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The application/zlib and application/gzip media types
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Abstract

This document defines the 'application/gzip' and 'application/zlib' media types for compressed data using the gzip and zlib compression formats.

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1. Introduction

The Zlib [RFC1950] and gzip [RFC1952] formats are widely used compression formats. Zlib is a stream format, while glib adds header and trailer fields more appropriate for a file format. They are used to compress a wide variety of material, from unstructured text to structured data to executable code.

2. The Application/Zlib Media Type

The application/zlib media type describes a block of data that is compressed using Zlib [RFC1950] compression. The data is a stream of bytes as described in RFC 1950.

2.1. Regsistration Details

Type name: application

Subtype name: zlib

Required parameters: none

Optional parameters: none

Encoding considerations: needs base64 or other encoding that allows arbitrary binary data

Security considerations: See section [security] below

Interoperability considerations: none

Published specification: [RFC1950]

Applications that use this media type: anywhere data size is an issue

Additional information:

Magic number(s): first byte is usually 0x78 but can also be 0x08, 0x18, 0x28, 0x38, 0x48, 0x58, or 0x68.
File extension(s): none
Macintosh file type code(s): none

Person and email address to contact for further information: see http://www.zlib.net/

Intended usage: COMMON

Restrictions on usage: none

Author: John Levine

Change controller: IETF

3. The Application/Gzip Media Type

The application/gzip media type describes a block of data that is compressed using gzip [RFC1952] compression. The data is a stream of bytes as described in RFC 1952.

3.1. Regsistration Details

Type name: application

Subtype name: gzip

Required parameters: none

Optional parameters: none

Encoding considerations: needs base64 or other encoding that allows arbitrary binary data

Security considerations: See section [security] below

Interoperability considerations: none

Published specification: [RFC1952]

Applications that use this media type: anywhere data size is an issue

Additional information:

Magic number(s): first two bytes are 0x1f, 0x8b.
File extension(s): gz
Macintosh file type code(s): none

Person and email address to contact for further information: see http://www.gzip.net/

Intended usage: COMMON

Restrictions on usage: none

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Change controller: IETF

4. Security Considerations

Zlib and gzip compression can be used to compress arbitrary binary data such as hostile executable code. Also, data that purports to be in zlib or gzip format may not be, and fields that are supposed to be flags, lengths, or pointers, could contain anything. Applications should treat any data with due scepticism.

5. References

[RFC1950] Deutsch, L.P. and J-L. Gailly, "ZLIB Compressed Data Format Specification version 3.3", RFC 1950, May 1996.

[RFC1951] Deutsch, P., "DEFLATE Compressed Data Format Specification version 1.3", RFC 1951, May 1996.

[RFC1952] Deutsch, P., Gailly, J-L., Adler, M., Deutsch, L.P. and G. Randers-Pehrson, "GZIP file format specification version 4.3", RFC 1952, May 1996.

[RFC4288] Freed, N. and J. Klensin, "Media Type Specifications and Registration Procedures", BCP 13, RFC 4288, December 2005.

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