

Setting up your BSD machine with bsdstats

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I no longer work for Datadok, change affiliation

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Introducing BSDstats

The BSDStats project was started in August of 2006 by FreeBSD developer Marc Fournier and others with its stated mission to

"... compile semi-accurate numbers for advocacy and marketing of the *BSD operating systems.

More specifically, we are trying to demonstrate to hardware and software vendors out there that *BSD should be viewed as a serious operating system, not just as a hobbyist system, for support (ie. hardware drivers) purposes."

The statistics generation and collection is implemented as a shell script which is intended to be run periodically, reporting the specified statistics to the bsdstats.org (<http://bsdstats.org>) servers once a month.

The initial development was done on FreeBSD and was soon made rather painless when the `300.statistics` script was rolled into a port for that operating system. The present mini-guide is an attempt to make it easier for users of other BSD system to set up and maintain reporting on their systems.

Setting up BSDstats on FreeBSD

Getting started with BSDstats on FreeBSD is easy, thanks to the port `/usr/ports/sysutils/bsdstats`. The port drops the `300.statistics` script into your `/usr/local/etc/periodic/monthly` directory, where the `periodic(8)` system will find it and execute it in due course. The port also adds the necessary variables to your `/etc/periodic.conf`.

To set up statistics reporting on your FreeBSD system:

1. Make sure your ports tree is up to date, using your favourite updating tool such as `cvsup(1)` or `portsnap(8)`
2. Install the port. The port installation script will prompt you for options such as whether you want it to edit your `/etc/periodic.conf` to enable the script and offer to run the reporting immediately after its infrastructure has been set up.

Once the script is properly included in the `periodic(8)` system infrastructure, it will be executed at the proper one-month interval. You may want to upgrade the script to newer versions occasionally, just like you would other installed ports.

Setting up BSDstats on OpenBSD

OpenBSD does not have the periodic system, but instead has the `/etc/daily`, `/etc/weekly` and `/etc/monthly` scripts, all of which are executed at the corresponding intervals from root's crontab¹.

The daily, weekly and monthly scripts will run the contents of corresponding `.local` files, so to run the `bsdstats` script once a month you either

- create an `/etc/monthly.local` script which calls the `300.statistics` script,
- or, if the `300.statistics` script is the only local script you want to run each month, copy `300.statistics` to `/etc/monthly.local`.

The `bsdstats` script depends on the setting of some environment variables which on FreeBSD are kept in `/etc/periodic.conf`. On OpenBSD, the place for locally defined system variables is `/etc/rc.conf.local`, where you put the lines

```
monthly_statistics_enable="YES" # needed for bsdstats to work at all
monthly_statistics_report_devices="YES" # optionally report devices too
```

As indicated by the comments, only the first of those is mandatory for the script to work; the second lets you submit hardware information too if you want to.

With a valid `/etc/monthly.local` script which runs the statistics script and the `/etc/rc.conf.local` lines in place, you can either sit back and wait for the monthly script to execute at some point in the future or run the script manually.

1. `sudo crontab -u root -l` will show the times and other data about how the scripts are run; use `sudo crontab -u root -e` if you want to edit.

Setting up BSDstats on other BSD systems

Download the script (<http://bsdstats.org/downloads/300.statistics>) to `/usr/local/sbin`, and add a cron entry, as root, to run the script once per month, similar to:

```
59 00 1 * * /usr/local/sbin/300.statistics
```

The following variables can be set in `/etc/rc.conf.local` to enable the statistics, as well as fine tune various parts of it:

```
* monthly_statistics_enable="YES"  
* monthly_statistics_report_devices="YES"
```

After downloading, run it once initially.

Want to help improve this document?

This document is a first draft. If you find it needs improvement, please feel free to send your comments to peter@bsdly.net. The document itself is written as a DocBook SGML "book", much like the FreeBSD Handbook.