you will visit ‘`po/foo.lang.po`’ (in PO mode) and ‘`foo.lang.html`’ (in HTML mode) in another buffer. Then you can copy a paragraph or an element from the latter and yank it in the relevant message in the former. Be extra careful, since this is the time to check *precisely* that the translation corresponds to the original. Further changes will be reflected, but if your “initial” PO file is not a 100% match, that would not necessarily mean that it is an improvement. Since it is very easy to do this kind of check, because the relevant `msgid` and `msgstr` appear one above the other in the same buffer (or the similar concept in other PO editors), please *do* perform this initial sanity check even if you are confident that the translation you have been yanking strings from is a completely up-to-date translation.

There is also a semi-automatic way to produce an initial PO file. You checkout the revision of the English page, ‘`foo.html`’, that corresponds to the latest revision of the translation, ‘`foo.lang.html`’. Then you run `gnun-preconvert` which invokes `po4a-gettextize` (See [Section 3.1.4 \[gnun-preconvert\]](#), page 25.):

```
gnun-preconvert foo.lang.html foo.html
```

If some passages in ‘`foo.lang.html`’ don’t match the structure of ‘`foo.html`’, error messages will be displayed. Check them, adjust the files and try again. When you succeed, the result will be written to `foo.lang.po`. After that, run `gnun-merge-preconverted` (See [Section 3.1.5 \[gnun-merge-preconverted\]](#), page 26.):

```
gnun-merge-preconverted -C compendium.lang.po foo.lang.po foo.pot
```

If you have no compendium, just omit the “`-C compendium.lang.po`” part.

You get ‘`foo.lang.po`’ where all messages are marked as “fuzzy” (unless you use a compendium); you still should make sure that the translations correspond to the original and remove those “fuzzy” marks. The script adds differences against previous `msgid`s to facilitate checking.

There is no need to delete the existing HTML translation, GNUN will automatically overwrite it. The only thing a translator should do is to commit the PO file in the repository.

When an essay has been translated by several people through the years, it is important that this information is recorded and reflected in the PO file. In the future, special targets may be added to enable the FSF to check who translated a particular article, and when.

A recommended way to do this is as follows:

```
# French translation of http://www.gnu.org/philosophy/bsd.html
# Copyright (C) 2006, 2007, 2008 Free Software Foundation, Inc.
# This file is distributed under the same license as the gnu.org article.
# Cédric Corazza <cedric.corazza@wanadoo.fr>, 2006, 2008.
# Jérôme Dominguez <taz@gnu.org>, 2007.
```

In this example, it is clear that Cédric made the initial translation, Jérôme made some changes in 2007, and the original translator returned in 2008 and continued maintaining it.

### 2.3.3 Special Handling for GNU News

**Pay attention:** The practice of news handling that is described here has been obsolete for some time now, as they are being fed automatically from Planet GNU (<http://planet.gnu.org>). Nevertheless, the information below is accurate to the extent that the support for the old-fashioned way is still available.

The GNU website has infrastructure for supporting “What’s New”, also known as “GNU News”. Entries are added in a special plain text file, ‘`server/whatsnew.txt`’ and are used to build ‘`server/whatsnew.include`’ and ‘`gnusflashes.include`’. The former is used by ‘`server/whatsnew.html`’, while the latter is included in the homepage.

GNUN has additional rules for building ‘`whatsnew.pot`’, which contains a combination of all necessary strings for ‘`server/whatsnew.lang.html`’, ‘`server/whatsnew.lang.include`’ and ‘`gnusflashes.lang.include`’. There is nothing unusual in this POT file, so it should be

translated like any other. When you commit `'whatsnew.lang.po'`, it will be used to generate all three localized files. In addition, if there is a homepage for this language, it will be rebuilt when `'gnusflashes.lang.include'` is generated for the first time in order the translated homepage to include it instead of `'gnusflashes.include'`.

Note that localized RSS feeds are not supported on purpose, as it would be annoying for subscribers if new items appear in English and then once again translated.

### 2.3.4 Useful Hints for Editing PO Files

This section contains additional explanations, some in the form of advices and recommendations; not all of them are strictly related to PO files editing.

- When you install a new translation of an article (that is different from a server template or the homepage), all you need to do is to add your PO file in the appropriate `'/po'` sub-directory.

In the next build, your `'article.lang.html'` will be built and the link to it will be added to the list of translations and propagate to all translations, provided that they are under GNUN's control.

