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signature of Ty Coon, 1 April 1989
Ty Coon, President of Vice
That's all there is to it!

1 General introduction to GNU sort.

This is an MS-DOS port of the (unreleased) external sort program for the GNU project, written by Mike Haertel.

• PLEASE NOTE: Mike Haertel (the original author) allowed me to distribute this program under the condition that I make clear that this program has not been tested extensively and is to be considered as in a pre-alpha test state.

I have decided to distribute this program anyway, because it outclasses *any* external sort program I have seen for MS-DOS: both in performance and functionality.

• Performance:

- 1. When used with a fast (preferably cached) disk, this program is as fast as V. Buerg's sortf (if the latter is used with large, non default keys, GNU sort is considerably faster).
- 2. There are (almost) no build-in hard limits! (I have put one hard and one soft limit in the MS-DOS version, see Chapter 4 [MS-DOS], page 9).
- Functionality:
 - 1. GNU sort works as a filter.
 - 2. GNU sort has lots of useful options (see Chapter 3 [Options], page 8).

This distribution is different from the other ports of GNU software for MS-DOS: it contains the full, unabridged source code and no context diffs. This is because GNU sort has not yet been released by the Free Software Foundation, and therefore you can't pick up the official source from prep. But: all changes (which are very few) are conditionalized with MSDOS.

Please send bug reports (preferably with fixes (context diff's!) to

Thorsten Ohl td12@ddagsi3.bitnet>

I can make no promises to fix it immediately, but I might want to!

2 How to install the MS-DOS version of GNU sort.

1. Edit the following variables in the makefile

LIBS Remove glob.obj, msd_dir.obj, and _cwild.obj if you don't have glob.c, msd_dir.c, msd_dir.h, and _cwild.c from the other MS-DOS ports (e.g. fileutils), or if you do not want a reasonable filename globbing.

VPATH Include path for glob.c, msd_dir.c, msd_dir.h, and _cwild.c on your system. If you have a loosing (non GNU) make that doesn't understand VPATH, copy the sources in your current directory.

CFLAGS, LDFLAGS

These are for the Microsoft C compiler Version 6.0, edit them for your system:

-AC Compact memory model

-W4 Full warnings!

-Ocgilt (Almost) maximal optimization.

-Za

-DSTDC_HEADERS

ANSI C.

-DUSG Microsoft's C looks more like System V than BSD.

/e Pack the executable.

/st:0x8000

Large stack.

/noe If duplicate symbols in object files and libraries, use the one from the object file.

2. Say make.

That's all.

3 Options for GNU sort

```
\operatorname{sort} [-cmuV] [-t \ c] [-o \ \operatorname{file}] [-T \ \operatorname{dir}] [-bdfiMnr] [+n \ [-m] \dots] [\operatorname{file} \dots]
```

The following is a guide to GNU sort, not a collection of documented options that can be relied on.

3.1 Options affecting all sort keys

'-c' Check sort order only.

'-m' Merge presorted files (avoids resorting of already sorted files, which is generally a slow operation).

'-ofile' Send output to file (overwriting).

'-tc' Use c as field separator.

'-Tprefix'

Use prefix as prefix for temporary files (e.g. prefix/sort3141.137), default is '\$TMP'.

'-u' Delete duplicate lines from the output.

'-V' Print the version string

See Section 3.3 [Local], page 8, for more options that can affect all keys.

3.2 How to specify the sort keys

Keys are zero based, thus the first field has number 0, and so on.

'+num1.num2'

Start a new key at character num2 of field num1.

'-num1.num2'

Extend the key upto (not including) character num2 of field num1.

3.3 Options affecting one or all sort keys

These option apply either globally to all sort keys (if they are specified before the keys on the command line), or to a single key (if they are appended to the key specification).

'-b' Skip white space.

'-d' Dictionary mode: ignore punctuation.

'-f' Fold to lowercase.

'-i' Ignore nonprinting characters.

'-M' Sort as english (three character) month names.

'-n' Sort numrically.

'-r' Sort in reverse.

4 How the MS-DOS version differs

- The maximum line length has been reduced to 32k. While the introduction of arbitrary upper limits is alien to the GNU project, this particular limit seems to be o.k. for MS-DOS applications and tremendously decreases the number of required changes in the original source.
- The maximum number of lines per input buffer is restricted to about 4000. This limit can only be reached by files with an average linelength smaller that 8 characters. To allow the sorting of such files, the following option has been included to reduce the input buffer size:

'-S num' Set the input buffer size (default 32k) to num.