

NAME

lessfile, lesspipe – "input preprocessor" for less.

SYNOPSIS

lessfile, lesspipe

DESCRIPTION

This manual page documents briefly the *lessfile*, and *lesspipe* commands. This manual page was written for the Debian GNU/Linux distribution because the input preprocessor scripts are provided by Debian GNU/Linux and are not part of the original program.

lessfile and *lesspipe* are programs that can be used to modify the way the contents of a file are displayed in *less*. What this means is that *less* can automatically open up tar files, uncompress gzipped files, and even display something reasonable for graphics files.

lesspipe will toss the contents/info on STDOUT and *less* will read them as they come across. This means that you do not have to wait for the decoding to finish before *less* shows you the file. This also means that you will get a 'byte N' instead of an N% as your file position. You can seek to the end and back to get the N% but that means you have to wait for the pipe to finish.

lessfile will toss the contents/info on a file which *less* will then read. After you are done, *lessfile* will then delete the file. This means that the process has to finish before you see it, but you get nice percentages (N%) up front.

USAGE

Just put one of the following two commands in your login script (e.g. `~/bash_profile`):

```
eval "$(lessfile)"
```

or

```
eval "$(lesspipe)"
```

FILE TYPE RECOGNITION

File types are recognized by their extensions. This is a list of currently supported extensions (grouped by the programs that handle them):

```
*.a  
*.arj  
*.tar.bz2  
*.bz  
*.bz2  
*.deb, *.udeb, *.ddeb  
*.doc  
*.egg  
*.gif, *.jpeg, *.jpg, *.pcd, *.png, *.tga, *.tiff, *.tif  
*.iso, *.raw, *.bin  
*.lha, *.lzh  
*.tar.lz, *.tlz  
*.lz  
*.7z  
*.pdf  
*.rar, *.r[0-9][0-9]  
*.rpm  
*.tar.gz, *.tgz, *.tar.z, *.tar.dz  
*.gz, *.z, *.dz  
*.tar  
*.tar.xz, *.xz  
*.whl  
*.jar, *.war, *.xpi, *.zip
```

*.zoo

USER DEFINED FILTERS

It is possible to extend and overwrite the default *lesspipe* and *lessfile* input processor if you have specialized requirements. Create an executable program with the name *.lessfilter* and put it into your home directory. This can be a shell script or a binary program.

It is important that this program returns the correct exit code: return 0 if your filter handles the input, return 1 if the standard *lesspipe/lessfile* filter should handle the input.

Here is an example script:

```
#!/bin/sh

case "$1" in
  *.extension)
    extension-handler "$1"
    ;;
  *)
    # We don't handle this format.
    exit 1
esac

# No further processing by lesspipe necessary
exit 0
```

FILES

~/.lessfilter

Executable file that can do user defined processing. See section USER DEFINED FILTERS for more information.

BUGS

Sometimes, *less* does not display the contents file you want to view but output that is produced by your login scripts (*~/.bashrc* or *~/.bash_profile*). This happens because *less* uses your current shell to run the *lesspipe* filter. Bash first looks for the variable `$BASH_ENV` in the environment expands its value and uses the expanded value as the name of a file to read and execute. If this file produces any output *less* will display this. A way to solve this problem is to put the following lines on the top of your login script that produces output:

```
if [ -z "$PS1" ]; then
  exit
fi
```

This tests whether the prompt variable `$PS1` is set and if it isn't (which is the case for non-interactive shells) it will exit the script.

SEE ALSO

less(1)

AUTHOR

This manual page was written by Thomas Schoepf <schoepf@debian.org>, for the Debian GNU/Linux system (but may be used by others). Most of the text was copied from a description written by Darren Stalder <torin@daft.com>.