Google Groups

"But _I_ can't FTP..." Re: shared X systems available

Kent Paul Dolan   Jan 13, 1991 11:52 PM
Posted in group: **comp.sources.d**

In comp.groupware article <151@intrbas.UUCP>
kenn@intrbas.uucp (Kenneth G. Goutal) writes:

> At least one site in this newsgroup -- my guess is that there are
> actually an unholy number of us -- cannot get things via FTP,
> anonymous or otherwise. Could someone undertake to make the sources
> available by some other means? Perhaps in one of the comp...sources
> newsgroups?

One of the better kept secrets on the net appears to be the ability of
anyone who can use email to retrieve stuff from FTP sites.

Princeton University Computer Center runs a pro bono email<->ftp server.
If you have the FTP documentation (available as part of the BSD 4.3
printed manual set, for example, or online as "man" pages in several
Unix systems) so you'll have some idea what to do with the instructions,
then send a message containing the two lines:

HELP
FTPLIST

to bit...@pucc.princeton.edu, and you will receive a document showing
how to get started with the server, and a list of sites the server knows
how to access by ASCII name (it can probably access _any_ FTP site if
you have the numeric net name of the site).

This is by no means a facile interface, since it seems impossible, for
example, to ask directly for a full directory of a site's ftp archives,
but, especially if posters are careful to specify the full pathname of
archive files, it does provide a means of retrieving files.

Big files are sent in pieces, binary files are sent uuencoded, and so
the usual skills used to deal with large posted archives are also needed
to deal with bitftp emailed files.

The server is bandwidth limited, and services small requests ahead of
large ones, and it would be much nicer if there were several such
servers scattered about the net to lessen the single point email
bottleneck, but it does work.

Clumsy as it is, it beats all hollow pestering the net to do the work
for you.

Of course, this could all be avoided if the sites that provide anonymous
ftp server access provided anonymous UUCP server access to the same
archives, since the latter does not require a direct link, merely any
link at all.

Kent, the man from xanth.
<xant...@Zorch.SF-Bay.ORG> <xant...@well.sf.ca.us>