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**Shared Brotli Compressed Data Format**  
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**Abstract**

This specification defines a data format for shared brotli compression, which adds support for shared dictionaries, large window, patching and a container format to brotli [[RFC7932](#)].

Shared dictionaries and large window support allow significant compression gains compared to regular brotli, and patching allows smaller patches of binary files.

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Purpose**

The purpose of this specification is to extend the brotli compressed data format format ([[RFC7932](#)]) with new abilities that allow further compression gains:

- \* Shared dictionaries allow a static shared context between encoder and decoder for significant compression gains.
- \* Large window brotli allows much larger back reference distances to give compression gains for files over 16MiB.
- \* Patching allows to create smaller patches of binary files
- \* The framing format is a container format that allows to store multiple resources, refer to dictionaries, enable patching and other filters that improve compression.

This document is the authoritative specification of shared brotli data formats and the backwards compatible changes to brotli, and defines:

- \* The data format of serialized shared dictionaries
- \* The data format of the framing format
- \* The encoding of window bits and distances for large window brotli in the brotli data format
- \* The encoding of shared dictionary references in the brotli data format
- \* The data format for patching with brotli

### **1.2. Intended audience**

This specification is intended for use by software implementers to compress data into and/or decompress data from the shared brotli dictionary format.

The text of the specification assumes a basic background in programming at the level of bits and other primitive data representations. Familiarity with the technique of LZ77 coding is helpful but not required.

### **1.3. Scope**



This specification defines a data format for shared brotli compression, which adds support for dictionaries and extended features to brotli [[RFC7932](#)].

#### **1.4. Compliance**

Unless otherwise indicated below, a compliant decompressor must be able to accept and decompress any data set that conforms to all the specifications presented here. A compliant compressor must produce data sets that conform to all the specifications presented here.

#### **1.5. Definitions of terms and conventions used**

Byte: 8 bits stored or transmitted as a unit (same as an octet). For this specification, a byte is exactly 8 bits, even on machines that store a character on a number of bits different from eight. See below for the numbering of bits within a byte.

String: a sequence of arbitrary bytes.

Bytes stored within a computer do not have a "bit order", since they are always treated as a unit. However, a byte considered as an integer between 0 and 255 does have a most- and least-significant bit, and since we write numbers with the most-significant digit on the left, we also write bytes with the most-significant bit on the left. In the diagrams below, we number the bits of a byte so that bit 0 is the least-significant bit, i.e., the bits are numbered:

```
+-----+
|76543210|
+-----+
```

Within a computer, a number may occupy multiple bytes. All multi-byte numbers in the format described here are unsigned and stored with the least-significant byte first (at the lower memory address). For example, the decimal 16-bit number 520 is stored as:

```
0          1
+-----+-----+
|00001000|00000010|
+-----+-----+
^          ^
|          |
|          + more significant byte = 2 x 256
+ less significant byte = 8
```

##### **1.5.1. Packing into bytes**



This document does not address the issue of the order in which bits of a byte are transmitted on a bit-sequential medium, since the final data format described here is byte- rather than bit-oriented. However, we describe the compressed block format below as a sequence of data elements of various bit lengths, not a sequence of bytes. We must therefore specify how to pack these data elements into bytes to form the final compressed byte sequence:

- \* Data elements are packed into bytes in order of increasing bit number within the byte, i.e., starting with the least-significant bit of the byte.
- \* Data elements other than prefix codes are packed starting with the least-significant bit of the data element. These are referred to here as integer values and are considered unsigned.
- \* Prefix codes are packed starting with the most-significant bit of the code.

In other words, if one were to print out the compressed data as a sequence of bytes, starting with the first byte at the *\*right\** margin and proceeding to the *\*left\**, with the most-significant bit of each byte on the left as usual, one would be able to parse the result from right to left, with fixed-width elements in the correct MSB-to-LSB order and prefix codes in bit-reversed order (i.e., with the first bit of the code in the relative LSB position).

