How to edit, convert, join, split and re-time movie subtitle files on Linux (Fix Subtitles bad timing) / Install subtitle manipulation console tools for Linux

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As a Linux user I sometimes face difficulties with watching subtitled, movies. I mostly use Mplayer, Totem or VLC to watch the common video files.
The most common problems I face with subtitles are caused by **bad timing**, many times the solution to the bad timing issues is very simpleand comes up to changing the default movie player I use **MPlayer** to **VLC** or Totem.

However at many occasions trying to watch the movie with different kind of movie player does not help. In this dark moments I get seriously irritated I am not a regular Windows user, where such kind of problems are almost none as many of the Windows movie player problems does fix bad timing issues automatically.

Luckily there is a work-around to this subtitles timing issues and other mishaps caused by guys who created a Movie subtitle files with a Windows subtitle editor program, subtitles timing, the Linux work-around takes a few more minutes to install a package called Subtitles

The Subtitles text utility is written in Perl and contains two executables **subplay** and **subs** .

Subtitles is the Linux subtitle Swiss Army Knife as it is capable of **convert, join, split, and re-time of subtitles files**

Installing Subtitles tools on Linux is a trivial job and it comes to download and installation of the 2 perl executables.
Here is how:

1. Download Subtitles.tar.gz toolsI have mirrored Linux Subtitles (Subtitles.tar.gz) here originally the binaries are to be found on URL address: *http://karasik.eu.org/software/* , issue the commands:

```
linux:~# cd /usr/local/src
linux:/usr/local/src# wget http://www.pc-freak.net/files/Subtitles.tar.gz
...
```

2. Unarchive it

```
linux:/usr/local/src# tar -zxvvf tar -zxvvf Subtitles.tar.gz...
linux:/usr/local/src# cd Subtitles-1.0
```

3. Compile and install Subtitles system wide Pitily the Subtitles tools are not currently available as a packages in the repositories of Debian and Ubuntu Linux and thus easy installation without compilation

via *apt-get* is unfortunately not available.

Here is the commands with which to compile and install Subtitles:

```
linux:/usr/local/src/Subtitles-1.0# perl Makefile.PL
...
linux:/usr/local/src/Subtitles-1.0# make
...
linux:/usr/local/src/Subtitles-1.0# make test
...

All tests successful.Files=1, Tests=17, 1 wallclock secs ( 0.05 usr 0.00 sys + 0.06 cusr 0.01 csys = 0.12 CPU)Result: PASS

linux:/usr/local/src/Subtitles-1.0# make install

Installing /usr/local/share/perl/5.10.1/Subtitles.pm
Installing /usr/local/man/man1/subplay.1p
Installing /usr/local/man/man1/subs.1p
Installing /usr/local/man/man3/Subtitles.3pm
Installing /usr/local/bin/subplay
Installing /usr/local/bin/subs
Appending installation info to /usr/local/lib/perl/5.10.1/perllocal.pod
```

Now as we have the **subs** executable installed, Let's say **your movie subtitles displays 5 seconds earlier before the movie scenes (bad timing),** all you need to do to adjust your subtitles to show up in correct movie scenes is issue:

```
hipo@linux:/home/hipo/Movies$ subs -i -b 5 your_movie_subtitle_file_name.sub
```

now check out the subtitle files once again with your favourite player and the early subtitles display on your movie should be fixed.
Let's have another scenario, say that your movie file is encoded to display 24 frames per seconds (fps) but the subtitle file is created to display the subtitles for a 25 fps, to solve this situation issue:

```
hipo@linux:~# subs -i -a 24/25 your_movie_subtitle_file.sub
```

Another possible scenario where **subs command** will be a precious asset is if you for example want to merge two subtitle files into one.Let's say you have subtitles for a movie which are split over in 2 parts and the corresponding subtitles are in 2 different files, but eventually you find a better quality of the movie (DVD quality) in a single file and therefore you need the movie subtitles to be stored in one single file.
In that case to merge the subtitle files from let's say the files **movie_subtitle_file1.sub** and

movie_subtitle_file2.sub use the command:

subs -z movie_subtitle_file1.sub movie_subtitle_file2.sub

Some few other helpful things you can do with *subs* on Linux, are for example: *splitting a file after a determined period of time, separating overlapped lines, and joining files into a single subtitle.*

If you want to remove all the comments of gestures, facial expressions loud laughing etc. which displays usually the annoying ('[Sneezing]' or '[Music playing]) during the movie screen play, issue:

subs -e 's/[\s-]*\[.*\]\s*\n*//gs' movie_subtitle_file.sub

Also other interesting Linux tool which is useful if you want to make conversions between subtitle in a (.sub) format to (.srt) format is called **sub2srt perl script**:

sub2srt's home page is located on the URL address: *http://www.robelix.com/sub2srt/,* just to ensure it won't just disappear with time I have created sub2srt mirror here

The most basic usage of sub2srt linux converting tool is by simply passing input sub and output srt file names like so:

linux:~# ./sub2srt 5rFF-pop.sub 5rFF-pop.srt

sub2srt supports changing of fps rate per second during conversion with the **-f** option as well as creationg of converted files in dos like end of file (CR+LF) with the **--dos** option.

Hope this article makes sense. If you find it useful, please drop me a thanks comment ;)