- If you don't feel comfortable editing `'gnun.mk'`, do not worry. Someone from the GNUN maintainers will notice and will amend `TEMPLATE_LINGUAS` or `HOME_LINGUAS` for you, as appropriate.
- Dealing with obsolete strings. Elements which are removed from the original articles appear in the PO files as “obsolete” strings—the translation is not lost, but they are marked in a special way at the end of the PO file. You don't have to update a PO file if it contains obsolete strings—do this only if it has “fuzzy” or “untranslated”, and of course when you want to improve the existing translated ones. Sometimes these obsolete strings are useful, and they can save time. For example, if you anticipate that the deleted text may reappear some time in the future, you can preserve the string and hopefully it would be marked as “fuzzy” when this happens. Failing that, you can still copy it and yank it at the appropriate place.
- You can add comments to every message in a PO file—for example if you want to remember that you have to do something, or to remind you why this particular message is translated in a special way. These comments do not appear in the generated HTML source.
- Sometimes, especially when the original message contains many links, it is easier to copy it to `msgstr` and edit the latter by translating the English text. In PO mode, this is done by `C-j`. This is useful also for large chunks of text in `<pre>` elements, which normally you would want to preserve verbatim.
- If you translate “Free Software Foundation, Inc.” in your native language in the copyright notice, then please prepend the English name to the `<address>`; otherwise it looks awkward in most languages. Example:

```
# type: Content of: <div><address>
msgid "51 Franklin St, Fifth Floor, Boston, MA 02110-1301, USA"
msgstr ""
"Free Software Foundation, Inc., 51 Franklin St, Fifth Floor, "
"Boston, MA 02110-1301, USA"
```

- There is absolutely no reason to use HTML entities in translations as a replacement for common non-ASCII characters. They are harder to write and serve no purpose.
- Wrapping of `msgstr` using `M-q` in Emacs (or other means) is considered harmful. It is best to leave GNUN (or more precisely, Po4a) to do the wrapping—that way all generated HTML translations will have predictable results. This will help tremendously for the conversion to other formats, like Texinfo. Also, note that not all elements are wrapped by default, so

deliberately wrapping the text inside the `msgstr` could lead to an invalid page or a page that is valid, but is rendered incorrectly by the web browser.

### 2.3.5 The ‘`generic.lang.html`’ File

The files ‘`server/gnun/generic.lang.html`’ are special: if no such file exists for your language, an empty file will be created (and added to the repository if specified `VCS=yes`). This file is optional, and should contain a short message in your native language, ideally providing more information about the translation team or where to report bugs. For example:

```
<p>To join the Fooish translation team, see <a
href="http://gnu.org/server/standards/translations/www-foo">the
Foo team homepage</a>.</p>
```

The contents of ‘`generic.lang.html`’ is injected right after the translators’ credits, if any, and before the timestamp. It should be valid HTML markup.

When you modify this file, for example, adding a message to the existing empty file or changing a URL, such modification will affect *all* articles of the language *lang* in ‘`generic.lang.html`’. The next time a build occurs, all translations of the language code *lang* (i.e. all ‘`.lang.html`’, including the homepage), will be modified to include the contents of this special file.

### 2.3.6 The ‘`languages.txt`’ File

The file ‘`server/gnun/languages.txt`’ is used when generating lists of translations; those lists are subsequently included in all translations of the article. Every line in the file is either a comment (when it begins with “`#`”) or a definition for a language. A language is defined by three TAB-separated fields. The first field defines the language suffix; it is used in file names and in texts of the links. The second field is the name of the language in English; it is used in HTML comments. The third field defines the name of the language in that language itself; it is used in texts of the links, and it should be in UTF-8. For example:

```
de German Deutsch
```

The generated list of translations may look like this:

```
<!-- begin translinks file -->
<div id="translations">
<ul class="translations-list">
<!-- German -->
<li><a href="/distros/screenshot.de.html">Deutsch</a>&nbsp;[de]</li>
<!-- English -->
<li><a href="/distros/screenshot.html">English</a>&nbsp;[en]</li>
<!-- Polish -->
<li><a href="/distros/screenshot.pl.html">polski</a>&nbsp;[pl]</li>
</ul>
</div> <!-- id="translations" -->
<!-- end translinks file -->
```