As an example, consider packing the following data elements into a sequence of 3 bytes: 3-bit integer value 6, 4-bit integer value 2, prefix code 110, prefix code 10, 12-bit integer value 3628.

byte 2	byte 1	byte 0	
+-----+-----+-----+			
11100010 11000101 10010110			
+-----+-----+-----+			
^	^ ^	^ ^	
			+----- integer value 6
			+----- integer value 2
			+----- prefix code 110
			+----- prefix code 10
			+----- integer value 3628

## 2. Shared Brotli Overview

Shared brotli extends brotli [[RFC7932](#)] with support for shared dictionaries, larger LZ77 window and a framing format.





### 3. Shared Dictionaries

A shared dictionary is a piece of data shared by a compressor and decompressor. The compressor can take advantage of the dictionary context to encode the input in a more compact manner. The compressor and the decompressor must use exactly the same dictionary. A shared dictionary is specially useful to compress short input sequences.

A shared brotli dictionary can use two methods of sharing context:

- \* An LZ77 dictionary. The encoder and decoder could refer to a given sequence of bytes. Multiple LZ77 dictionaries can be set.
- \* A custom static dictionary: a word list with transforms. The encoder and decoder will replace the static dictionary data with the data in the shared dictionary. The original static dictionary is described in [Section 8 in \[RFC7932\]](#). The original data from [Appendix A](#) and [Appendix B of \[RFC7932\]](#) will be replaced. In addition, it is possible to dynamically switch this dictionary based on the data compression context, and/or to include a reference to the original dictionary in the custom dictionary.

If no shared dictionary is set the decoder behaves the same as in [\[RFC7932\]](#) on a brotli stream.

If a shared dictionary is set, then it can set any of: LZ77 dictionaries, overriding static dictionary words, and/or overriding transforms.

#### 3.1. Custom Static Dictionaries

If a custom word list is set, then the following behavior of the [RFC 7932](#) decoder [\[RFC7932\]](#) is overridden:

Instead of the Static Dictionary Data from [Appendix A of \[RFC7932\]](#), one or more word lists from the custom static dictionary data are used.

Instead of NDBITS at the end of [Appendix A](#), a custom SIZE\_BITS\_BY\_LENGTH per custom word list is used.

The copy length for a static dictionary reference must be between 4 and 31 and may not be a value for which SIZE\_BITS\_BY\_LENGTH of this dictionary is 0.

If a custom transforms list is set without context dependency, then



the following behavior of the [RFC 7932](#) decoder [[RFC7932](#)] is overridden:

The "List of Word Transformations" from [Appendix B](#) is overridden by one or more lists of custom prefixes, suffixes and transform operations.

The transform\_id must be smaller than the number of transforms given in the custom transforms list.

If the dictionary is context dependent, it includes a lookup table of 64 word list and transform list combinations. When resolving a static dictionary word, the decoder computes the literal context id, as in [section 7.1. of \[RFC7932\]](#). The literal context id is used as index in the lookup tables to select the word list and transforms to use. If the dictionary is not context dependent, this id is implicitly 0 instead.

If a distance goes beyond the dictionary for the current id and multiple word list / transform list combinations are defined, then a next dictionary is used in the following order: if not context dependent, the same order as defined in the shared dictionary. If context dependent, the index matching the current context is used first, the same order as defined in the shared dictionary excluding the current context are used next.

#### [3.1.1. Transform Operations](#)

A shared dictionary may include custom word transformations, to replace those specified in [Section 8](#) and [Appendix B of \[RFC7932\]](#). A transform consists of a possible prefix, a transform operation, for some operations a parameter, and a possible suffix. In the shared dictionary format, the transform operation is represented by a numerical ID, listed in the table below.

ID	Operation
--	-----
0	Identity
1	OmitLast1
2	OmitLast2
3	OmitLast3
4	OmitLast4
5	OmitLast5
6	OmitLast6
7	OmitLast7
8	OmitLast8
9	OmitLast9



10	FermentFirst
11	FermentAll
12	OmitFirst1
13	OmitFirst2
14	OmitFirst3
15	OmitFirst4
16	OmitFirst5
17	OmitFirst6
18	OmitFirst7
19	OmitFirst8
20	OmitFirst9
21	ShiftFirst (by PARAMETER)
22	ShiftAll (by PARAMETER)

Operations 0 to 20 are specified in [Section 8 in \[RFC7932\]](#).

