

**libnix.info**

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# Chapter 1

## libnix.info

### 1.1 libnix.info

This is the documentation of libnix. The following is a list of chapters. You need not read all of them - but reading the chapter Features is recommended.

Description

What is libnix?

Motivation

Why a new library?

Authors

Who did it?

Disclaimer

Copyright and other legal stuff.

Naming

Naming conventions.

Usage

How to use it ;-)

Features

Details of the implementation.

Set elements

A nice feature of gnu ld.

Library bases

And how they work.

geta4

Some words on code and data models

FAQs

Frequently asked questions and answers.

## 1.2 libnix.info/Description

What is libnix?

\*\*\*\*\*

libnix is a static (i.e. link) library for usage on amiga computers together with gcc 2.3.3 or above. It is very amigalike and contains a lot of features some people missed in ixemul.library:

- \* auto-open-library feature
- \* SAS compatible handling of WB startup message
- \* auto-detach startup code
- \* is very short
- \* does not require a shared library
- \* is PD instead of GPL
- \* and much more

So if you want to write amiga specific programs or if you only need ANSI support instead of unix compatibility - and if you don't want to redistribute ixemul.library - this can be your choice.

But be aware - libnix requires Amiga OS 2.0 or higher :(.

## 1.3 libnix.info/Motivation

Why a new library?

\*\*\*\*\*

A few months ago I decided to install the gcc package on my amiga to recompile some programs with it. I found out soon that there are some things that make it hard to write amiga specific programs with gcc and ixemul.library - first of all the library itself. ixemul.library is a very nice thing if you want to port unix programs and it's the backbone of the whole gcc environment, but it's ridiculous to have such a large shared library included just to process the workbench startup message if you want to write amiga specific applications.

So I tried out some of the other gcc packages around - even gerlib - but none of them did exactly what I wanted it to do.

So I decided to write my own. I knew that I was on the right way at the time I placed a miniscule startup for gcc on the aminet and got a

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lot of resonance (and even a co-author).

So here it is. It's very amigalike, it doesn't support unix-features (nomen est omen - it's name is libnix = No IXemul, thank you Philippe) but that's exactly the goal of it.

Matthias

## 1.4 libnix.info/Authors

Authors

\*\*\*\*\*

If you want to change anything in the library please contact one of us first - we know how to do it best since we wrote it. If you want to report bugs please contact us, too. If we don't know about them we cannot fix them.

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I want to thank especially Gerhard Müller (the author of gerlib) - we worked hard together to be compatible - just wait for his next release. And Philippe Brand - I use gcc 2.3.3 rather than gcc 2.5.8 but the name libnix was just his idea.

## 1.5 libnix.info/Disclaimer

Disclaimer

\*\*\*\*\*

This package is public domain. That means that you can copy, use and modify it without any problems and that you can get it for free. If you actually paid for getting it this is completely your fault - I didn't see a cent of that money. It also means that I cannot be made responsible for any damage resulting out of the use of it - you simply shouldn't trust anything you didn't pay for :-).

## 1.6 libnix.info/Naming

Naming conventions

\*\*\*\*\*

This library is not only for the end user but also for the library

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programmer (if you want to write your own startup, etc).

If you want to write code for it you should be aware of the normal naming conventions for ANSI libraries:

- \* Names with no underscore 'foo' are ANSI or POSIX compliant - there is absolutely no risk in using them. If you use only these you can write portable programs.
- \* Names with a single underscore '\_foo' are ANSI extensions for the end user. Usually they are very common on certain systems but not used on others.
- \* Names with two underscores '\_\_foo' are for the library programmers only. If they are not documented you cannot rely on them. And even if they are you should use them only for writing library code.

There is only one exception of these conventions ('\_\_chkabort()') and this is for compatibility reasons.

## 1.7 libnix.info/Usage

Usage

\*\*\*\*\*

The usage of this library is like any other link library. The only important thing is the right linkage order:

1. The startup code has to be used first :-)
2. The stubs-library has to be used last since it contains the library base pointers.
3. The commandline parser should be used after your code but before most other things or you will run into problems.

Normally this is handled by the specs file of gcc. There is a sample specs file in this package (and an ARexx script to change most nonstandard specs files). By installing it gcc will automatically get a new option '-noixemul'. By using this option you choose this library package. Such options are called flavours.

```
'gcc (-fbaserel) (-resident) -noixemul YOUR_OBJECTS (-nix_main) (-lm)'
```

If you use '-lnix\_main' you get a different commandline parser. '-lm' uses the math library.

