

**NAME**

msgfmt – create a message object from a message file

**SYNOPSIS**

**msgfmt** [ -v ] *filename.po* ...

**DESCRIPTION**

**msgfmt** creates a message object *filename.mo* file from the portable message file *filename.po*.

The **.po** file contains strings extracted from source code. **.po** files can be edited, and the messages in them can be changed to accommodate any language supported by the system.

The **xgettext** command (see **xgettext(1)**) can be used to create the **default.po** file.

The **msgfmt** command does not modify the portable object files.

**Portable Object Files**

Each **.po** file contains one or more lines. Each line contains either a comment or a statement. Comments start the line with a hash mark (#) and end with the newline character and are ignored.

Each directive starts on a new line and is separated from *<value>* by white space (such as one or more space or tab characters). *<value>* consists of one or more quoted strings separated by white space or <CR>. The following are valid directives:

```
domain domainname
msgid message_identifier
msgstr message_string
```

The **domain** directive identifies all following directives until another **domain** directive is encountered as applying to the domain *domainname*. The *domainname* is a string up to MAXDOMAIN bytes long, and can contain any characters allowed in legal filenames. Until the first **domain** directive is encountered in the file, all target strings belong to the default domain. The default domain is called **default**.

The **msgid** directive specifies the message identifier for the following **msgstr** directive. The *message\_identifier* string identifies a target string at retrieval time. Every statement containing a **msgid** directive must be followed by a statement containing a **msgstr** directive.

The **msgstr** directive specifies the target string associated with the *message\_identifier* string declared in the immediately preceding **msgid** directive.

**OPTIONS**

**-v** Verbose. List duplicate message identifiers. Message strings are not redefined.

**EXAMPLES**

The following command creates a named **.mo** file for each domain named in the portable message objects **filename1.po** and **filename2.po**.

```
msgfmt filename1.po filename2.po
```

Running **msgfmt(1)** on the following sample **.po** file creates two **.mo** files, named **first.mo** and **second.mo**.

```
domain "first.mo"
msgid "aao"
msgstr "first sample message"
domain "second.mo"
msgid "bbo"
msgstr "second sample message"
```

**SEE ALSO**

**xgettext(1)**, **gettext(3)**.