ShiftFirst and ShiftAll transform specifically encoded SCALARs.

A SCALAR is a 7-, 11-, 16- or 21-bit unsigned integer encoded with 1, 2, 3 or 4 bytes respectively with following bit contents:

7-bit SCALAR:

```
+-----+
|0sssssss|
+-----+
```

11-bit SCALAR:

```
+-----+-----+
|110sssss|XXssssss|
+-----+-----+
```

16-bit SCALAR:

```
+-----+-----+-----+
|1110ssss|XXssssss|XXssssss|
+-----+-----+-----+
```

21-bit SCALAR:

```
+-----+-----+-----+-----+
|11110sss|XXssssss|XXssssss|XXssssss|
+-----+-----+-----+-----+
```

Given the input bytes matching SCALAR encoding pattern, the SCALAR value is obtained by concatenation of the "s" bits, with the most significant bits coming from the earliest byte. The "X" bits could have arbitrary value.

An ADDEND is defined as the result of limited sign extension of 16-bit unsigned PARAMETER:



At first the `PARAMETER` is zero-extended to 32 bits. After this, if the resulting value is greater or equal than `0x8000`, then `0xFF0000` is added.

`ShiftAll` starts at the beginning of the word and repetitively applies the following transform until the whole word is transformed:

If the next untransformed byte matches the first byte of the 7-, 11-, 16- or 21-bit `SCALAR` pattern, then:

If the untransformed part of the word is not long enough to match the whole `SCALAR` pattern, then the whole word is marked as transformed.

Otherwise, let `SHIFTED` be the sum of the `ADDEND` and the encoded `SCALAR`. The lowest bits from `SHIFTED` are written back into the corresponding "s" bits. The "0", "1" and "X" bits remain unchanged. Next, 1, 2, 3 or 4 not transformed bytes marked as transformed, according to the `SCALAR` pattern length.

Otherwise, the next untransformed byte is marked as transformed.

`ShiftFirst` applies the same transform as `ShiftAll`, but does not iterate.

### 3.2. LZ77 Dictionaries

If an LZ77 dictionary is set, then the decoder treats this as a regular LZ77 copy, but behaves as if the bytes of this dictionary are accessible as the uncompressed bytes outside of the regular LZ77 window for backwards references.

Let `LZ77_DICTIONARY_LENGTH` be the length of the LZ77 dictionary. Then `word_id`, described in [Section 8 in \[RFC7932\]](#), is redefined as:

`word_id = distance - (max allowed distance + 1 + LZ77_DICTIONARY_LENGTH)`

For the case when `LZ77_DICTIONARY_LENGTH` is 0, `word_id` matches the [\[RFC7932\]](#) definition.

Let `dictionary_address` be

`LZ77_DICTIONARY_LENGTH + max allowed distance - distance`

Then distance values of `<length, distance>` pairs [\[RFC7932\]](#) in range `(max allowed distance + 1)..(LZ77_DICTIONARY_LENGTH + max allowed`





distance) are interpreted as references starting in the LZ77 dictionary at the byte at `dictionary_address`. If length is longer than  $(\text{LZ77\_DICTIONARY\_LENGTH} - \text{dictionary\_address})$ , then the reference continues to copy  $(\text{length} - \text{LZ77\_DICTIONARY\_LENGTH} + \text{dictionary\_address})$  bytes from the regular LZ77 window starting at the beginning.

#### 4. Varint Encoding

A varint is encoded in base 128 in one or more bytes as follows:

```
+-----+-----+               +-----+
|1xxxxxxx|1xxxxxxx| {0-8 times} |0xxxxxxx|
+-----+-----+               +-----+
```

where the "x" bits of the first byte are the least significant bits of the value and the "x" bits of the last byte are the most significant bits of the value. The last byte must have its MSB set to 0, all other bytes to 1 to indicate there is a next byte.