### 2.3.7 Maintaining Translations in Your Team’s Repository

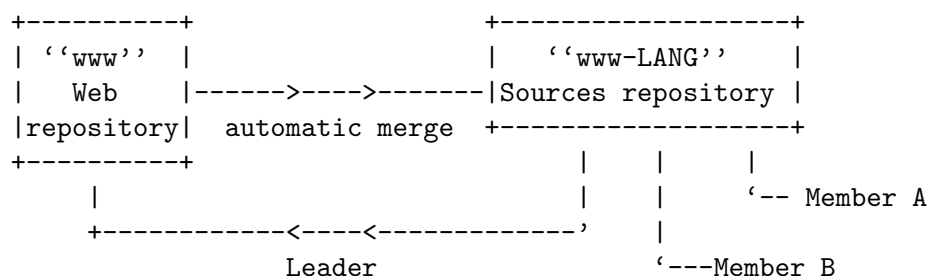
GNUN operates on the “official” Web repository of the Savannah project ‘`www`’, where normally only the coordinators of translation teams have write access. However, all translation teams have their own projects, so it is possible to take advantage of Savannah as a hosting facility to make the team work more comfortable.

The PO files provide an excellent and natural way to review each other’s translations, because the translation appears right below the original message. Mutual reviews and proof-reading of translations is a crucial part of the process. Furthermore, team work is great for the community

spirit; automating some of the operations also result in more time for all members to concentrate on the important tasks.

The file ‘GNUmakefile.team’ in the ‘gnun’ package is a template, aimed for all translation teams who wish to use their own project’s repository as a place to keep their draft translations, until they ripe and are ready to be installed officially.

The following diagram illustrates a typical workflow—it is applicable for small, medium and large teams:



All members and the team leader commit in their project’s repository—when a translation is ready, the leader checks it in in the official ‘www’ repository. If an original article changes, a build could be invoked to synchronize (i.e. merge) the changes and optionally automatically commit them so that the draft PO files are updated. A translator would then normally update the PO file, and commit it again in the project’s Sources repository, from where the coordinator will pick it up and install it in ‘www’.

To take advantage of this semi-automation, rename this template ‘GNUmakefile.team’ as ‘GNUmakefile’ and install it in the root of your project’s Sources repository. Then create directories and sub-directories exactly as they are in ‘www’. Do not create the ‘/po’ sub-directories; they are redundant here. Instead, install the PO files in the normal locations where the corresponding ‘.lang.html’ resides in ‘www’, for example:

```

Root
|
|--GNUmakefile
|--home.lang.po
|--...
|--gnu
|  |
|  |
|  +--linux-and-gnu.lang.po
|  +--manifesto.lang.po
|  +--...
|
|
+--philosophy
|  |
|  |
|  +--free-sw.lang.po
|  +--not-ipr.lang.po
|  +--open-source-misses-the-point.lang.po
|  +--...
|
+--...

```

Add ‘priorities.mk’ in order to make the report target sort the files by priority.

The next sections explain how to adopt the makefile for your team and how to invoke a “build”.

### 2.3.7.1 Adopting ‘GNUmakefile.team’ for a Specific Team

To adjust the makefile for your team, you need to edit two variables.

- ‘TEAM’      Set this to the language code, like **bg** or **pt-br**.
- ‘wwwdir’    The relative or absolute path to the working copy of the master ‘www’ repository. So if you have checked out your project’s Sources repository at ‘~/projects/www-lang’ and the ‘www’ Web repository at ‘~/projects/www’, the value of **wwwdir** should be **../www/** or **/home/user/projects/www/**. Note the slash at the end, it is important.

If two variants of one language share the same project and repository (such as **zh-cn** and **zh-tw**), they should maintain two directories with two ‘GNUmakefile’s and each directory having its own tree.

Some variables are specified on the command line, and alter the behavior of the build process.

- ‘VERBOSE=yes’  
Print more information from **cvs**, **svn** and **msgmerge**; off by default. Note that **VERBOSE** can be defined to any string, it will have the same effect.
- ‘VCS=yes’    Update both ‘www’ and ‘www-lang’ repositories, then commit the merged PO files in the latter repository. By default, there is no VCS interaction. The VCS of the translation project repository is determined automatically; currently only CVS, Subversion, GNU Bzr, Git, Mercurial (Hg) and GNU Arch repositories are supported.  
**Caution:** The makefile rule will commit all local changes, not only those that resulted from running **msgmerge**. Thus, it is better to use a separate working copy dedicated solely for this purpose.