Be aware that the formatted I/O-functions need the math libraries to work correctly for floating point numbers. Without the math libraries you get only floating point support for simple operators like '+', '\*', casts and that like.

If you don't use the assembler inline functions of gcc you will have

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to use 'libamiga.a' if you want to use any Amiga OS function. Be aware that the 'libamiga.a' that comes with libnix is only a dummy library - I cannot distribute 'libamiga.a'. But you can build one yourself if you unpack the sources. This will take some hours, therefore it's not part of the installation procedure.

For compiling a4-relative programs you should choose the '-fbaserel' option. You get resident (pure) programs if you set the '-resident' option. Anything else necessary for these options is handled by the specs-file (choosing the right startups and libraries).

If you don't want to replace your specs file you can still use this package if you call everything by hand:

```
'gcc -nostdlib ncrt0.o YOUR_OBJECTS libnixmain.a (libm.a) libnix.a
libstubs.a'
```

But that's not the recommended way. Therefore I don't explain this in detail here - use the '-v' option of gcc for more details.

## 1.8 libnix.info/Features

Features - what you get

\*\*\*\*\*

The following list contains the elements of this package in the right linkage order. This means if you follow the list from top to bottom and take one file of each menu entry you will get a working configuration.

```

Startup codes
  Does all work necessary for startup.
Your objects   Need I say anything about that?

Commandline parser
  Calculates argc and argv.
libm.a        The math library (optional).

libnix.a
  The library itself.

libamiga.a
  If you have one.

libstubs.a
  The library bases.
```

## 1.9 libnix.info/Startup codes

### Startup codes

\*\*\*\*\*

There is a lot of work to do before your 'main' function can be called - open shared libraries, open stdin, stdout, etc. Depending on the compiler options and the ANSI functions you use. This work is done by the startup code.

### Startup interface

#### Startup usage

To get a short startup all the necessary modules are optional -  $\leftrightarrow$  they get only linked in if you use them. There are 2 exceptions from this (since the linker cannot check for it):

- \* The commandline parser. It can be deactivated by declaring `'__nocommandline'` somewhere in your program (the type doesn't matter).
- \* The shared-library-opening module. You should not disable it unless you know what you are doing since most library functions depend on it.

The startup codes itself are written in assembly to be as short as possible.

Here is a little program to get the point:

```
#include <inline/exec.h>
#include <dos/dos.h>
#include <inline/dos.h>
#include <workbench/workbench.h>

int __nocommandline=1; /* Disable commandline parsing */
int __initlibraries=0; /* Disable auto-library-opening */

struct Library *DOSBase=NULL;

extern struct WBStartup *_WBenchMsg;

int main(void)
{ if(_WBenchMsg==NULL)
  { if((DOSBase=OpenLibrary("dos.library",37))!=NULL)
    { Write(Output(),"Hello world\n",12);
      CloseLibrary(DOSBase); } }
  return 0;
}
```

compiled and linked with

```
`gcc -noixemul -s -O2 -fbaserel helloworld.c`
```

gives an executable of 492 bytes. And this with the normal 'main' function!

So you never need to try to write a program without a startup code.

## 1.10 libnix.info/Startup interface

Startup code interface

\*\*\*\*\*

The startup codes do the following:

- \* They catch the workbench startup message and place it into the variable

```
`extern struct WBStartup *_WBenchMsg`
```

you can simply look into this place (and test for a 'NULL' pointer) to check if your program was started from WB. If this is a 'NULL' pointer

```
`extern char *__commandline`
```

contains the ('\n' terminated) parameters of the commandline.

- \* They call all functions in the

```
`long __INIT_LIST__[];`
```

with ascending priority.

- \* They call the function

```
`int main(int argc, char *argv[])`
```

You can exit by simply falling through the end of 'main' or by calling

```
`__volatile void exit(int returncode)`
```

which does the cleanup:

- \* It calls all functions in the

```
`long __EXIT_LIST__[];`
```

with descending priority.

- \* It replies the WB startup message if necessary, resets the stackpointer and returns to the shell.

'\_\_INIT\_LIST\_\_' and '\_\_EXIT\_LIST\_\_' are two set elements which are a speciality of the gnu ld. Since everything that needs initialization works over these two lists the bare startups are very short. In fact they are even shorter then some low-level-startups

You can easily add your own functions to the startup procedure by using the macros in the file 'headers/stabs.h'. Priority values  $\leq 0$  are reserved for library implementors.