The maximum allowed amount of bits to read is 63 bits, if the 9th byte is present and has its MSB set then the stream must be considered as invalid.

#### 5. Shared Dictionary Stream

The shared dictionary stream encodes a custom dictionary for brotli including custom words and/or custom transformations. A shared dictionary may appear standalone or as contents of a resource in a framing format container.

A compliant shared brotli dictionary stream must have the following format:

2 bytes: file signature, in hexadecimal the bytes 91, 0.

varint: `LZ77_DICTIONARY_LENGTH`, number of bytes for a LZ77 dictionary, or 0 if there is none.  
The maximum allowed value is the maximum possible sliding window size of brotli or of large window brotli.

`LZ77_DICTIONARY_LENGTH` bytes: contents of the LZ77 dictionary.

1 byte: `NUM_CUSTOM_WORD_LISTS`, may have value 0 to 64

`NUM_CUSTOM_WORD_LISTS` times a word list, with the following format for each word list:



28 bytes: SIZE\_BITS\_BY\_LENGTH, array of 28 unsigned 8-bit integers, indexed by word lengths 4 to 31. The value represents  $\log_2(\text{number of words of this length})$ , with the exception of 0 meaning 0 words of this length. The max allowed length value is 15 bits. OFFSETS\_BY\_LENGTH is computed from this as  $\text{OFFSETS\_BY\_LENGTH}[i + 1] = \text{OFFSETS\_BY\_LENGTH}[i] + (\text{SIZE\_BITS\_BY\_LENGTH}[i] ? (i \ll \text{SIZE\_BITS\_BY\_LENGTH}[i]) : 0)$

N bytes: words dictionary data, where N is  $\text{OFFSETS\_BY\_LENGTH}[31] + (\text{SIZE\_BITS\_BY\_LENGTH}[31] ? (31 \ll \text{SIZE\_BITS\_BY\_LENGTH}[31]) : 0)$ , first all the words of shortest length, then all words of the next length, and so on, where for each length there are either 0 or a positive power of two amount of words.

1 byte: NUM\_CUSTOM\_TRANSFORM\_LISTS, may have value 0 to 64

NUM\_CUSTOM\_TRANSFORM\_LISTS times a transform list, with the following format for each transform list:

2 bytes: PREFIX\_SUFFIX\_LENGTH, the length of prefix/suffix data. Must be at least 1 because the list must always end with a zero-length stringlet even if empty.

NUM\_PREFIX\_SUFFIX times: prefix/suffix stringlet.  
NUM\_PREFIX\_SUFFIX is the amount of stringlets parsed and must be in range 1..256.

1 byte: STRING\_LENGTH, the length of the entry contents. 0 for the last (terminating) entry of the transform list. For other entries STRING\_LENGTH must be in range 1..255. The 0 entry must be present and must be the last byte of the PREFIX\_SUFFIX\_LENGTH bytes of prefix/suffix data, else the stream must be rejected as invalid.

STRING\_LENGTH bytes: contents of the prefix/suffix.

1 byte: NTRANSFORMS, amount of transformation triplets.

NTRANSFORMS times: data for each transform:

1 byte: index of prefix in prefix/suffix data;  
must be less than NUM\_PREFIX\_SUFFIX.



1 byte: index of suffix in prefix/suffix data;  
must be less than NUM\_PREFIX\_SUFFIX.

1 byte: operation index, must be an index in the table of  
operations listed in the chapter  
"Transform Operations".

If and only if at least one transform has operation index  
ShiftFirst or ShiftAll:

NTRANSFORMS times:

2 bytes: parameters for the transform. If the transform  
does not have type ShiftFirst or ShiftAll, the  
value must be 0. ShiftFirst and ShiftAll  
interpret these bytes as an unsigned 16-bit  
integer.

if NUM\_CUSTOM\_WORD\_LISTS > 0 or NUM\_CUSTOM\_TRANSFORM\_LISTS > 0  
(else implicitly NUM\_DICTIONARIES is 1 and points to the  
brotli built-in and there is no context map)

1 byte: NUM\_DICTIONARIES, may have value 1 to 64. Each  
dictionary is a combination of a word list and a  
transform list. Each next dictionary is used when the  
distance goes beyond the previous. If a CONTEXT\_MAP is  
enabled, then the dictionary matching the context is  
moved to the front in the order for this context.