### Targets in ‘GNUmakefile.team’

- update**    Updates the repositories. Does nothing unless **VCS=yes**.
- sync**      Merges all available PO files from the corresponding POT in **www**. If a POT is missing in the master repository (usually, because it was deleted when the original article was either split, renamed or deleted), a warning is printed for the corresponding file and no merging occurs for it.
- report**    Verifies which translations are complete, and prints a list (with statistics) of those that need to be updated.
- format**    A convenience rule to re-wrap all files upto the standard length. Most PO editors leave the **msgstr** as a single long line after it has been edited, but GNUN will automatically re-wrap the file to the standard line length when it is processed. Wrapping long lines in PO files is a good practice as it avoids unnecessary revisions. This rule checks for all translations that have lines longer than 80, and runs **msgcat** accordingly to reformat them. For that reason, it is recommended that you wrap all long lines in the comment fields (e.g. the file header, including the copyright statement, and any other comments for specific messages), because **make format** will unnecessarily invoke **msgcat** for any file that has a longer line, wherever it may occur.
- publish**    The **publish** rule’s task is to copy all modified files to the official **www** repository. It depends on the **format** target to ensure that all files are re-wrapped to the standard line length limit, but deliberately does not depend on **sync VCS=yes**. Usually, one



would run `make publish` when one or a bunch of PO files are in a satisfactory condition to be published, and this rule is just a convenience to avoid multiple manual `cp` invocations. As a rule of thumb, before running this rule it is sane to run `sync` and correct any *fuzzy* messages and other problems, if necessary.

The `publish` rule does not depend on `sync` explicitly, because that would be a nuisance for offline operations and basically unnecessary when the committer is fairly confident that there are no changes to (re-)merge. A hard dependency on `sync` would slow down the operation considerably.

As usual, when committing to the official repository, it is always a good practice to examine the output of `cvs diff`.

Invoking `make publish` prints warnings and does not actually copy the affected file if the sub-directory in “`www`” is non-existent or the corresponding ‘`.pot`’ is missing.

Typically, after an editing session (whether it involves actual editing or just merging contributions from team members), one would do:

```
$ make sync VCS=yes
$ make publish
$ cd wwwdir
$ cvs up
(Add all new translations, if any.)
$ cvs add file ...
$ cvs diff
$ cvs commit -m "Some descriptive message."
```

**clean**      Deletes all backup and auto-generated files that some PO editors leave behind, namely—‘`file.po~`’, ‘`file.po.bak`’ and ‘`file.mo`’.

`make VCS=yes` is the recommended command to be run periodically. To check the status of the translations, run `make report`.

Feel free to replace all strings with equivalents in your native language and of course—do not hesitate to extend this file and modify it as much as you like. For example, useful extra functionality would be a target that will check which files have not yet been committed in the official repository, or which files have to be updated there (i.e. they were updated by the team members but not installed by the coordinator). Either way, if you come up with something interesting, it would be nice to send a message to [bug-gnun@gnu.org](mailto:bug-gnun@gnu.org), so that ‘`GNUmakefile.team`’ gets updated for all teams’ benefit.

### 2.3.7.3 Automatic Synchronization and Status Reports

It is convenient to invoke such synchronization automatically, for example once every day. If you have enabled commit notifications for the project’s repository, any new changes will be visible for subscribers. Here is an example crontab entry:

```
# m h dom mon dow   command
@daily                cd $HOME/projects/www-lang; make VCS=yes
```

It is not necessary the job to be run on the team leader’s machine, since all team members have write access to their project repository.

If desired, you could set up another job to report the status of the translations weekly or fortnightly, for example:

```
# m h dom mon dow   command
@weekly              cd $HOME/projects/www-lang; \
                     make report | mail -s "Weekly statistics" \
                     www-lang-list@gnu.org
```

**Caution:** Most cron implementations do not allow the character ‘\’ as a line continuation character—the example shown is made that way for better readability.

### 2.3.8 Using Compendia

Compendium is a PO file including translations for common strings; it is used to fill other PO files. See [Section “Using Translation Compendia” in GNU gettext tools](#). One example of such common strings is the footer text about reporting bugs and sending inquiries: when a webmaster updates footer texts in an article, GNUN will use compendia to automatically fill the translations for the new version of the strings.