## 1.11 libnix.info/Startup usage

Startup code usage  
\*\*\*\*\*

There are currently 3 startup codes in this package (maybe there will be more in the future). Depending on the code and data model you use and some other things you should choose one of them:

'nrcrt0.o'

This is the normal (i.e. large code, large data model) startup. It contains a 'geta4()' entry point to enable you to use one source for two code models. There is no other need for this function.

'nbcrt0.o'

This one is for compiling small data model (a4 relative) programs. There is a 'geta4()' entry that places the right information into a4. Use this startup code if you compiled with '-fbaserel'.

'nrcrt0.o'

This startup code allocates a new data area every time you call it. Even if you don't call it at all the data are is there once. This gives you multientrant and reentrant code. Therefore this startup code is for compiling resident (pure) programs. Resident programs are always small data model if you let the compiler do the work.

There is no 'geta4()' entry - I just don't know how this could be done. (If you start your code 10 times and want to access global data out of a hook you cannot tell which one of the 10 data areas to use because you want to access the data from a different task!)

## 1.12 libnix.info/Commandline parser

Commandline parser  
\*\*\*\*\*

There are currently 2 commandline parser modules in the libnix package. You can easily write your own by looking into the examples

'libnixmain.a'

---

This is the normal one, i.e. it does all the work necessary for ANSI compatibility and gives you the normal 'main' calling convention. You can shut down the commandline parsing (if you want to use the amiga OS commandline parser) by declaring

```
'__nocommandline'
```

somewhere in your code (the type of it actually doesn't matter). This spares some bytes and is compatible to every other compiler.

And you can declare your own WB shell window by declaring a

```
'char __stdiowin[]'
```

variable somewhere in your code (but only if you parse the commandline - without the commandline parser you get no window at all!).

'libnix\_main.a'

This is a special version of a commandline parser - it doesn't call the normal 'main' but

```
'int main(char *commandline)'
```

'commandline' is the complete commandline - including the quoted filename of your program (it's only quoted, not escaped - this is for compatibility reasons :- ( ). You might think the name of the game should be '\_main' and not 'main' - and you are completely right. You can use '\_main' for 'main' and '\_exit' for 'exit' - there are symbol redirections for these and the linker does the work.

This commandline parser is useful for compatibility. You can use it as a second example or for recompiling PD programs that use the single argument. You cannot use it for compiling ANSI code.

## 1.13 libnix.info/libnix.a

Some ANSI (mis)features

\*\*\*\*\*

I suppose you are familiar with C and especially ANSI C - if not you should read a good book about it (1). This chapter only contains some special features of the implementation - you should know these if you want to use this library.

Locale

Formatted I-O

atof strtod

Memory management

Standard I-O

Signal handling

setjmp longjmp

ctype

clock

Multibyte character functions

----- Footnotes -----

(1) I recommend this one:

Brian W. Kernighan, Dennis M. Ritchie:  
The C Programming Language (Second Edition)  
Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1988

## 1.14 libnix.info/Locale

Locale

\*\*\*\*\*

One feature of a complete ANSI compatible library is locale support. The ANSI standard only knows of two locales:

\* "C" locale (normal C behaviour).

\* Default locale.

Every other locale depends very heavily on the implementation.

To do locale support on the amiga I decided to use locale.library (what else). This means that you normally have only these two locales - to have more than that you must make some extra preferences files with the locale preferences editor and give the path of these to the setlocale()-call. If you do not have locale.library you will get only "C" locale. This is the default then :-).

Another important point is that the ANSI standard requires the default locale to be loaded at program startup. i.e. if you use german locale (for example) you will just get it - printf and scanf will not work as expected but use the decimal comma ',' instead of the decimal point '.' for their floating point numbers, ctype functions will behave differently, too.

This can be very annoying if you don't want to use ANSI locale but rather locale.library (which is not portable but IMHO much better) or if you don't need locale support. And even dangerous if you don't test your program under different locales.

---

To get around this problem I decided to do some nasty thing: To get locale support you have to make up a reference to setlocale. You can do this by just calling

```
setlocale(LC_ALL, "C");
```

immediately after program startup. (And get "C" locale then after program start which is a much better choice). Or by just using setlocale anywhere in your program - you will get default locale at program startup then.

