

Overview of Ghostscript

This document is a roadmap to the Ghostscript documentation. After looking through it, if you want to install Ghostscript and not only use it, we recommend you read how to install Ghostscript, and how to compile Ghostscript from source code (which is necessary before installing it on Unix and VMS systems).

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Document roadmap by theme

What should I read if I'm a new user?

- * how to use Ghostscript. This includes both a quickstart introduction to the commandline version and more extensive reference material.
- * detailed information about specific devices that Ghostscript can use for output
- * more detailed information about how to use Ghostscript under Unix with lpr as a filter for printing
- * for information about known problems or to report a new one, please visit bugs.ghostscript.com but remember that free versions of Ghostscript come with with NO WARRANTY and NO SUPPORT

GPL and commercial Ghostscript

GPL Ghostscript, Artifex Ghostscript and AFPL Ghostscript are different releases.

- * additional information about GPL Ghostscript releases that is not relevant to commercial versions.

If you run into any questions, or if you are going to be using Ghostscript extensively, you should at least skim, and probably eventually read:

- * about the fonts distributed with Ghostscript, including how to add or replace fonts
- * a description of the Ghostscript language, and its differences from the documented PostScript language
- * about the postscript files distributed with Ghostscript (other than fonts)

Before building Ghostscript

If you are going to compile Ghostscript from source, rather than just use an executable you got from somewhere, you may want to read:

- * how to build Ghostscript and install it
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What should I read if I'm not a new user?

If you have already used Ghostscript, when you receive a new release you should begin by reading this file, then

- * [News.htm](#), for incompatible changes and new features in the current release;
 - * if you wish, [Changes.htm](#), for a detailed list of changes in the current release;
 - * if you wish, [History#.htm](#) (currently [History8.htm](#)), for changes in other releases.
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What if I'm a developer?

If you are going to do any development on or with Ghostscript at all, you should at least look at

- * the roadmap documentation for Ghostscript's source files and architecture

If you are going to write a new driver for Ghostscript, you should read

- * the guide to the Ghostscript source code
- * the interface between Ghostscript and device drivers
- * about the external font interface between Ghostscript and platform-supplied fonts

If you are considering distributing GPL Ghostscript in conjunction with a commercial product, you should read the license carefully, and you should also read

- * additional clarification of the circumstances under which Ghostscript can be distributed with a commercial product

If you intend to use Ghostscript in the form of a dynamic link library (DLL) under OS/2 or Microsoft Windows or in the form of shared object under Linux, read

- * documentation on Ghostscript Interpreter API

If you want to use Ghostscript as part of another program--as a callable PostScript language interpreter--and not as a DLL or as a self-contained executable application, you should begin by reading

- * the source file `imain.h`, the documented API for Ghostscript not as a DLL

or if you are going to use only the Ghostscript graphics library,

- * about the structure of the Ghostscript library and its interfaces

What if I'm writing documentation?

If you are editing or adding to Ghostscript's existing documentation in HTML format, or writing a new document, you should read

Presence on the World Wide Web

Ghostscript's home page

Ghostscript has a home page on the World Wide Web with helpful information such as the FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) and a list of known problems and workarounds for the current GPL Ghostscript release (in the "Obtaining" file for that release):

<http://www.cs.wisc.edu/~ghost/>

More material about Ghostscript can be found at

<http://www.ghostscript.com/>

Adobe PostScript, Encapsulated PostScript, and PDF reference documentation

Adobe makes a wealth of technical documentation available over the Web, including the PostScript Language Reference Manual (Third Edition); the Encapsulated PostScript (EPS) Format Specification version 3, including

Encapsulated PostScript Interchange (EPSI) format; the PDF Reference manuals. The Acrobat SDK contains pdfmark and Acrobat Distiller parameters documentation. Some of these documents are also available at Adobe's ftp site, but not necessarily under the same filenames.

Other material on the WWW

Much other material about Ghostscript is available on the World Wide Web, both as web pages and as archived Usenet and mailing list discussions. Use the well-known search engines to find such material.

There is a translation of the Ghostscript 'man' pages into Czech at:

<http://www.volny.cz/rebus/ghostscript/>

Which document contains what?

Here is the list in alphabetic order of Ghostscript documentation, with explanations of the contents.

API.htm

On MS-Windows and OS/2, Ghostscript is compiled as a dynamic link library (DLL). On Linux, Ghostscript can be compiled as a shared object. This describes how to use it. For developers.

