

Open Source Software happiness

Contributed by Michael Felt

Time for some happy frustration as I start getting back to packaging software for AIX. I would probably have a lot less trouble if I took AIX 6.1 as the base level - but I am trying to compile everything using the IBM xLC compiler (v11) and AIX 5.3 TL7 (CSP).

My first serious project, several years back, was ASF (Apache Software Foundation) HTTPD. ASF has always been very open and willing to listen and make changes when applicable - and give constructive hints when that was more applicable. And, for the record, I managed to get both HTTPD 2.2.28 and 2.4.9 repackaged without too much of a problem last week - check out <http://dl.aixtools.net/httpd> for files - if interested.

Working with PHP has always been more difficult - this goes back to early 2001 or 2002 (whenever PHP 4.0.4 and 4.0.6 were the latest releases). There have always been "frustrations". And, most of the time, the problem has not been in the PHP code itself - but in the tools needed to get PHP to build. Initially this was libtool - as it was a bit behind with AIX, but lately the problem seem to be the mind shift in people developing Open Source Software (OSS).

Back when OSF and GNU got started one of their key premises was portability of code - over all *NIX systems and compilers. The goal seemed to be not only make software open (source code is available) but also portable when using any modern architecture - including the legacy application development tools (e.g., compilers and linkers). A large part of the reason for tools like libtool, autoconf, automake, etc. was to automate the configuration of software sources to a variety of environments.

Unfortunately - today - portability seems to be defined by some as - compiles using gcc and/or compiles on Linux. And this makes me sad.

I shall comment more on this as I get responses, or lack of any response, as I try to package some of the dependancies many OSS packages have/need. And your comments are very welcome via the forums - <http://www.rootvg.net/forums>.

p.s. I will be posting, I hope, packaging of PHP 5.2, 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5 asap. I have nearly finished 5.2 and 5.3 - not because I expect lots of people to need them now - but because I believe there are moments when old versions are needed versus the belief "there is only one version - the latest version -- old versions should be non-extinct"