## 1.15 libnix.info/Formatted I-O

Formatted I/O

\*\*\*\*\*

The formatted I/O specifications are all there (remember: this library tries to be ANSI compliant). But there are two things you should know about them:

- \* The formatted I/O is affected by the setlocale() call - this is no bug, just an ANSI feature.
- \* Half of the code of a full blown printf handles floating point numbers - but not everybody needs them. So there are two functions for both 'vfprintf' and 'vfscanf' - one in 'libnix.a' not including floating point support and one in 'libm.a' including floating point support.

So if you want to use one of the formatted I/O specifiers for floats you should link with the math library '-lm'.

## 1.16 libnix.info/atof strtod

atof strtod

\*\*\*\*\*

The two functions 'atof' and 'strtod' require a working '%f' specifier in 'vfscanf' - therefore they require the formatted I/O functions in the math library. Since 'libm.a' is linked before 'libnix.a' these two functions have been gone into the math library.

## 1.17 libnix.info/Memory management

## Memory management

\*\*\*\*\*

Most of the memory management of this library runs through malloc(). Only the commandline parser uses AllocVec() - so you can use it without having the malloc function somewhere in your program.

The memory management uses a local (to this task) memory pool to reduce memory fragmentation. It uses the system functions to do so (not the new pooled memory functions but just the older Allocate(), Deallocate() pair which are the <3.0 fallback for libamiga.a's pooled memory functions, too) so there should be no problems with it - these functions are tested very good.

The default blocksize for memory allocations is 16384 bytes - equivalent to 4 MMU pages. Bigger allocations are blown up to a multiple of 4096 bytes. So don't be alarmed if your program uses more memory than expected.

If you don't like this value (if you use bigger portions frequently or only use very little memory) you can replace it by declaring

```
`unsigned long _MSTEP'
```

You should use a multiple of MMU pages. If you don't use a full MMU page you gain nothing - malloc rounds up anyway.

## 1.18 libnix.info/Standard I-O

Standard I/O - where stdin, stdout, stderr come from

\*\*\*\*\*

2 of the 3 standard I/O streams are no real problem:

- \* 'stdin' is set to the value the 'Input()' function of 'dos.library' serves,
- \* 'stdout' is set to the 'Output()' value.

Both streams are managed by the OS and the library need not take much care about them. But 'stderr' is a different thing since there is no 'Errput()' ;-) function. So 'stderr' is handled as follows:

1. If 'process->pr\_CES' is set, this value is taken. There are not much shells that set this value so most of the time this leads to NULL.
2. If this didn't work and your program was started from CLI the library opens 'Open("\*",MODE\_NEWFILE)'. This opens the last interactive terminal attached to stdout, i.e. if you use the normal Amiga shell and redirect your output to a file you get the terminal, if you redirect your output to 'NIL:' you get 'NIL:'.



3. If this didn't work too (you never know) or your program was started from WB you simply get the same stream as in 'stdout'.

## 1.19 libnix.info/Signal handling

Signal handling

\*\*\*\*\*

There is only support for the two signals SIGABRT and SIGINT. The library knows of some other signals but cannot generate them. The support for SIGABRT is simple - but SIGINT is a completely different thing:

You cannot use exec signal handlers since they are called at any time - even in the middle of a library call. And if your library just blocked a private semaphore and you jump out of the library code you will get a nice deadlock :-(. (And for people who don't know: signal handlers are bogus upto OS 2.0 (even there you need a good setpatch)).

So SIGINT (CTRL-C) is just polled at the start of most I/O-functions by calling the function

```
'void __chkabort(void)'
```

Other signals are even more difficult to implement:

- \* SIGSEGV simply doesn't exist - and if it does it's due to a VM system and should not be generated.
- \* SIGFPE is not generated by the math libraries - so it would be a bad thing to generate it by the mathematical coprocessor.
- \* SIGILL should never happen - your program must be faulty if you get one. Most of the time this happens if you try to run a 68020+ compiled program on a plain 68000.
- \* SIGTERM couldn't be disabled - even if it was there ;-).

You can disable CTRL-C handling by replacing '\_\_chkabort' with a do-nothing stub function - but there is a better way. Just call

```
'signal(SIGINT,SIG_IGN)'
```

Replacing \_\_chkabort is used very often by amiga-programs and if your application does not need CTRL-C handling at all and is amiga specific you can use this. The second method is the ANSI standard method and works on all types of machines.

