
wheel Documentation

Release 0.30.0.dev0

Daniel Holth

September 15, 2016

1	Why not egg?	3
2	Code of Conduct	5
3	Usage	7
4	Setuptools scripts handling	9
5	Defining the Python version	11
6	Defining conditional dependencies	13
7	Automatically sign wheel files	15
8	Format	17
9	Slogans	19
9.1	The Story of Wheel	19
9.2	API Documentation	20
	Python Module Index	23

A built-package format for Python.

A wheel is a ZIP-format archive with a specially formatted filename and the .whl extension. It is designed to contain all the files for a PEP 376 compatible install in a way that is very close to the on-disk format. Many packages will be properly installed with only the “Unpack” step (simply extracting the file onto sys.path), and the unpacked archive preserves enough information to “Spread” (copy data and scripts to their final locations) at any later time.

The wheel project provides a *bdist_wheel* command for *setuptools* (requires *setuptools* \geq 0.8.0). Wheel files can be installed with a newer *pip* from <https://github.com/pypa/pip> or with wheel’s own command line utility.

The wheel documentation is at <http://wheel.rtd.org/>. The file format is documented in PEP 427 (<http://www.python.org/dev/peps/pep-0427/>).

The reference implementation is at <https://bitbucket.org/pypa/wheel>

Why not egg?

Python's egg format predates the packaging related standards we have today, the most important being PEP 376 "Database of Installed Python Distributions" which specifies the `.dist-info` directory (instead of `.egg-info`) and PEP 426 "Metadata for Python Software Packages 2.0" which specifies how to express dependencies (instead of `requires.txt` in `.egg-info`).

Wheel implements these things. It also provides a richer file naming convention that communicates the Python implementation and ABI as well as simply the language version used in a particular package.

Unlike `.egg`, wheel will be a fully-documented standard at the binary level that is truly easy to install even if you do not want to use the reference implementation.

Code of Conduct

Everyone interacting in the wheel project's codebases, issue trackers, chat rooms, and mailing lists is expected to follow the [PyPA Code of Conduct](#).

Usage

The current version of wheel can be used to speed up repeated installations by reducing the number of times you have to compile your software. When you are creating a virtualenv for each revision of your software the savings can be dramatic. This example packages pyramid and all its dependencies as wheels, and then installs pyramid from the built packages:

```
# Make sure you have the latest pip that supports wheel
pip install --upgrade pip

# Install wheel
pip install wheel

# Build a directory of wheels for pyramid and all its dependencies
pip wheel --wheel-dir=/tmp/wheelhouse pyramid

# Install from cached wheels
pip install --use-wheel --no-index --find-links=/tmp/wheelhouse pyramid

# Install from cached wheels remotely
pip install --use-wheel --no-index --find-links=https://wheelhouse.example.com/ pyramid
```

For lxml, an up to 3-minute “search for the newest version and compile” can become a less-than-1 second “unpack from wheel”.

As a side effect the wheel directory, “/tmp/wheelhouse” in the example, contains installable copies of the exact versions of your application’s dependencies. By installing from those cached wheels you can recreate that environment quickly and with no surprises.

To build an individual wheel, run `python setup.py bdist_wheel`. Note that `bdist_wheel` only works with `distribute (import setuptools)`; plain `distutils` does not support pluggable commands like `bdist_wheel`. On the other hand `pip` always runs `setup.py` with `setuptools` enabled.

Wheel also includes its own installer that can only install wheels (not sdist) from a local file or folder, but has the advantage of working even when `distribute` or `pip` has not been installed.

Wheel’s builtin utility can be invoked directly from wheel’s own wheel:

```
$ python wheel-0.21.0-py2.py3-none-any.whl/wheel -h
usage: wheel [-h]

           {keygen,sign,unsign,verify,unpack,install,install-scripts,convert,help}
           ...

positional arguments:
  {keygen,sign,unsign,verify,unpack,install,install-scripts,convert,help}
```

	commands
keygen	Generate signing key
sign	Sign wheel
unsign	Remove RECORD.jws from a wheel by truncating the zip file. RECORD.jws must be at the end of the archive. The zip file must be an ordinary archive, with the compressed files and the directory in the same order, and without any non-zip content after the truncation point.
verify	Verify a wheel. The signature will be verified for internal consistency ONLY and printed. Wheel's own unpack/install commands verify the manifest against the signature and file contents.
unpack	Unpack wheel
install	Install wheels
install-scripts	Install console_scripts
convert	Convert egg or wininst to wheel
help	Show this help
optional arguments:	
-h, --help	show this help message and exit

Setuptools scripts handling

Setuptools' popular *console_scripts* and *gui_scripts* entry points can be used to generate platform-specific scripts wrappers. Most usefully these wrappers include *.exe* launchers if they are generated on a Windows machine.

