Extracting pages and page ranges, protect with password and remove password from PDF on GNU / Linux with QPDF - Linux Manipulating PDF files from command line

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If're a Linux user and you need to **script certain page extraction from PDF files, crypt protect with password a PDF file or decrypt (remote password protection from PDF)** or do some *kind of structural transformation of existing PDF file* you can use a *QPDF command line utility*. qpdf is in active development and very convenient tool for Website developers (*PHP / Perl / Python*), as often on websites its necessery to *write code to cut / tailer / restructure PDFs*.

1. Install QPDF from deb / rpm package

qpdf is instalalble by default in deb repositories on *Debian / Ubuntu GNU / (deb derivative) Linux-es* to install it *apt-get it*

        apt-get install --yes qpdf

On *RPM based distribution CentOS / SuSE / RHEL / Fedora Linux to install qpdf*, fetch the respective distribution binary from rpmfind.net or to **install latest version of qpdf** build it from source code.

2. Install QPDF from source

To *build latest qpdf from source*

- on RPM based distributions install with yum fullowing packages:

> **yum -y install zlib-devel pcre-devel gcc gcc-c++**

- on Deb based Linuces, you will need to install

> **apt-get install --yes build-essential gcc dpkg-dev g++ zlib1g-dev**

Then to build gather latest qpdf source from here

> **cd /usr/local/src**
> **wget -q http://www.pc-freak.net/files/qpdf-5.1.2.tar.gz**
> **tar -zxvf qpdf-5.1.2.tar.gz**
> **cd qpdf-5.1.2/**
> **./configure**
> **make**
> **make install**

Once it is installed, if you get *error on qpdf runtime*:

> /usr/local/bin/qpdf: error while loading shared libraries: libqpdf.so.13: cannot open shared object
> file: No such file or directory

To solve the error find in your compile directory libqpdf.so.13 and copy it to **/usr/lib** or **/usr/local/lib**

cp -rpf ./libqpdf/build/.libs/libqpdf.so.13 /usr/local/lib

3. Decrypt password encrypted (protected) PDF file

if you have time and you like reading be sure to check the extensive qpdf-manual.

To **remove password from a PDF file protected with a password with qpdf**

qpdf --password=SECRET-PASSWORD --decrypt input-file.pdf output-file.pdf

QPDF has a vast range of split and merge features. It can **combine all the files in a folder (*.pdf)**, you can use it to **try to recover damaged pdf files**, **extract individual pages from PDF, dump and reverse page range,** make new created PDF with old PDF's reversed pages (pages 1,2,3,4 to become in order 4,3,2,1), apply some **single pdf file metadata to multiple files**.

4. Try to Recover damaged PDF file

To try to **recover some damaged file with qpdf**:

qpdf file-to-repair.pdf repaired-file.pdf

5. Extract certain pages or page range from PDF

It is recommended to use the version built from source to extract certain page range from PDF

/usr/local/bin/qpdf --empty --pages input-file.pdf 1-5 -- outfile-file.pdf

If you wanted to take pages 1–5 from file1.pdf and pages 11–15 from file2.pdf in reverse, you would run

qpdf file1.pdf --pages file1.pdf 1-5 file2.pdf 15-11 -- outfile.pdf