## 1.20 libnix.info/setjmp longjmp

```
setjmp, longjmp
*****
```

This library is compatible to the header files that come with gcc - and the jmp\_buf in there is not large enough for the FPU registers. So they are not restored! The ANSI standard doesn't even require to restore any of the other local variables (they are restored :-), so this is NO incompatibility to the ANSI standard.

## 1.21 libnix.info/ctype

```
ctype.h functions
*****
```

If you look into ctype.h you will see that the functions in there are just macros - and that they are duplicate in the library as functions. This is NOT a mistake. The ANSI standard requires such macros to be duplicate as functions.

And remember: These functions are affected by the setlocale() call.

## 1.22 libnix.info/clock

```
The clock function
*****
```

The clock() function's work is to measure processor time for the specific task - but there is no information like this in the amiga OS :-(. So it just measures the time from program start on - and is compatible with this behaviour to all single tasking OSs around.

## 1.23 libnix.info/Multibyte character functions

```
Multibyte character functions
*****
```

The multibyte character functions are all there - but since the Amiga OS uses no other character set than ECMA Latin I they simulate just "C" locale. This means they do nothing useful.

## 1.24 libnix.info/libstubs.a

## libstubs - automatic library opening

\*\*\*\*\*

The Amiga OS shared libraries are a nice thing. All the tasks can use them in parallel, they eat up memory only if you use them and they are simple to use - and all this works even without a memory management unit (MMU).

Another nice feature is the fact that you can open them under program control, i.e. you can take some action if they do not exist - warn the user, disable some features, etc. This nice feature becomes a misfeature if you only need a certain list of functions that are there all the time - exec, dos, intuition - you still have to open the shared libraries.

So most Amiga compilers have a feature called automatic library opening feature. This means that all libraries you reference (by calling one of the functions) but don't open yourself get opened for you by the compiler.

Auto-library-opening usage  
How to use it.

Auto-library-opening interface  
How it works.

## 1.25 libnix.info/Auto-library-opening usage

Usage

\*\*\*\*\*

To use this feature you have to do nothing (therefore it's called automatic). But you can control the library version if you wish by declaring

```
'long __oslibversion;'
```

somewhere in your program. But don't set this lower than 37 - most functions of libnix (including the commandline parsers) need 37 or more.

## 1.26 libnix.info/Auto-library-opening interface

Interface

\*\*\*\*\*

Implementing such a feature is no hard work if you know how - this

implementation uses a (not so good known) feature of the gnu linker called set elements:

1. You write a library entry for every library base and link this library as the last one. This means that the linker uses this library for every library base pointer that is not defined but referenced somewhere.
2. You tell the linker to collect these library bases together into a set element.
3. You write a function that opens all libraries in the set element at program start and cleans them up later.

Some details:

There are two object files in the library for every library base pointer. The first one is a

```
struct lib
{ struct Library *base;
  char *name; };
```

containing the library base pointer (a 'NULL' pointer at program start) and a pointer to the name of the library. This name

```
'extern char name[]'
```

is the second object. All these structs are collected together into one single set element called

```
'extern struct lib *__LIB_LIST__[]'
```

To open and close the shared libraries there are two functions in libstubs:

```
'void __initlibraries(void)'
```

and

```
'void __exitlibraries(void)'
```

Since it is still possible to open the shared libraries by hand I had to take care about the library base pointers for libnix itself - they are used in the commandline parsers - even before anybody could open them. There exists a (library private) duplicate library base pointer for each of these. They have normal names with two underscores in front.

So don't be alarmed if some system monitor tells you that your program opened dos.library twice - this is normal behaviour, most libraries do this.

Opening libraries by hand works exactly the same way as on any other compiler:

\* You declare the library base variable somewhere globally:

```
'struct Library *DOSBase=NULL;'
```

The initialization `'=NULL'` is necessary! Uninitialized variables get overwritten by initialized ones in other object files - and the library base pointers in `'libstubs.a'` are initialized with `'NULL'`. This is a feature of the GNU ld and I cannot do much about it :(.

\* You open the library before using it:

```
'DOSBase=OpenLibrary("dos.library",37);'
```

and do some action if it fails :).

## 1.27 libnix.info/Set elements

Set elements - a nice feature of the gnu ld  
\*\*\*\*\*

Set elements are used very often by this library. Since most people don't know them they are explained here a second time.

