

# GNU Stow

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GNU Stow is a symlink farm manager which takes distinct packages of software and/or data located in separate directories on the filesystem, and makes them appear to be installed in the same place. For example, `/usr/local/bin` could contain symlinks to files within `/usr/local/stow/emacs/bin`, `/usr/local/stow/perl/bin` etc., and likewise recursively for any other subdirectories such as `.../share`, `.../man`, and so on.

This is particularly useful for keeping track of system-wide and per-user installations of software built from source, but can also facilitate a more controlled approach to management of configuration files in the user's home directory, especially when coupled with version control systems.

Stow is implemented as a combination of a Perl script providing a CLI interface, and a backend Perl module which does most of the work. Stow is Free Software, licensed under the GNU General Public License.

## Latest news

*Sun 8 September 2024*

Stow 2.4.1 has been released. This release contains some minor bug-fixes — specifically, fixing the `--dotfiles` option to work correctly with ignore lists, allowing options in `.stowrc` with spaces, and avoiding a spurious warning on Perl `>= 5.40`. There were also some clean-ups and improvements, mostly internal and not visible to users. Read details of what's new.

*Sun 7 April 2024*

Stow 2.4.0 has been released. This release contains some much-wanted bug-fixes — specifically, fixing the `--dotfiles` option to work with `dot - foo` directories, and avoiding a spurious warning when unstowing. There were also very many clean-ups and improvements, mostly internal and not visible to users. Read details of what's new.

## Downloading Stow

Stow can be found on the main GNU ftp server: <http://ftp.gnu.org/gnu/stow/> (via HTTP) and <ftp://ftp.gnu.org/gnu/stow/> (via FTP). It can also be found on the GNU mirrors; please use a mirror if possible.

There is also a git repository containing the latest development code.

## Documentation

Documentation for Stow is available online, as is documentation for most GNU software. You may also find more information about Stow by running `info stow` or `man stow`, or by looking at `/usr/share/doc/stow/`, `/usr/local/doc/stow/`, or similar directories on your system. A brief summary is available by running `stow --help`.

## Mailing lists

Stow has the following mailing lists:

- `help-stow` is for general user help and discussion.
- `stow-devel` is used to discuss most aspects of Stow, including development and enhancement requests.
- `bug-stow` is for bug reports.

Announcements about Stow are posted to `info-stow` and also, as with most other GNU software, to `info-gnu` (archive).

Security reports that should not be made immediately public can be sent directly to the maintainer. If there is no response to an urgent issue, you can escalate to the general security mailing list for advice.

The Savannah project also has a mailing lists page.

## Getting involved

Development of Stow, and GNU in general, is a volunteer effort, and you can contribute. For information, please read [How to help GNU](#). If you'd like to get involved, it's a good idea to join the [stow-devel mailing list](#).

### Bug reporting

Please send bug reports to the [bug-stow mailing list](#) (see [Mailing lists](#) above).

### Development

For development sources and other information, please see the [Stow project page](#) at [savannah.gnu.org](http://savannah.gnu.org). There is also a [stow-devel mailing list](#) (see [Mailing lists](#) above).

### Translating Stow

Stow is not currently multi-lingual, but patches would be gratefully accepted. Please e-mail [stow-devel](#) if you intend to work on this.

### Maintainers

Stow is currently being maintained by [Adam Spiers](#). Please use the [mailing lists](#) for contact.

## Licensing

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