

MuntsOS

Application Note #24: Development Environment Setup for x86-64 Windows 10/11

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Introduction

This application note describes how to install the application software development environment for **MuntsOS Embedded Linux** (hereafter just **MuntsOS**) onto an x86-64 (*i.e.* AMD or Intel 64-bit CPU) computer running Windows 10 or 11.

*Hereafter in this document, the term **Windows** must be understood as x86-64 Windows 10 or 11.*

While it is entirely feasible to run development tools targeting **MuntsOS** on a Windows computer in a Linux virtual machine, or in [Windows Subsystem for Linux](#), these options impose a significant system administration burden, as you must install and maintain a full Linux distribution just to run a cross-toolchain.

The **MuntsOS Embedded Linux** cross-toolchains running on Windows can be installed and updated periodically from one of the following `git` repositories:

<https://git.munts.com/toolchains/win64/gcc-aarch64-muntsos-linux-gnu-ctng>

<https://git.munts.com/toolchains/win64/gcc-arm-muntsos-linux-gnueabihf-ctng-raspberrypi1>

At time of writing, these cross-toolchains do not include support for [GNU Modula-2](#), due to [GCC Bug 92336](#).

Building a Cross-Toolchain for Windows

In the [GCC](#) cross-toolchain world, there are names for three different computers running potentially different operating systems:

Build is the computer you build your cross-toolchain on.

Host is the computer you run your cross-toolchain on.

Target is the computer you use your cross-toolchain to compile programs for.

Building a cross-toolchain that will run on Microsoft Windows was a terrible battle. Neither [Crosstool-NG](#) nor [GNU Dev Tools for ARM](#) are able at time of writing to successfully build a cross-toolchain (build=64-bit Windows, host=64-bit Windows, target=32- or 64-bit ARM Linux) using either [Cygwin](#) or [MSYS2/Mingw-w64](#) (the two most popular environments for compiling and running Unix software on Windows). Crosstool-NG can ostensibly build a [Canadian Cross](#) (build=64-bit Linux, host=64-bit Windows, target=32- or 64-bit ARM Linux) toolchain in one go, but that also failed.

I eventually built a cross-compiler targeting Windows (build=64-bit Linux, host=64-bit Linux, target=64-bit Windows). Using that and the existing normal **MuntsOS** cross-toolchains (build=64-bit Linux, host=64-bit Linux, target=32- or 64-bit ARM Linux), I was finally able to manually build Canadian Cross **MuntsOS** cross-toolchains for Windows (build=64-bit Linux, host=64-bit Windows, target=32- or 64-bit ARM Linux).

Caveats & Limitations & Rants

Windows presents two main difficulties that make it nigh impossible to build a cross-toolchain targeting **MuntsOS** and difficult to even install one built elsewhere.

The first difficulty is the lack of symbolic links compatible with Unix operating systems such as Linux. Windows does provide symbolic links, but they are different enough that it becomes difficult to translate from Linux to Windows. One example of different functionality is that Linux is happy to create a symbolic link that points to a file that does not yet exist while Windows refuses to create a link to a non-existent target. Another complication is that Windows requires different kinds of links for different kinds of targets and some of them require administrative access to create.

The solution to this first difficulty is to replace all symbolic links in the cross-toolchain directory tree with the targets they point to. This is surprisingly easy to accomplish with:

```
rsync -avcql
```

After replacing symbolic links with their targets, the size of the cross-toolchain directory tree will be somewhat larger, as there will be an extra copy of each file previously pointed to by a symbolic link.

The second and worst difficulty is that Windows and MacOS file systems are, by default, **case insensitive**, meaning upper case and lower case letters are not distinguished in file names. Only one of **aa**, **aA**, **Aa**, and **AA** can exist in a directory. If you create a file **aa** and subsequently open and write to **AA**, only the former will be present and will contain the data written to the latter.

Unix and Linux file systems are typically **case sensitive**, meaning that **aa**, **aA**, **Aa**, and **AA** can all exist as distinct files in a directory. In a *rational* world this would not be a problem: *Rational* software developers would *never* deliberately create filenames differing only in letter case, both because such a policy prevents very obscure bugs (reading or writing the wrong file), and in recognition of the existence of more than one billion case insensitive Windows and MacOS computers that people actually use.

In the *real* world the situation is rather uglier. The Linux kernel source tree contains filenames differing only in letter case, making it impossible to unpack or checkout the Linux source tree to a typical Windows or MacOS file system. The GCC and/or binutils source trees also seem to contain filenames differing only in letter case, as may some of the library components included in the **MuntsOS** cross-toolchains.

The cross-toolchain distribution tarballs mentioned above in the first section of this document contain about 15 or so sets of filenames differing in case and present in the same directory, including the insane example of **linux/netfilter/xt_CONNMARK.h** that just includes its evil twin **linux/netfilter/xt_connmark.h**. This means that you cannot unpack one of the cross-toolchain distribution tarballs to a typical Windows file system without corrupting the cross-toolchain directory tree.