GNUN uses compendia located in the ‘`server/gnun/compendia`’ directory of the ‘`www`’ web repository. There are two kinds of compendia: ‘`master.lang.po`’ and ‘`compendium.lang.po`’.

The first kind, ‘`master.lang.po`’, can be used to simultaneously update all occurrences of the translations of a given string. Translations from this file will override the translations from ‘`article.lang.po`’. When ‘`master.lang.po`’ is updated, the translations will be rebuilt. GNUN doesn’t modify this kind of compendia.

The second kind, ‘`compendium.lang.po`’, is updated automatically. GNUN finds strings that repeat many times in POTs of articles and collects them in ‘`compendium.pot`’. Then it checks all available ‘`article.lang.po`’ files for translations of those strings and generates ‘`compendium.lang.po`’. This file is also used to fill missing translations, but it doesn’t override the translations from ‘`article.lang.po`’, and the strings coming from ‘`compendium.lang.po`’ are always marked as “fuzzy” to prevent propagation of translations that may be wrong in a different context.

When updating ‘`compendium.pot`’, some strings should be excluded even though they repeat in the POT files many times—for instance, GNUN slots for translators’ notes. See [Section 2.3.1.1 \[Notes Slot\], page 14](#). They are not real translations, this is why they are likely to be different for different articles. In order to avoid including them in compendia, GNUN checks a specific file, ‘`exclude.pot`’, and when that file contains the string, it won’t be added to ‘`compendium.pot`’.

## 2.4 Tips and Hints for Webmasters

This section contains some tips and general recommendations for webmasters in no particular order—it is not mandatory to follow them, but doing so will make translators’ lives substantially easier.

First and foremost, respect translators’ work—it is ungrateful and hard, undoubtedly much harder than translation of programs. It is important to have as many and as better as possible translations, and you don’t have to make titanic efforts to help.

If you plan to edit a certain page extensively, please do so within the period between two adjacent GNUN builds—i.e. within a day. That way, the POT will be regenerated only once, and translators who are quick to update it immediately won’t be disappointed if it changes again in the next run.

### 2.4.1 Validation

The script `gnun-validate-html` is useful for webmasters who want to verify if their (potentially intrusive) changes result in a valid markup. Before committing your changes, you can check whether the file is valid by running

```
gnun-validate-html --root . philosophy/not-ipr.html
```

See [Section 3.1.6 \[gnun-validate-html\], page 26](#), for more information.

### 2.4.2 Comments for Translators

If you want a comment to be visible for translators, place it *inside* the element, for example:

```
<p>
<!--TRANSLATORS: Note that foo is bar in this context.-->
The fooish bar mumbles bazzling.
</p>
```

This will result in:

```
# type: Content of: <p>
#. TRANSLATORS: Note that foo is bar in this context.
msgid "The fooish bar mumbles bazzling."
msgstr ""
```

As per the established convention, start the comment with `TRANSLATORS:` to catch their attention, and do not add a space after the beginning of the HTML comment (`<!--`), since this will unnecessarily indent the comment in the POT.

### 2.4.3 Modifying Boilerplates

**Warning:** Any significant structural diversion from ‘`boilerplate.html`’ in a specific article may result in errors from GNUN. Any untested intrusive updates to the server templates (such as changing the entire look & feel of the site) will probably break *all* translations under GNUN’s control. Of course, this does not mean that no changes should happen—only that they must be applied in our sandbox first, to ensure a smooth transition.

### 2.4.4 Localized URLs

Some articles may contain diagrams or other images with English text that can and should be translated. In order to make the translated versions appear in the respective translations, GNUN should be told what URLs need localization. It can be done with HTML comments like

```
<!-- GNUN: localize URL /philosophy/category.png,
/licenses/template-diagram.png and /graphics/jesus-cartoon.jpg -->
```

The URLs are separated with spaces. One trailing comma at the end of every word is removed if present. Words without a dot, such as ‘and’, do not count as URLs; they are ignored.

Such comments will be extracted nightly and compiled into per-article lists of URLs in ‘`localized-urls.mk`’.

After every build GNUN will check if the respective ‘`philosophy/category.lang.png`’ and other files are present in the working copy and substitute the strings in the HTML file of the translation.

GNUN relies on URLs being absolute, starting from the root homepage as required in <http://www.gnu.org/server/fsf-html-style-sheet.html#FilenameAndURLGuidelines>.

