
Leafnode FAQ

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\$Id: FAQ.xml,v 1.10 2002/10/23 09:36:11 emma Exp \$

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\$Date: 2002/10/23 09:36:11 \$

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Leafnode frequently asked questions, with answers.

Installation problems

Q:. Leafnode does not compile on my system.

A.: **Apple MacOS X/Darwin.** Apple introduced Two-Level Namespace Executables [<http://developer.apple.com/techpubs/macosx/>] with MacOS X 10.1. This change affects how the linker works, and the linker itself is driven by the libtool parts that ship with PCRE. libtool as of that version and up to version 1.4.2 does not yet support the new linker semantics of MacOS X 10.1, and the compile broke up to and including leafnode 1.9.27.

Since leafnode 1.9.28, the embedded `pcre/` directory contains two changes to overcome these problems:

1. the embedded libtool parts in `configure` are patched to detect these new MacOS versions and pass appropriate options to the linker.
2. When leafnode uses the embedded libtool, it passes the `--disable-shared` option to PCRE's `configure`, which avoids this trouble with shared libraries and speeds up the build -- leafnode will link statically anyhow to avoid the PCRE installation. The file `configure.gnu` does that, and it will not get applied if you explicitly configure `pcre/`.

So, effectively, an update to leafnode 1.9.28 should fix this problem. If it does not, contact the leafnode mailing list.

Linux. Another common reason for the build to fail is that Leafnode depends on some system-specific information which is usually included in the sources of the kernel.

Unfortunately, some Linux distribution do not install kernel sources by default; therefore, compilation of Leafnode (and most other programs as well) will fail. The obvious solution is to install the kernel sources. On Linux, if the kernel sources are installed in `/usr/src/linux-a.b.cc` (with `a.b.cc` being the version number of your kernel), create a symlink to `/usr/src/linux`.

Configuration problems

Q:. Leafnode refuses to start and tells things about my hostname!

A:. There is a separate documentation file dedicated to this issue, how to obtain a hostname, and how to tell leafnode about it. Please see `README-FQDN` or `README-FQDN.html` for details.

Q:. Does leafnode support local newsgroups?

A:. Leafnode 1.x does not support local newsgroups. Leafnode 2.x will do that.

Q:. How do I use fetchnews with NNTP/SSL servers, such as `nntp.sourceforge.net`?

A:. Warning: SourceForge does not currently support the **HEAD**, **STAT** and **BODY** commands, so leafnode-1 is totally out of the play for now. leafnode-2 will work for lurking, but will likely be unable to post. Sourceforge are aware that we need these commands and will add them at a later time.

1. Obtain stunnel [<http://stunnel.mirt.net>] and install it.
2. Arrange for stunnel to be started at system boot time, try:

```
/usr/sbin/stunnel -c -d 127.0.0.1:563 -r nntp.sourceforge.net:563
```

```
Add  
D1
```

```
server = localhost  
port = 563  
username = YOUR_SF_LOGIN  
password = TOP_SECRET
```

```
to your /etc/leafnode/config.
```

Problems at run time

Q:. I cannot post, leafnode tells me the Message-ID is invalid.

A:. Netscape Communicator, Mozilla and derived products (Beonex) will by default generate the Message-ID from the domain part of your E-Mail address. However, if your address is that of a big freemailer site (hotmail.com, yahoo.com, gmx.de), this will lead to invalid Message-IDs.

To work around this, go to the **Mail & Newsgroups** settings and enclose your E-Mail addresses into double quote marks, like this:

```
"matthias.andree@gmx.de"
```

This will prevent your Netscape-based newsreader from generating the invalid Message-ID and leave the generation to leafnode.

Q:. I cannot connect to my newsserver.

A:. You may not have configured inetd or xinetd properly, or the corresponding super server is not running. Please review the installation instructions.

To test the setup, try: **telnet localhost 119**. Leafnode should then reply with

```
200 Leafnode NNTP Daemon, version 1.9.27.rel running at merlin.emma.line.org (my_
fqdn: merlin.emma.line.org)
```

Q:. Remote users cannot connect to leafnode.

A:. You are connecting from outside the same networks that your leafnode server is in. Leafnode by default refuses connections from outside your LAN to prevent your leafnode server from abuse should you forget to configure tcpd or make a mistake when writing your `hosts.allow` or `hosts.deny` files. Please see `/etc/leafnode/config.example` for the **allowstrangers** option and how to configure this option. You will have to change the capitalization and write a special number on that line as you put it into your `/etc/leafnode/config`.

Q:. Fetchnews does not fetch any articles.

A:.

- You did not read any pseudo articles with your news reader. Subscribe to some groups, enter them and read the leafnode placeholder article.
- Your groupinfo file may be corrupt. Run **fetchnews -f**.
- `/var/spool/news` may have wrong permissions. `/var/spool/news` and all its subdirectories should be owned by user and group news and have permissions `drwxrwsr-x (02755)`.

Q:. Fetchnews has problems retrieving new newsgroups.

A.: Maybe your upstream server supports neither the **XGTITLE news.group.name** nor the **LIST NEWS-GROUPS news.group.name** command.