C-style.htm

Guidelines and style for C coding, which you should follow if, for example, you write a new driver or add or change something in Ghostscript. For developers.

Changes.htm

A detailed list of all code changes in the current release or pre-release, generated mechanically from the CVS logs. For developers.

Commprod.htm

The conditions under which Ghostscript may be distributed in a commercial context. See also the GNU General Public License.

DLL.htm

On OS/2, MS Windows-16 and MS Windows-32 platforms, Ghostscript is compiled as a dynamic link library (DLL). This describes how to use it. For developers. This DLL interface is obsolete. Use API.htm instead.

Develop.htm

Code orientation for developers. Contains a detailed breakdown of the source files by functional group, and overviews of the major architectural features and services.

Deprecated.htm

Documentation for deprecated devices and features. Features described here will be removed in future versions of Ghostscript.

Devices.htm

Detailed information about some specific devices for which Ghostscript can produce output. Run "gs -h" to see which devices

a particular version of Ghostscript is built to use.

Drivers.htm

Describes the interface between Ghostscript and device drivers. If you do this, you should also read and use the C style and coding guidelines. Necessary to develop a new driver. For developers.

Fonts.htm

All about fonts freely available for Ghostscript, and how to add and use new fonts. Also describes how to use Ghostscript fonts as X Windows fonts. For both users and developers.

Helpers.htm

A note of thanks to people who have helped in the development of Ghostscript.

Hershey.htm

Part 1 of the five-part original Usenet distribution of the free Hershey fonts, giving the terms of use and describing their encoding.

History*.htm

The history of changes in all Ghostscript releases:

History8.htm for Ghostscript versions 8.n

History7.htm for Ghostscript versions 7.n

History6.htm for Ghostscript versions 6.n

History5.htm for Ghostscript versions 5.n

History4.htm for Ghostscript versions 4.n

History3.htm for Ghostscript versions 3.n

History2.htm for Ghostscript versions 2.n

History1.htm for Ghostscript versions 1.n

Install.htm

How to install Ghostscript. See also how to build it.

Issues.htm

A list of outstanding open issues in Ghostscript. These include known limitations, minor bugs, performance issues, differences from Adobe implementations, and others.

Language.htm

The relationship between the Ghostscript interpreter and the PostScript language as defined by Adobe.

Lib.htm

A description of the Ghostscript library, a set of procedures to implement the graphics and filtering capabilities that are primitive operations in the PostScript language and in Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF). For developers.

Make.htm

How to build Ghostscript executables from the source code. See also how to install it. It's not necessary to be a highly experienced developer to build or install Ghostscript, but some experience is needed.

News.htm

A brief description of the latest release or pre-release of Ghostscript, and a list of any incompatible changes in it. Changes in older releases are described in the history files "History*.htm", which are usually installed in the documentation directory. Run "gs -h" to see where that is.

Projects.htm

A list of Ghostscript development projects with which we would like help.

Ps-style.htm

The guidelines and style for postscript coding in Ghostscript. Some of Ghostscript is implemented in the postscript language itself, and various utilities and examples are distributed with it. You should follow these guidelines if you're extending or modifying those files. For developers.

Ps2epsi.htm

Detailed information on how to use Ghostscript through ps2epsi to convert PostScript to Adobe Encapsulated PostScript Interchange (EPSI) format.

Ps2pdf.htm

Detailed information on how to use Ghostscript through ps2pdf to convert PostScript to Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF).

Ps2ps2.htm

Detailed information on how to use Ghostscript through ps2ps2 to convert Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) or Adobe Postscript Level 3 into Adobe Postscript Level 2.

Psfiles.htm

A description of the PostScript files (other than font files) distributed with Ghostscript, including initialization routines, utility programs, and sample printable files.

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The GNU General Public License, which states the conditions for using and redistributing GPL Ghostscript.

Readme.htm

This document.

Release.htm

A description of how to prepare and test a Ghostscript release. Of interest only to developers who want to create new Ghostscript versions for distribution.

Source.htm

A guide to the Ghostscript source code, for development and debugging.

Unix-lpr.htm

How to set up Ghostscript as a Unix lpr filter.

Use.htm

Detailed instructions on how to use Ghostscript, including such matters as designating an output device; choosing a default paper size; how Ghostscript finds files, including font files;

how it uses environment variables; notes on specific platforms, including the X Window System; and command-line options.

Xfonts.htm

Ghostscript's external font interface to a host platform's font-rendering mechanism, for developers.

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