And please don’t forget to commit the image in its source form (typically, in SVG format).

## 3 Unexciting Information for GNUN's Operation

This chapter might be of interest probably only to people who would have special interest in the software, plan to enhance it or develop a front-end, except the section about scripts that includes descriptions of programs that may also be useful for the translators.

### 3.1 GNUN Scripts

For the time being there are several helper scripts. Some of them are used internally as commands with certain arguments in the makefile rules; other scripts were written specifically to facilitate some mechanical actions, like initially filling the headers in the PO files. They all can be invoked separately, as stand-alone programs.

#### 3.1.1 The `make-prototype` Script

This is a Guile script which makes the “prototype” file, `foo.lang.proto`, from which the POT is generated. GNUN is designed in such a way, because it would be no big improvement if links to other translations ended up in the POT—it would mean that translators would have to manually update their PO file when a new translation is added.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, `make-prototype` guards the timestamp (the `$Date$` RCS keyword) in order the timestamp of the translation to be updated *only* when there are actual changes, being automatic or not.

Finally, `make-prototype` “injects” the artificial elements `*GNUN-SLOT: TRANSLATOR'S NOTES*` and `*GNUN-SLOT: TRANSLATOR'S CREDITS*`, thanks to which it is possible to insert the name of the translator and translator's notes, if necessary. See [Section 2.3.1 \[New Translation\]](#), page 11.

Here are the options that `make-prototype` accepts:

```
--article'
    Process the input file as an article. This is the default.2

--home'    Process the input article as a homepage. Specify this when you want to create a
            '.proto' file for a homepage.

-i'
--input=file'
    Input file, which can be a common article (essay) or a homepage.

-g'
--generic=file'
    Common notes for a translation team; this is the 'generic.lang.html' file. See
    Section 2.3.5 \[generic.LANG.html\], page 18.

-o'
--output=file'
    The file where to write the output of the script.

--version'
    Print copyright and version information on the standard output.

--help'    Print usage information on stdout.
```

<sup>1</sup> Since version 0.5, those links are maintained in a separate file included with SSI directives.

<sup>2</sup> As of version 0.5, this option is considered obsolete because the lists of translations are implemented as an automatically generated file included via SSI directive just like the respective list is included in the homepage. See [Section 2.3.6 \[languages.txt\]](#), page 18. In the future, both the `--article` and the `--home` option will be removed.

### 3.1.2 The `gnun-add-fuzzy-diff` Script

This script adds comments with differences of current `msgid`s against previous ones to fuzzy translations in a PO file. To produce the differences `wdiff` is used. This may be useful to figure out what has changed. In fact, it wraps around a `sed` script used in GNUN internally.

```
gnun-add-fuzzy-diff [OPTION...] [FILE]

'-i'
'--in-place'
    Edit the file in place.

'--version'
    Display copyright and version information and exit.

'--help'   Display usage information and exit.
```

### 3.1.3 The `gnun-init-po` Script

This script initializes a PO file using POT generated with GNUN, and fills some fields in the header. It also optionally uses a compendium (or compendia) to fill translations.

```
gnun-init-po [OPTION...] POT

'-C'
'--compendium=comp'
    Specify a compendium to use. You can issue this option many times to use multiple
    compendia simultaneously. The suffix of compendium is used when the language
    suffix is not specified with the --language option.

'-d'
'--disable-diffs'
    Don't add diffs to previous messages.

'-g'
'--team="team <list>"'
    Specify team's name and mailing list.

'-l'
'--language=lang'
    Specify language suffix, e.g. "bg". The suffix also defines the name of the language
    which is used in some fields of PO file header.

'-t'
'--translator="full name <email>"'
    Specify translator.

'--version'
    Display copyright and version information and exit.

'--help'   Display usage information and exit.
```

The PO file name is guessed from the name of POT and language suffix; the file is created in current working directory.