As of 0.23.0, *bdist_wheel* no longer places pre-generated versions of these wrappers into the **/data/scripts/* directory of the archive (non-setuptools scripts are still present, of course).

If the scripts are needed, use a real installer like *pip*. The wheel tool *python -m wheel install-scripts package [package ...]* can also be used at any time to call setuptools to write the appropriate scripts wrappers.

Defining the Python version

The `bdist_wheel` command automatically determines the correct tags to use for the generated wheel. These are based on the Python interpreter used to generate the wheel and whether the project contains C extension code or not. While this is usually correct for C code, it can be too conservative for pure Python code. The `bdist_wheel` command therefore supports two flags that can be used to specify the Python version tag to use more precisely:

<code>--universal</code>	Specifies that a pure-python wheel is "universal" (i.e., it works on any version of Python). This equates to the tag "py2.py3".
<code>--python-tag XXX</code>	Specifies the precise python version tag to use for a pure-python wheel.

Neither of these two flags have any effect when used on a project that includes C extension code.

The default for a pure Python project (if no explicit flags are given) is "pyN" where N is the major version of the Python interpreter used to build the wheel. This is generally the correct choice, as projects would not typically ship different wheels for different minor versions of Python.

A reasonable use of the `-python-tag` argument would be for a project that uses Python syntax only introduced in a particular Python version. There are no current examples of this, but if wheels had been available when Python 2.5 was released (the first version containing the `with` statement), wheels for a project that used the `with` statement would typically use `-python-tag py25`. However, unless a separate version of the wheel was shipped which avoided the use of the new syntax, there is little benefit in explicitly marking the tag in this manner.

Typically, projects would not specify Python tags on the command line, but would use `setup.cfg` to set them as a project default:

<pre>[bdist_wheel] universal=1</pre>

or:

<pre>[bdist_wheel] python-tag = py32</pre>
--

Defining conditional dependencies

In wheel, the only way to have conditional dependencies (that might only be needed on certain platforms) is to use environment markers as defined by PEP 426.

As of wheel 0.24.0, the recommended way to do this is in the `setuptools` `extras_require` parameter. A `:` separates the extra name from the marker. Wheel's own `setup.py` has an example:

```
extras_require={
    ':python_version=="2.6"': ['argparse'],
    'signatures': ['keyring'],
    'signatures:sys_platform!="win32"': ['pyxdg'],
    'faster-signatures': ['ed25519ll'],
    'tool': []
},
```

The extra named `''` signifies a default requirement, as if it was passed to `install_requires`.

Older versions of `bdist_wheel` supported passing requirements in a now-deprecated `[metadata]` section in `setup.cfg`.

Automatically sign wheel files

Wheel contains an experimental digital signatures scheme based on Ed25519 signatures; these signatures are unrelated to pgp/gpg signatures and do not include a trust model.

python setup.py bdist_wheel will automatically sign wheel files if the environment variable *WHEEL_TOOL* is set to the path of the *wheel* command line tool.:

```
# Install the wheel tool and its dependencies
$ pip install wheel[tool]
# Generate a signing key (only once)
$ wheel keygen

$ export WHEEL_TOOL=/path/to/wheel
$ python setup.py bdist_wheel
```

Signing is done in a subprocess because it is not convenient for the build environment to contain bindings to the keyring and cryptography libraries. The keyring library may not be able to find your keys (choosing a different key storage back end based on available dependencies) unless you run it from the same environment used for keygen.

Format

The wheel format is documented as PEP 427 “The Wheel Binary Package Format...” (<http://www.python.org/dev/peps/pep-0427/>).

Slogans

Wheel

- Because ‘newegg’ was taken.
- Python packaging - reinvented.
- A container for cheese.
- It makes it easier to roll out software.