In this case, add **nodesc = 1** to the server entry in `/etc/leafnode/config`, as described in the `leafnode(8)` manual page and the `/etc/leafnode/config.example` file.

Q.: Since the update, fetchnews does not post any of my old articles!

A.: Go read the "incompatible changes" and "updating" sections in NEWS and README.

Q.: Since the update, fetchnews does not post my new articles!

A.: You have probably mixed old and new binaries. Check your `inetd.conf` or `xinetd.conf` configuration if they really point to the new binary.

Q.: While fetchnews is running, my modem hangs up.

A.: An article that causes the interruption may contain three plus signs in a row ('+++'), which many modems interpret as the beginning of a command. You can change or disable this 'escape' sequence. Consult your modem's manual, register S2 is a common place to configure this.

Q.: How can I run fetchnews as regular user (not root)?

A.: For security reasons, this is not possible.

However, there is a tool named 'sudo' that allows a regular, unprivileged user to impersonate another user, and this can be used to enable a regular user to run fetchnews.

'sudo' is available from <http://www.courtesan.com/sudo/>.

DIIf 'sudo' is installed on your system, then run **visudo** as root and add this line:

```
username ALL = (news) NOPASSWD: /path/to/fetchnews
```

Remember to replace 'username' and '/path/to/' with the user's login and the proper path to fetchnews.

Now, the user who has been enabled access to fetchnews can just type **sudo -u news /path/to/fetchnews** to run fetchnews.

Q.: I have unsubscribed from a newsgroup, but fetchnews still pulls articles for that group.

A.: Your news reader talks to leafnode via the NNTP protocol. This protocol provides no means for Leafnode to determine which newsgroups you are actually subscribe. Therefore, Leafnode assumes that a newsgroup that is not read for a certain time (which can be configured with the **timeout_long** parameter) is unsubscribed and will only stop retrieving articles in it after this time.

If you are impatient and want to stop retrieving articles from that group immediately, delete the corresponding file in the `/var/spool/news/interesting.groups/` directory. The articles that are already in your spool are still subject to the regular **texpire** schedule, however.

Q:. Texpire does not expire articles.

A:. The backup software that you are using may not reset the atime after reading a file. Check if you can reconfigure it to reset the 'atime'.

As a workaround, run **texpire -f**. This will expire articles somewhat earlier because expiry is then determined from the time the file was last modified, rather than when it was last accessed.

Q:. How do I stop fetchnews from unsubscribing from newsgroups?

A:. Run **fetchnews -n** rather than just **fetchnews**.

Problems with particular newsreaders

Q:. When searching news with Netscape, I only get back 'unknown command'.

A:. To search news, older versions of Netscape needed a news server which supports the XPAT command. Leafnode-1 does not. If you want to use Netscape, you have to upgrade to version 4.5 and press the 'options' button which appears in the 'search messages' window. In the box which appears you have to select 'on your local system'.

Q:. Outlook Express locks up.

A:. This can be caused by a corrupted `inbox` file in Outlook Express. It is said to happen during the initial install of Internet Explorer. To fix this problem, go to 'Add/Remove Programs', choose 'Internet Explorer', then 'Repair installation.'

Thanks to Jim Gifford who talked to Microsoft to find this solution.

Q:. Tin complains about a missing file `/var/lib/news/active`.

A:. Either you have started the wrong version of tin (the one which tries to read news directly from the spool) or your `groupinfo` file is corrupt.

In the first case, simply invoke tin with the `-r` flag: **tin -r**. If this does not help, try to rebuild the `groupinfo` file by running **fetchnews -f**.

License issues

Q:. Why is Leafnode not licensed under the GPL?

A:. There are several reasons:

- Originally, Arnt Gulbrandsen licensed Leafnode under his own license:

Use, modification and distribution is allowed without limitation, warranty, or liability of any kind. This license is very broad. The same spirit is (in my opinion) contained in the X11 license, which is used by Leafnode nowadays.

- I (Cornelius) do not like the philosophy of the FSF. They seem to emphasize that every project they conceived is good whereas everything else is bad. If they cannot argue the software away this way, they claim it to be part of the project, such as calling Linux "GNU/Linux". Or, as Arnt Gulbrandsen put it:

Freedom includes the freedom to disagree with me and still use my software.

Obtaining a stack backtrace

From a core file.

This is simple:

1. Type **gdb PROGRAM core**. Replace PROGRAM by the name of the program that crashed, for example fetchnews.
2. Type **backtrace full**.
3. Type **quit**.

From a running/hanging leafnode program.

1. Find out the Process ID of the hanging leafnode program. Type **ps axw | grep PROGRAM | grep -v grep** on BSD systems and Linux, replacing PROGRAM by the name of the program. Use **ps -ef** instead on SysV systems such as Solaris.

You will get an output like:

```
1995 ? S      0:00 /usr/local/sbin/leafnode
```

1995 is the Process ID.

2. Then attach gdb: **gdb PROGRAM 12345**, replacing PROGRAM by the program's name and 12345 by the PID that you have just found out.
3. Type **backtrace full**.
4. Type **detach**.
5. Type **quit**.