You can tell the linker to build up an array of pointers to every global symbol in your program (functions or variables) even if your symbols are scattered among some object files. These arrays are called set elements.

You can take 4 Library base pointers

```
'DOSBase', 'IntuitionBase', 'GfxBase', 'IconBase'
```

tell the linker to put them together into a set element called `'librarybases'` by placing some assembler lines like

```
'asm(".stabs \"_librarybases\",24,0,0,_DOSBase)'
```

into your code (22 for text, 24 for data, 26 for bss - and don't forget the single underscore) and get an array of pointers like this:

```
void *librarybases[]=
{ (void *)4,&DOSBase,&IntuitionBase,&GfxBase,&Iconbase,NULL };
```

The first element contains the number of symbols. The last element contains a NULL pointer. And remember: This are pointers to the pointer variables.

This is the basis of global constructors and destructors in C++ and is very useful on the amiga to implement an auto-library-opening feature :-). Set elements are used in this library for collecting together library bases, initialization routines and cleanup routines.

## 1.28 libnix.info/geta4

geta4 and other things - some words on code and data models

\*\*\*\*\*

A program consists of two portions - code and data (with the exception of self modifying code - you cannot get this out of GCC and it is a bad thing to do - so forget about it).

A program usually accesses them in a unique style of addressing modes for the machine instructions - called a code (or data) model.

On the amiga OS there exist two addressing styles for both of them - code and data. With full 32 bit addresses - giving you access to 4 GB of address space. And with reduced 16 bit addresses - giving you access to only 32k of code and 64k of data. These styles are called large (or normal) and small code and data models. Usually small code comes together with small data - but that's not necessary.

(Don't mix code and data models with the memory models of MS-DOS machines: The memory in small data model is still flat 4 GB which means by using pointers you can still address the whole memory. Only the number of variables is limited.)

You may think that these limitations are a large disadvantage - where are the benefits?

The benefits are simple: Code size and performance.

Every time you access a 16 bit address instead of 32 bit you spare 2 bytes in code size meaning 2 bytes in program size. And the processor needs to load and process a smaller instruction that needs less processor cycles. And since these 16 bit addresses are relative the loader of the OS need not relocate them. Meaning that you spare even 8 bytes more in executable size and some loading time.

And there is another advantage: If all the data is addressed relative it is simple to relocate it at program start - which means that you can easily get multientrant and reentrant executables (the code section is constant and need not be relocated). You know these as pure=resident programs.

Some details:

Data models

Code models

## 1.29 libnix.info/Data models

Data models - large and small

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Let's take a simple C program:

```
#include <stdio.h>

int max=100;
int count;
char string[]="Hello, world\n";

int main(void)
{ int i;
  for(i=0;i<max;i++)
  { count++;
    printf("%s",string); }
  return 0;
}
```

If we look at it carefully we see 4 different types of data in it:

1. The variable 'max' and the array 'string' - both are nonconstant initialized global data.
2. The variable 'count' - this is uninitialized (and therefore nonconstant) global data.
3. The string "%s" - this one is constant data.
4. The variable 'i' - this one is local data.

The compiler places these 4 types of data into 4 different places:

Data number 4 is local (and exists only in one function call). The compiler places such data into registers if possible. On the stack if this is not possible. If you do not want the compiler to place data into registers declare it volatile - it will be on the stack then all the time.

Data number 3 is constant - the compiler places it together with all the other constant data into the code section (code is also constant). Never change any constant data - the weirdest things can happen.

Data number 2 is not initialized - it would be a bad thing to put data without information into an executable. Therefore such data goes into a special section - the BSS section. BSS data does not increase executable size.

And the rest (number 1) goes into the data section :-).

To access the data section with machine instructions there are two possible methods:

You can take the whole 32 bit address and store it into your machine code. 32 bit means 4 byte every time you access a global variable. This is know as the large (normal) data model because you can access the whole bunch of 4 GB address space.

A lot of applications do not need such a large data section and it would be a waste of memory to do so. So there exists a second possibility:

You take one address register (a4) and use it as a pointer to your data section. You access your data relative to this pointer with 16 bit references. This is known as small data model.

Since there are only 16 bit references you can access a total of 64k of data (32k in each direction from a4 on). And since you use only one address register for this the data and BSS section get merged together (BSS data still need not increase executable size - there exist some tricks to prevent this - but not all linkers support such tricks).