9.1 The Story of Wheel

I was impressed with Tarek’s packaging talk at PyCon 2010, and I admire PEP 345 (Metadata for Python Software Packages 1.2) and PEP 376 (Database of Installed Python Distributions) which standardize a richer metadata format and show how distributions should be installed on disk. So naturally with all the hubbub about *packaging* in Python 3.3, I decided to try it to reap the benefits of a more standardized and predictable Python packaging experience.

I began by converting *cryptacular*, a password hashing package which has a simple C extension, to use `setup.cfg`. I downloaded the Python 3.3 source, struggled with the difference between `setup.py` and `setup.cfg` syntax, fixed the `define_macros` feature, stopped using the missing `extras` functionality, and several hours later I was able to generate my `METADATA` from `setup.cfg`. I rejoiced at my newfound freedom from the tyranny of arbitrary code execution during the build and install process.

It was a lot of work. The package is worse off than before, and it can’t be built or installed without patching the Python source code itself.

It was about that time that distutils-sig had a discussion about the need to include a generated `setup.cfg` from `setup.py` because `setup.cfg` wasn’t static enough. Wait, what?

Of course there is a different way to massively simplify the install process. It’s called built or binary packages. You never have to run `setup.py` because there is no `setup.py`. There is only `METADATA` aka `PKG-INFO`. Installation has two steps: ‘build package’, ‘install package’, and you can skip the first step, have someone else do it for you, do it on another machine, or install the build system from a binary package and let the build system handle the building. The build is still complicated, but installation is simple.

With the binary package strategy people who want to install use a simple, compatible installer, and people who want to package use whatever is convenient for them for as long as it meets their needs. No one has to rewrite `setup.py` for their own or the 20k+ other packages on PyPi unless a different build system does a better job.

Wheel is my attempt to benefit from the excellent distutils-sig work without having to fix the intractable *distutils* software itself. Like `METADATA` and `.dist-info` directories but unlike `Extension()`, it’s simple enough that there really could be alternate implementations; the simplest (but less than ideal) installer is nothing more than “unzip archive.whl” somewhere on `sys.path`.

If you've made it this far you probably wonder whether I've heard of eggs. Some comparisons:

- Wheel is an installation format; egg is importable. Wheel archives do not need to include .pyc and are less tied to a specific Python version or implementation. Wheel can install (pure Python) packages built with previous versions of Python so you don't always have to wait for the packager to catch up.
- Wheel uses .dist-info directories; egg uses .egg-info. Wheel is compatible with the new world of Python *packaging* and the new concepts it brings.
- Wheel has a richer file naming convention for today's multi-implementation world. A single wheel archive can indicate its compatibility with a number of Python language versions and implementations, ABIs, and system architectures. Historically the ABI has been specific to a CPython release, but when we get a longer-term ABI, wheel will be ready.
- Wheel is lossless. The first wheel implementation *bdist_wheel* always generates *egg-info*, and then converts it to a .whl. Later tools will allow for the conversion of existing eggs and bdist_wininst distributions.
- Wheel is versioned. Every wheel file contains the version of the wheel specification and the implementation that packaged it. Hopefully the next migration can simply be to Wheel 2.0.

I hope you will benefit from wheel.

9.2 API Documentation

9.2.1 wheel.archive

Archive tools for wheel.

```
wheel.archive.archive_wheelfile (base_name, base_dir)
    Archive all files under base_dir in a whl file and name it like base_name.

wheel.archive.make_wheelfile_inner (base_name, base_dir='.')
    Create a whl file from all the files under 'base_dir'.

    Places .dist-info at the end of the archive.
```

9.2.2 wheel.install

Operations on existing wheel files, including basic installation.

```
class wheel.install.VerifyingZipFile (file, mode='r', compression=0, allowZip64=False)
    ZipFile that can assert that each of its extracted contents matches an expected sha256 hash. Note that each file
    must be completely read in order for its hash to be checked.

    open (name_or_info, mode='r', pwd=None)
        Return file-like object for 'name'.

    pop ()
        Truncate the last file off this zipfile. Assumes infolist() is in the same order as the files (true for ordinary
        zip files created by Python)

    set_expected_hash (name, hash)
```

Parameters

- **name** – name of zip entry
- **hash** – bytes of hash (or None for “don't care”)

`wheel.install.WHEEL_INFO_RE()`
`match(string[, pos[, endpos]])` → match object or None. Matches zero or more characters at the beginning of the string

class `wheel.install.WheelFile` (*filename*, *fp=None*, *append=False*, *context=<function get_supported>*)

Parse wheel-specific attributes from a wheel (.whl) file and offer basic installation and verification support.

