Curlftpfs

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Contents

1 Abstract

The curlftpfs utility can be used to "mount" the directory of an FTP server. Together with other tools like rsync you can get a fine-grained and easy access via the command line with the possibility of scripting. This document describes installtion, use, and critique this approach.

2 Introduction

Dealing with FTP servers can be tedious with the `ftp` command. Partially improved are tools like `ncftp`, `lftp` or `sftp`. Some FTP servers offer **rsync-module** support, and `rsync` can be used to partially download an FTP site. However, the local admin would have to know in advance that a certain part of the FTP server is of special interest and predefine a **rsync-module**. Usually this is not the case for exactly the part you want to download.

In this cases curlftpfs can be used.

Debian	Code	Version
9	Stretch	0.9.2-9+b1
10	Buster	0.9.2-9+b1
11	Bullseye	0.9.2-9+b1

3 Prerequisites

1. To avoid using curlftpfs, you should check if the part of the FTP server is already available via a **rsync-module**.

2. Partly root rights are needed

4 Installation

Installation is straightforward and there are no special requirements or dependencies.

```
aptitude install curlftpfs
```

5 Usage

No configuration is required. To recursively copy a portion of an FTP server, the following steps can be used.

```
mkdir /tmp/mnt
curlftpfs -o allow_other ftp://myusername:mypassword@ftp.domain.tld
    ↪  /tmp/mnt
mkdir /tmp/dst
```

```
cd /tmp/dst
rsync -rzv --inplace --append --progress --stats --timeout=7200
↪  /tmp/mnt/somedir .
sudo umount /tmp/mnt
```

6   Critique

1. Using curlftpfs with rsync can be inefficient compared to lftp mirroring.
2. One is able to script curlftpfs.
3. Root rights

7   Other Techniques

- rsync module (wikipedia)
- csync
- lftp mirror (wikipedia)

8   Links

- curlftpfs
- curlftpfs source package Debian 10 Buster

9   History

Version	Date	Notes
0.1.2	2023-04-04	Improve writing, fix spelling curlftpfs
0.1.1	2022-06-27	Improve wording, grammar; shell->bash
0.1.0	2021-05-04	Initial release

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