Beware: you should never lose the contents of your address register (a4) or all the hell breaks loose.

If you ever lost them (this can only happen in certain cases when using interrupts or hooks) you can restore them by calling 'geta4()' or you can use no global data at all (and have no problems then).

The second method is recommended - and it is possible sometimes since the OS takes care of this and supports local data areas in these nasty cases. But don't call any shared library - or you will access (hidden) a library base pointer.

It is not possible to have a 'geta4()' function with resident programs = multiple data sections (which one would you choose? You access the data from a different task!)

It's in general not possible to mix objects compiled for the two data models. There are some exceptions, but people that know enough to prevent collosions need no explanation of when it's possible ;-).

## 1.30 libnix.info/Code models

Code models

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All your constant data and all (constant) code form the code section. To access the code section there exist two code models:

You can take the whole 32 bit address to call a function and can write programs 4GB large. This is the large (normal) code model.

But you can even call your functions relative to the program counter (pc) with 16 bit offsets. This is the small code model. The advantages are the same as in the small data model - only the disadvantages are different:

- \* You can only have a total of 32k of code since you need to jump in both directions. But even this is enough for a lot of programs.
  - \* There is no address register that can be lost - the program counter
-



is valid the whole time.

- \* It is possible to mix large and small code model - but you can hardly get more than 32k of code out of it.

## 1.31 libnix.info/Library bases

Library base pointers - and how they work

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The model of shared libraries on the amiga works as follows:

The library is not managed by the linker but by the application. You open it through a system function. The advantage of this is clear: You open libraries under program control, i.e. you can even check if they are there and disable some features if not or take other action.

The result of this system function is a pointer to the upper end of a jump table (a table of 'jmp' instructions to the different functions) and the lower end of a library structure containing extra information for every library you opened. These pointers are called library base pointers. They are usually stored in normal global variables.

To call a system function you have to put the library base into address register a6 and the parameters into certain other registers. Then your program has to jump over the certain address of the jump table. The function returns with the result in register d0 (and sometimes some more).

A compiler can handle this behaviour by two different methods:

- \* It can just do the right thing and place everything into the desired registers - gcc does this by declaring special assembler inline functions that do the job.
- \* It can put the arguments on the stack (as in every normal function call) and call a glue function that does nothing else then taking the arguments from the stack and putting them into the right registers then calling the function. This glue code is contained in 'amiga.lib'.

Both methods require to access the library base pointer (and a valid value in it) so they make up a reference to this variable.

## 1.32 libnix.info/libamiga.a

Glue code and some other things

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It's not possible for me to redistribute amiga.lib - but you should

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have one if you really want to use the possibilities of your amiga. (You don't need one if you only want to use ANSI features or if you use the inline headers of gcc) If you want to compile resident programs you will need a baserelative version too.

To solve this problem I decided to include a selfmade version of libamiga.a. The gluecode of this library is built out of the inline header files of gcc, some of the other functions are written from scratch. This does not give you a complete version of libamiga.a but a better that nothing version including sources.

If you want to have a fully functional version of libamiga.a you can replace the included libamiga.a by the real one. To do this you will have to convert normal amiga objectfile format to a.out format (known by the linker). Type:

```
cd <some empty directory>
stack 300000
sh
Hunk2GCC <path>amiga.lib
ar -q libamiga.a obj*
rm *.o
ranlib libamiga.a
exit
```

Doing this on 'RAM:' will improve performance a lot.

This doesn't give you the baserelative version blib/libamiga.a - you will be unable to compile resident programs. To get a baserelative version of amiga.lib try to get the 'libtos' program of the 'DICE' compiler of M. Dillon (from fishdisk or somewhere else) - it converts libraries to baserelative ones:

```
cd <some empty directory>
lha x amigalibdisk491:dice/dice206_21.lzh #?/libtos
netdcc/bin/libtos <path>amiga.lib amigas.lib
```

Then do the same as above.

### 1.33 libnix.info/FAQs

FAQs

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Q:

I do not get a working executable out of it - my debugger tells me the library bases are broken.

A:

The GNU ld that comes with GCC 2.5.8 (or lower) has some serious bugs in conjunction with set elements. Use the fixed version of ld that comes with gcc 2.6.0 (or above).

Q:

---

There are some prototypes missing in `stdio.h`.

A:

This `stdio.h` is only for internal use - use the normal GCC `stdio.h` to compile your programs.

---