WheelFile can be used to simply parse a wheel filename by avoiding the methods that require the actual file contents.

arity

The number of compatibility tags the wheel declares.

compatibility_rank (*supported*)

Rank the wheel against the supported tags. Smaller ranks are more compatible!

Parameters supported – A list of compatibility tags that the current Python implementation can run.

compatibility_tags

A wheel file is compatible with the Cartesian product of the period-delimited tags in its filename. To choose a wheel file among several candidates having the same distribution version ‘ver’, an installer ranks each triple of (pyver, abi, plat) that its Python installation can run, sorting the wheels by the best-ranked tag it supports and then by their arity which is just `len(list(compatibility_tags))`.

install (*force=False*, *overrides={}*)

Install the wheel into site-packages.

install_paths

Consult distutils to get the install paths for our dist. A dict with (‘purelib’, ‘platlib’, ‘headers’, ‘scripts’, ‘data’).

We use the name from our filename as the dist name, which means headers could be installed in the wrong place if the filesystem-escaped name is different than the Name. Who cares?

parsed_wheel_info

Parse wheel metadata (the .data/WHEEL file)

rank

Lowest index of any of this wheel’s tags in `self.context()`, and the arity e.g. (0, 1)

tags

A wheel file is compatible with the Cartesian product of the period-delimited tags in its filename. To choose a wheel file among several candidates having the same distribution version ‘ver’, an installer ranks each triple of (pyver, abi, plat) that its Python installation can run, sorting the wheels by the best-ranked tag it supports and then by their arity which is just `len(list(compatibility_tags))`.

verify (*zipfile=None*)

Configure the `VerifyingZipFile` *zipfile* by verifying its signature and setting expected hashes for every hash in RECORD. Caller must complete the verification process by completely reading every file in the archive (e.g. with `extractall`).

`wheel.install.parse_version` (*version*)

Use `parse_version` from `pkg_resources` or `distutils` as available.

9.2.3 wheel.pkginfo

Tools for reading and writing PKG-INFO / METADATA without caring about the encoding.

9.2.4 wheel.util

Utility functions.

`wheel.util.urlsafe_b64encode` (*data*)
urlsafe_b64encode without padding

`wheel.util.urlsafe_b64decode` (*data*)
urlsafe_b64decode without padding

`wheel.util.utf8` (*data*)
Utf-8 encode data.

`wheel.util.to_json` (*o*)
Convert given data to JSON.

`wheel.util.from_json` (*j*)
Decode a JSON payload.

`wheel.util.matches_requirement` (*req, wheels*)
List of wheels matching a requirement.

Parameters

- **req** – The requirement to satisfy
- **wheels** – List of wheels to search.

W

`wheel.archive`, [20](#)
`wheel.install`, [20](#)
`wheel.pkginfo`, [21](#)
`wheel.util`, [22](#)

A

archive_wheelfile() (in module wheel.archive), 20
arity (wheel.install.WheelFile attribute), 21

C

compatibility_rank() (wheel.install.WheelFile method), 21
compatibility_tags (wheel.install.WheelFile attribute), 21

F

from_json() (in module wheel.util), 22

I

install() (wheel.install.WheelFile method), 21
install_paths (wheel.install.WheelFile attribute), 21

M

make_wheelfile_inner() (in module wheel.archive), 20
matches_requirement() (in module wheel.util), 22

O

open() (wheel.install.VerifyingZipFile method), 20

P

parse_version() (in module wheel.install), 21
parsed_wheel_info (wheel.install.WheelFile attribute), 21
pop() (wheel.install.VerifyingZipFile method), 20

R

rank (wheel.install.WheelFile attribute), 21

S

set_expected_hash() (wheel.install.VerifyingZipFile method), 20

T

tags (wheel.install.WheelFile attribute), 21
to_json() (in module wheel.util), 22

U

urlsafe_b64decode() (in module wheel.util), 22
urlsafe_b64encode() (in module wheel.util), 22
utf8() (in module wheel.util), 22

V

verify() (wheel.install.WheelFile method), 21
VerifyingZipFile (class in wheel.install), 20

W

wheel.archive (module), 20
wheel.install (module), 20
wheel.pkginfo (module), 21
wheel.util (module), 22
WHEEL_INFO_RE() (in module wheel.install), 20
WheelFile (class in wheel.install), 21