### 3.1.4 The `gnun-preconvert` Script

This script uses `po4a-gettextize` to convert a translation from HTML to PO format (see <http://po4a.alioth.debian.org/man/man7/po4a.7.php#1bA0>). If the conversion is successful, you can merge the result with the new POT using `gnun-merge-preconverted`.

```
gnun-preconvert [OPTION...] TRANSLATION MASTER
```

```
'-e'
'--encoding'
    Specify the encoding of TRANSLATION (if other than UTF-8).
'--version'
    Display copyright and version information and exit.
'--help'    Display usage information and exit.
```

### 3.1.5 The gnun-merge-preconverted Script

This script takes `po4a-gettextize` output, adds current `msgids` as “previous” values, merges the file with the new POT, and adds differences against previous values like `gnun-add-fuzzy-diff` does.

```
gnun-merge-preconverted [OPTION...] PO POT
'-C'
'--compendium'
    Specify the compendium (if any). This option can be used more than once to specify
    multiple compendia.
'--version'
    Display copyright and version information and exit.
'--help'    Display usage information and exit.
```

### 3.1.6 The gnun-validate-html Script

This is a Bash script whose purpose is to “validate” both the original and translated articles to make sure that they conform to the respective W3C standard. Sometimes webmasters make mistakes, and translators too, so this tool is useful to catch errors of that kind.

GNUN enforces HTML validation at build time if invoked with `VALIDATE=yes`.

The script expects only one *file* as the last argument and will exit with an error if it is not specified (which might be the case when an automatic variable is not expanded properly due to a bug in the makefile). Example:

```
gnun-validate-html --root . philosophy/free-sw.html
'--root=directory'
    Specify the top directory of the working copy; the default value is ‘../..’.
'--expand-to=file'
    Save the expanded HTML as file.
'--version'
    Display copyright and version information and exit.
'--help'    Display usage information and exit.
```

### 3.1.7 The mailfail Script

This is a helper script that runs a command, and mails the output of that command in case it exits with a non-zero exit status. `mailfail` depends on GNU Mailutils, or a compatible implementation, such as BSD's `mailx`.

Usage:

```
mailfail [--dry-run] RCPT SUBJECT CMD [ARG ...]
The mailfail script accepts the following options:
'--dry-run'
    Does not send the email message.
```

- 'RCPT'      The recipient of the message in a valid format, like `someone@somehost.org`.
- 'SUBJECT'   The subject of the message; if it is longer than a word you should guard it with quotes.
- 'CMD'        The command you want to run and send a mail in case it fails.
- 'ARG...'     The arguments of CMD, if any.

Here is a typical example, similar to the way it is used in GNUN:

```
mailfail translators@example.org "Bad PO" msgfmt -cv -o /dev/null bg.po
```

This will check the validity of `'bg.po'` with the `msgfmt` program and in case there are errors, a message will be sent to the specified address with `'Bad PO'` as subject and the error output from `msgfmt` as body.

`mailfail` inherits the exit status of the command being run. If an argument is missing, the usage information is printed to the standard output and the exit code is 1.

### 3.1.8 The `validate-html-notify` Script

This script is a wrapper around `gnun-validate-html` (see [Section 3.1.6 \[gnun-validate-html\]](#), [page 26](#)); it is necessary because it is hard to capture the output of the program from a program that itself captures the output of another program that it runs.

Usage:

```
validate-html-notify [--dry-run] RCPT FILE
```

'--dry-run'

Does not actually send the message, just like `mailfail`.

'RCPT'      The recipient of the message.

'FILE'      The HTML file that has to be validated for compliance with the W3C standard.

The subject of the message is hardcoded in the script, since this wrapper has a specific task and cannot be used to invoke an arbitrary command—use `mailfail` for that. See [Section 3.1.7 \[mailfail\]](#), [page 26](#).

### 3.1.9 The `gnun-clear-previous` Script

This simple script is not used internally in GNUN. It is merely for convenience only, for those who find it hard to remember the various `'gettext'` tools and their options.

`gnun-clear-previous` deletes the *previous* messages in a PO file, which is a good thing to do after the corresponding translation is updated and the *fuzzy* marker removed. It can also be used to wrap long lines in PO files.

Usage:

```
gnun-clear-previous FILE
```

'--version'

Print copyright and version information on the standard output.

'--help'    Print usage information on stdout.

## 3.2 How The Recipes Work

Read the source code, then please tell us :-)

## 4 Reporting Bugs

GNUUnited Nations, like any other software, is not bug free. There are some known bugs and annoyances, which are listed in the ‘TODO’ file, but it is absolutely certain that there are more which we know nothing about.

If you encounter a bug, or if you have suggestions of any kind, please do not hesitate to report them at [bug-gnun@gnu.org](mailto:bug-gnun@gnu.org) or <https://savannah.gnu.org/bugs/?group=gnun>.



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