

# How upstreams should learn to stop worrying and love uncompressed manpages

By *Roy Schestowitz*

Created 30/09/2021 - 2:21pm

Submitted by Roy Schestowitz on Thursday 30th of September 2021 02:21:30 PM Filed under [Gentoo](#) [1]

Portage (Gentoo's primary package manager) allows me to choose my own compression command using the variable `PORTAGE_COMPRESS` in `make.conf(5)`. As it happens, right now, it defaults to `bzip2`.

The vast majority of man pages on my system are therefore compressed with it. This is because most packages don't bother compressing their man pages - they accept the consensus that it's for distributions/a user preference. It's handled by my package manager at the point of installation.

But it doesn't stop with choice of algorithm. What about compression levels? What if I choose to use say, `pbzip2` instead (notably the same algorithm)?

i.e. Even if an upstream correctly guesses the right tool I've been using to be consistent with my other man pages (and I love consistency), they may end up doing it wrong anyway.

[2]

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## Links:

[1] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/taxonomy/term/109>

[2] <https://cmpct.info/~sam/blog/posts/automatic-manpage-compression/>