Windows from Windows 10 Build 1803 onwards provides a command `fsutil.exe` that can configure an *empty directory* for case sensitive filenames:

```
fsutil file SetCaseSensitiveInfo YourDestinationFolder enable
```

Files and directories subsequently created under `YourDestinationFolder/` will be case sensitive, and the Linux kernel could be checked out into `YourDestinationFolder/` or one of the cross-toolchains unpacked into `YourDestinationFolder/`.

Note: The `fsutil` command above may not work unless WSL (Windows Subsystem for Linux) has been enabled. If you find that to be the case (pun intended) on your computer, you can issue the following command in a PowerShell window (opened in Administrative mode) to enable WSL:

```
Enable-WindowsOptionalFeature -Online -FeatureName Microsoft-Windows-Subsystem-Linux
```

There does not appear to be any workable solution for any Windows older than Windows 10 Build 1803. It is *theoretically* possible to create a disk partition with MBR partition ID 7 and format said partition as a case sensitive [Universal Disk Format](#) file system using the following DOS command:

```
format G: /fs:UDF (Replace G: with your actual drive letter!)
```

Installation Procedure

Before Installing a Cross-Toolchain

You will need to use the **Windows Command Line Interface** to make use of the MuntsOS cross-toolchains for Windows. Even if you use a visual IDE (Integrated Development Environment) such as Visual Studio Code, it will be easier to set necessary environment variables in a command line window before starting the IDE in your project directory with a command like:

```
code .
```

Windows offers two command line window programs: The older **cmd.exe** inherited from MS-DOS and the newer **Windows Terminal**. The latter is far superior and strongly recommended. Windows Terminal can be configured for different command interpreters, including **cmd.exe**.

You will also need to install one of two Unix-like environments for Windows: [Cygwin](#) or [MSYS2](#). Each of these environments provides a large collection of programs (such as **ls**, **tar**, or **gmake**) that originally came from Unix but have been compiled for Windows.

Cygwin and MSYS2 are both collections of packages, like Linux distributions, each of which installs one or more programs. For Cygwin, the package manager is the GUI [Cygwin Installer](#). For MSYS2 the command line package manager is [pacman](#).

*Tip: [Alire](#) (the Ada Library Repository) automatically installs most or all of the MSYS2 packages that you will need to install and use the **MuntsOS** cross-toolchains for Windows. After you have installed Alire, you can use a batch file like [alire.bat](#) to set the **PATH** variable in a Windows command terminal.*

Installing a Cross-Toolchain

The following installation procedure assumes that Cygwin has been installed at **C:\Program Files\cygwin** and that **MuntsOS** cross-toolchains will be installed under **C:\Program Files\MuntsOS**. If you wish use MSYS2 and/or to install things elsewhere, you will need make adjustments to this procedure.

The following commands, which must be issued from a command window opened with administrative (*i.e.* superuser) access, create the directory **C:\Program Files\MuntsOS**, where cross-toochains are to be installed, and make it filename case sensitive:

```
set PATH=C:\Program Files\cygwin\bin;C:\Windows;C:\Windows\System32
cd "C:\Program Files"
md MuntsOS
fsutil.exe file setCaseSensitiveInfo MuntsOS enable
cd MuntsOS
```

Verify case sensitivity with the following commands:

```
touch aa AA  
dir  
del aa AA
```

You should receive response text resembling the following, showing two distinct files **aa** and **AA**:

```
Directory of C:\Program Files\MuntsOS  
  
11/24/2025  10:18 AM      <DIR>          .  
11/24/2025  10:17 AM      <DIR>          ..  
11/24/2025  10:18 AM          0 aa  
11/24/2025  10:18 AM          0 AA
```

Now download and verify a **MuntsOS** cross-toolchain for Linux with one or more of the following command sequences:

```
cd C:/PROGRA~1/MuntsOS  
git clone https://git.munts.com/toolchains/win64/gcc-aarch64-muntsos-  
linux-gnu-ctng  
cd gcc-aarch64-muntsos-linux-gnu-ctng  
md5sum --quiet -c share/stuff/checksums.md5
```

```
cd C:/PROGRA~1/MuntsOS  
git clone https://git.munts.com/toolchains/win64/gcc-arm-muntsos-  
linux-gnueabihf-ctng-raspberrypi1  
cd gcc-arm-muntsos-linux-gnueabihf-ctng-raspberrypi1  
md5sum --quiet -c share/stuff/checksums.md5
```

After Installing Cross-Toolchains

You will also need to clone the following two **git** repositories to pick up some make include files necessary to compile programs with the **MuntsOS** cross-toolchains:

```
git clone https://github.com/pmunts/libsimpleio  
git clone https://github.com/pmunts/muntsos
```

These should be cloned in your Windows home directory by default. If you wish to install them elsewhere, such as in **C:/PROGRA~1/MuntsOS**, you can set the **LIBSIMPLEIO** and **MUNTSOS** environment variables to the alternate checkout locations.