NUM\_DICTIONARIES times: the DICTIONARY\_MAP:

1 byte: index into a custom word list, or value  
NUM\_CUSTOM\_WORD\_LISTS to indicate to use the brotli  
[\[RFC7932\]](#) built-in default word list

1 byte: index into a custom transform list, or value  
NUM\_CUSTOM\_TRANSFORM\_LISTS to indicate to use the  
brotli [\[RFC7932\]](#) built-in default transform list

1 byte: CONTEXT\_ENABLED, if 0 there is no context map, if 1 a  
context map used to select the dictionary is encoded  
below

If CONTEXT\_ENABLED is 1, a context map for the 64 brotli  
[\[RFC7932\]](#) literals contexts:

64 bytes: CONTEXT\_MAP, index into the DICTIONARY\_MAP for



the first dictionary to use for this context

## 6. Large Window Brotli Compressed Data Stream

Large window brotli allows a sliding window beyond the 24-bit maximum of regular brotli [[RFC7932](#)].

The compressed data stream is backwards compatible to brotli [[RFC7932](#)], and may optionally have the following differences:

Encoding of WBITS in the stream header: the following new pattern of 14 bits is supported:

8 bits: value 00010001, to indicate a large window brotli stream

6 bits: WBITS, must have value in range 10 to 62

Distance alphabet: if the stream is a large window brotli stream, the maximum number of extra bits is 62 and the theoretical maximum size of the distance alphabet is  $(16 + \text{NDIRECT} + (62 \ll (\text{NPOSTFIX} + 1)))$ . However the alphabet is not allowed to contain a distance symbol able to represent a distance larger than 9223372036854775804 when its extra bits have their maximum value.

A decoder that does not support 64-bit integers may reject a stream if WBITS is higher than 30 or a distance symbol from the distance alphabet is able to encode a distance larger than 2147483644.

## 7. Patching Format Compressed Data Stream

TBD

## 8. Shared Brotli Compressed Data Stream

The format of a shared brotli compressed data stream without framing format is backwards compatible with brotli [[RFC7932](#)], with the following optional differences:

- \*) LZ77 dictionaries as described above are supported
- \*) Custom static dictionaries replacing or extending the static dictionary of brotli [[RFC7932](#)] with different words or transforms are supported
- \*) The stream may have the format of regular brotli [[RFC7932](#)], or the format of large window brotli as described in section





6, or the format of the patching stream described in [section 7](#)

## 9. Shared Brotli Framing Format Stream

A compliant shared brotli framing format stream has the format described below.

### 9.1. Main Format

4 bytes: file signature, in hexadecimal the bytes 91, 0a, 42, 52.  
The first byte contains the invalid WBITS combination for brotli [[RFC7932](#)] and large window brotli.

1 byte: container flags, 8 bits with meanings:

bit 0 and 1: version indicator, must be 00

bit 2: if 0, the file contains no final footer, may not contain any metadata chunks, may not contain a central directory, and may encode only a single resource (using one or more data chunks). If 1, the file may contain one or more resources, metadata, central directory, and must contain a final footer.

multiple times: a chunk, each with the format specified in [section 9.2](#)

### 9.2. Chunk Format

varint: length of this chunk excluding this varint but including all next header bytes and data. If the value is 0, then the chunk type byte is not present and the chunk type is assumed to be 0.

1 byte: CHUNK\_TYPE

- 0: padding chunk
- 1: metadata chunk
- 2: data chunk
- 3: first partial data chunk
- 4: middle partial data chunk
- 5: last partial data chunk
- 6: footer metadata chunk
- 7: global metadata chunk
- 8: repeat metadata chunk
- 9: central directory chunk
- 10: final footer



if CHUNK\_TYPE is not padding chunk or final footer:

1 byte: CODEC:

0: uncompressed

1: keep decoder

2: brotli

3: shared brotli

if CODEC is not "uncompressed":

varint: uncompressed size in bytes of the data contained  
within the compressed stream

if CODEC is "shared brotli"

1 byte: amount of dictionary references. Multiple dictionary  
references are possible with the following  
restrictions: there can be maximum 1 serialized  
dictionary, maximum 1 patching file, and maximum 15  
prefix dictionaries (a serialized dictionary may  
already contain one of those, and a patching file  
also takes up a prefix dictionary)

per dictionary reference:

1 byte: flags:

bit 0: if false, internal dictionary reference (by  
pointer to resource), if true, dictionary  
reference by hash code (could be internal or  
external)

bit 1 and 2: dictionary type:

00: prefix dictionary, set in front of the sliding  
window

01: serialized dictionary in the shared brotli  
format as specified in [section 5](#).

10: file to apply patching algorithm to. The  
compressed stream then has the format specified  
in [section 7](#).



11: invalid bit combination

bit 3-7: must be 0

if hash-based: 4+32 bytes "hw3-" and 256-bit Highwayhash  
checksum checksum to refer to dictionary

if internal index based: varint encoded pointer to its  
entry in this container. The entry must be a data  
chunk.

X bytes: extra header bytes, depending on CHUNK\_TYPE. If present,  
they are specified in the subsequent chapters.

remaining bytes: the chunk contents. The uncompressed data  
in the chunk content depends on CHUNK\_TYPE  
and is specified in the subsequent sections.  
The compressed data has following  
format depending on CODEC:

- \*) uncompressed: the raw bytes
- \*) if "keep decoder", the continuation of the compressed  
stream which was interrupted at the end of the previous  
chunk. The decoder from the previous chunk must be used  
and its state it had at the end of the previous chunk  
must be kept at the start of the decoding of this chunk.
- \*) brotli: the bytes are in brotli format  
[\[RFC7932\]](#)
- \*) shared brotli: the bytes are in the  
shared brotli format specified in [section  
8](#)

### [9.3](#). Metadata Format

All the metadata chunk types use the following format for the  
uncompressed content:

Per field:

2 bytes: code to identify this metadata field. This must be  
two lowercase or two uppercase alpha ascii  
characters. If the decoder encounters a lowercase  
field that it does not recognise for the current  
chunk type, non-ascii characters or non-alpha  
characters, the decoder must reject the data stream



as invalid. Uppercase codes may be used for custom user metadata and can be ignored by a compliant decoder.

varint: length of the content of this field in bytes, excluding the code bytes and this varint

N bytes: the contents of this field

The last field is reached when the chunk content end is reached. If the length of the last field does not end at the same byte as the end of the uncompressed content of the chunk, the decoder must reject the data stream as invalid.

## **9.4. Chunk Specifications**

### **9.4.1. Padding Chunk**

All bytes in this chunk must be zero, except for the initial varint that specifies the remaining chunk length.

Since the varint itself takes up bytes as well, when the goal is to introduce an amount of padding bytes, the dependence of the length of the varint on the value it encodes must be taken into account.

A single byte varint with value 0 is a padding chunk of length 1. For more padding, use higher varint values. Do not use multiple shorter padding chunks, since this is slower to decode.

### **9.4.2. Metadata Chunk**

This chunk contains metadata that applies to the resource whose beginning is encoded in the subsequent data chunk or first partial data chunk.

The contents of this chunk follows the format described in chapter 9.3.

The following field types are recognised:

id: name field. May appear 0 or 1 times. Has the following format:

N bytes: name in UTF-8 encoding, length determined by the field length. Treated generically but may be used as filename. If used as filename, forward slashes '/' should be used as directory separator, relative paths





should be used and filenames ending in a slash with 0-length content in the matching data chunk should be treated as an empty directory.

mt: modification type. May appear 0 or 1 times. Has the following format:

8 bytes: microseconds since epoch, as a little endian signed twos complement 64-bit integer

custom user field: any two uppercase ASCII characters.

#### **9.4.3. Data Chunk**

A data chunk contains the actual data of a resource.

This chunk has the following extra header bytes:

1 byte: flags:

bit 0: if true, indicates this is not a resource that should be output implicitly as part of extracting resources from this container. Instead, it may be referred to only explicitly, e.g. as a dictionary reference by hash code or offset. This flag should be set for data used as dictionary to improve compression of actual resources.

bit 1: if true, hash code is given

bits 2-7: must be zero

if hash code is given:

36 bytes: "hw3-" plus 32 bytes highwayhash-256 checksum of the uncompressed data

The uncompressed content bytes of this chunk are the actual data of the resource.

#### **9.4.4. First Partial Data Chunk**

This chunk contains partial data of a resource. This is the first chunk in a series containing the entire data of the resource.

The format of this chunk is the same as the format of a Data Chunk (chapter 9.4.3)

The uncompressed data size and hash code given by this chunk are only



of this part of the resource, not of the full resource.

#### **9.4.5. Middle Partial Data Chunk**

This chunk contains partial data of a resource, and is neither the first nor the last part of the full resource.

The format of this chunk is the same as the format of a First Data Chunk (chapter 9.4.4), except bit 0 of the flags must be 0. Only the first chunk specifies the "no output" flag.

#### **9.4.6. Last Partial Data Chunk**

This chunk contains the final piece of partial data of a resource.

The format is the same as for Partial Data Chunk, Middle (chapter 9.4.5).

The type of this chunk indicates that there are no further chunk encoding this resource, so the full resource is now known.

#### **9.4.7. Footer Metadata Chunk**

This metadata applies to the resource whose encoding ended in the preceding data chunk or last partial data chunk.

The contents of this chunk follows the format described in chapter 9.3.

There are no lowercase field types defined for footer metadata. Uppercase field types can be used as custom user data.

#### **9.4.8. Global Metadata Chunk**

This metadata applies to the whole container instead of a single resource.

The contents of this chunk follows the format described in chapter 9.3.

There are no lowercase field types defined for footer metadata. Uppercase field types can be used as custom user data.

#### **9.4.9. Repeat Metadata Chunk**

These chunks optionally repeat metadata that is interleaved between data chunks. To use these chunks, it is necessary to also read additional information, such as pointers to the original chunks, from



the central directory.

The contents of this chunk follows the format described in chapter 9.3.

This chunk has an extra header byte:

- 1 byte: chunk type of repeated chunk (metadata chunk or footer metadata chunk)

This set of chunks must follow the following restrictions:

It is optional whether or not repeat metadata chunks are present.

If they are present, then they must be present for all metadata chunks and footer metadata chunks.

There may be only 1 repeat metadata chunk per repeated metadata chunk.

They must appear in the same order as the chunks appear in the container, which is also the same order as listed in the central directory.

The fields contained in this metadata chunk must follow the following restrictions:

If a field is present, it must exactly match the corresponding field of the copied chunk.

It is allowed to leave out a field that is present in the copied chunk.

If a field is present, then it must be present in *\*all\** other repeat metadata chunks when the copied chunk contains this field. In other words, if you know you can get the name field from a repeat chunk, you know that you will be able to get all names of all resources from all repeat chunks.

#### **9.4.10. Central Directory Chunk**

The central directory chunk, along with the repeat metadata chunks, allow to quickly find and list compressed resources in the container file.

The contents of the central directory are as follows:



varint: pointer into the file where the repeat metadata chunks are located, or 0 if they are not present

per chunk listed:

varint: pointer into the file where this chunk begins

varint: amount of header bytes N used below

N bytes: copy of all the header bytes of the pointed at chunk, including total size, chunk type byte, X extra header bytes, codec, dictionary references, uncompressed size. The content is not repeated here.

The last listed chunk is reached when the end of the contents of the central directory are reached. If the end does not match the last byte of the central directory, the decoder must reject the data stream as invalid.

If present, the central directory must list all chunks of type data, first partial data, middle partial data, last partial data, metadata and footer metadata.

#### [9.4.11](#). Final Footer Chunk

Chunk that closes the file, only present if in the initial container header flags bit 2 was set.

This chunk has the following content, always uncompressed:

reversed varint: size of this entire framing format file, including these bytes themselves, or 0 if this size is not given

reversed varint: pointer to the start of the central directory, or 0 if there is none

A reversed varint has the same format as a varint, but has its bytes in reversed order and is designed to be parsed from end of file towards the beginning.

#### 9.4.12. Chunk ordering

The chunk ordering must follow the rules described below, if the decoder sees otherwise, it must reject the data stream as invalid.

Padding chunks may be inserted anywhere, even between chunks for which the rules below say no other chunk types may come in





between.

Metadata chunks must come immediately before the Data chunks of the resource they apply to.

Footer metadata chunks must come immediately after the Data chunks of the resource they apply to.

There may be only 0 or 1 metadata chunks per resource.

There may be only 0 or 1 footer metadata chunks per resource.

A resource must exist out of either 1 data chunk, or 1 first partial data chunk, 0 or more middle partial data chunks, and 1 last partial data chunk, in that order.

Repeat metadata chunks must follow the rules of [section 9.4.9](#).

There may be only 0 or 1 central directory chunks.

If bit 2 of the container flags is set, there may be only a single resource, no metadata chunks of any type, no central directory, and no final footer.

If bit 2 of the container flags is not set, there must be exactly 1 final footer chunk and it must be the last chunk in the file.

## **[10. Security Considerations](#)**

The security considerations for brotli [[RFC7932](#)] apply to shared brotli as well.

In addition, the same considerations apply to the decoding of new file format streams for shared brotli, including shared dictionaries, the framing format and the shared brotli format.

The dictionary must be treated with the same security precautions as the content, because a change to the dictionary can result in a change to the decompressed content.

The CRIME attack shows that it's a bad idea to compress data from mixed (e.g. public and private) sources -- the data sources include not only the compressed data but also the dictionaries. For example, if you compress secret cookies using a public-data-only dictionary, you still leak information about the cookies.

Not only can the dictionary reveal information about the compressed data, but vice versa, data compressed with the dictionary can reveal



the contents of the dictionary when an adversary can control parts of data to compress and see the compressed size. On the other hand, if the adversary can control the dictionary, the adversary can learn information about the compressed data.

The most robust defense against CRIME is not to compress private data (e.g., sensitive headers like cookies or any content with PII). The challenge has been to identify secrets within a vast amount of to be compressed data. Cloudflare uses a regular expression [[CLOUDFLARE](#)]. Another idea is to extend existing web template systems (e.g., Soy [[SOY](#)]) to allow developers to mark secrets that must not be compressed.

A less robust idea, but easier to implement, is to randomize the compression algorithm, i.e., adding randomly generated padding, varying the compression ratio, etc. The tricky part is to find the right balance between cost and security, i.e., on one hand we don't want to add too much padding because it adds a cost to data, on the other hand we don't want to add too little because the adversary can detect a small amount of padding with traffic analysis.

Another defense in addition is to not use dictionaries for cross-domain requests, and only use shared brotli for the response when the origin is the same as where the content is hosted (using CORS). This prevents an adversary to use a private dictionary with user secrets to compress content hosted on the adversary's origin. It also helps prevent CRIME attacks that try to benefit from a public dictionary by preventing data compression with dictionaries for requests that do not originate from the host itself.

The content of the dictionary itself should not be affected by external users, allowing adversaries to control the dictionary allows a form of chosen plaintext attack. Instead, only base the dictionary on content you control or generic large scale content such as a spoken language, and update the dictionary with large time intervals (days, not seconds) to prevent fast probing.

## **[11.](#) IANA Considerations**

The "HTTP Content Coding Registry" has been updated with the registration below:



Lode Vandevenne (editor)  
Google, Inc.



Email: [lode@google.com](mailto:lode@google.com)