

What flavour is it?

A gentle introduction to Albatross

Island of T_EX

Version 0.2.0 - December 9, 2020

1 Introduction

Albatross! Albatross!
Albatross!

Monty Python

Albatross is a command line tool for finding fonts that contain a given Unicode glyph. It relies on Fontconfig, a library for configuring and customizing font access. The tool is written in Kotlin and requires a Java virtual machine to run.

2 Requirements

Two choc-ices please.

Monty Python

Albatross has two hard requirements: a Java virtual machine (at least version 8.0, from any vendor) and the `fc-list` tool provided by the Fontconfig library, available in the system path. Linux and MacOS are known to have this library. For Windows, note that the T_EX Live distribution contains Fontconfig tools. It is also highly recommended to use a terminal with Unicode support, as Albatross will try to render the given glyphs.

3 Basic use

I haven't got choc-ices. I
only got the albatross.
Albatross!

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The tool is a typical command line application, so we need to invoke it by typing `albatross` in the terminal:

Usage: albatross [OPTIONS] glyphs...

Options:

```
-s, --show-styles      Show available font styles
-d, --detailed         Show a detailed font list
-a, --ansi-level [n|a16|a256|tc]
                        Set the default ANSI level
-b, --border-style [1|2|2|3|4|5]
                        Set the border style
-V, --version          Show the version and exit
-h, --help             Show this message and exit
```

Provided that Albatross is properly available in the underlying operating system, we will get the help message listing all the available options and the tool usage.

3.1 Glyphs

What flavour is it?

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Albatross takes a list of glyphs, separated by spaces, as input. Two formats are supported by the command line tool:

- The glyph itself, e.g. ß (Eszett). Internally, the tool will convert it to the corresponding Unicode code point.

```
$ albatross ß
```

- The glyph as a Unicode code point in the hexadecimal notation, e.g, 0xDF. The 0x prefix is mandatory.

```
$ albatross 0xDF
```

Note that the tool takes the value as case insensitive, e.g, 0xDF is equal to 0xdf (or any case combination thereof).

Formats can be used interchangeably.

3.2 Output

It's a bird, innit? It's a
bloody sea bird... it's not
any bloody flavour.
Albatross!

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Albatross prints the results as a table. The default behaviour is to just display the font names, e.g,

Unicode code point DF mapping to ß

| Font name |
|--------------------------------|
| 3270Medium Nerd Font |
| 3270Medium Nerd Font Mono |
| ... |
| Zilla Slab,Zilla Slab Medium |
| Zilla Slab,Zilla Slab SemiBold |

There is a -s option (or --show-styles for the long option) that includes the styles available for each font, e.g,

Unicode code point DF mapping to ß

| Font name | Available styles |
|------------------------------|--|
| 3270Medium Nerd Font | Medium |
| 3270Medium Nerd Font Mono | Medium |
| ... | |
| Zilla Slab,Zilla Slab Medium | Medium Italic, Italic, Medium, Regular |

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Zilla Slab,Zilla Slab SemiBold | SemiBold, Regular, SemiBold Italic, Italic |
|--------------------------------|--|

For even more details, including the font type and paths, there is the `-d` option (or `--detailed` for the long option), e.g,

Unicode code point DF, font details, mapping to ß

| | |
|-------|---|
| Name | 3270Medium Nerd Font |
| Type | OpenType Font |
| Files | /home/paulo/.local/share/fonts/NerdFonts/3270-Medium Nerd Font Complete.otf |

Unicode code point DF, font details, mapping to ß

| | |
|-------|--|
| Name | 3270Medium Nerd Font Mono |
| Type | OpenType Font |
| Files | /home/paulo/.local/share/fonts/NerdFonts/3270-Medium Nerd Font Complete Mono.otf |

...

Unicode code point DF, font details, mapping to ß

| | |
|-------|--|
| Name | Zilla Slab,Zilla Slab Medium |
| Type | OpenType Font |
| Files | /usr/share/fonts/mozilla-zilla-slab/ZillaSlab-MediumItalic.otf /usr/share/fonts/mozilla-zilla-slab/ZillaSlab-Medium.otf |

Unicode code point DF, font details, mapping to ß

| | |
|-------|--|
| Name | Zilla Slab,Zilla Slab SemiBold |
| Type | OpenType Font |
| Files | /usr/share/fonts/mozilla-zilla-slab/ZillaSlab-SemiBold.otf /usr/share/fonts/mozilla-zilla-slab/ZillaSlab-SemiBoldItalic.... |

For more verbosity, `--detailed` can be combined with `--show-styles` to include all font details, e.g,

Unicode code point DF, font details, mapping to ß

| | |
|-------|--|
| Name | 3270Medium Nerd Font |
| Type | OpenType Font |
| Files | /home/paulo/.local/share/fonts/NerdFonts/3270-Medium Nerd Font |

| | |
|--------|--------------|
| | Complete.otf |
| Styles | Medium |

Unicode code point DF, font details, mapping to ß

| | |
|--------|--|
| Name | 3270Medium Nerd Font Mono |
| Type | OpenType Font |
| Files | /home/paulo/.local/share/fonts/NerdFonts/3270-Medium Nerd Font Complete Mono.otf |
| Styles | Medium |

...

Unicode code point DF, font details, mapping to ß

| | |
|--------|--|
| Name | Zilla Slab,Zilla Slab Medium |
| Type | OpenType Font |
| Files | /usr/share/fonts/mozilla-zilla-slab/ZillaSlab-MediumItalic.otf /usr/share/fonts/mozilla-zilla-slab/ZillaSlab-Medium.otf |
| Styles | Medium Italic, Italic, Medium, Regular |

Unicode code point DF, font details, mapping to ß

| | |
|--------|--|
| Name | Zilla Slab,Zilla Slab SemiBold |
| Type | OpenType Font |
| Files | /usr/share/fonts/mozilla-zilla-slab/ZillaSlab-SemiBold.otf /usr/share/fonts/mozilla-zilla-slab/ZillaSlab-SemiBoldItalic.... |
| Styles | SemiBold, Regular, SemiBold Italic, Italic |

Since the results can span several rows (the more common the glyph, the more fonts will contain it), we strongly recommend using a pipeline and pass the results to a terminal pager, e.g, the less utility:

```
$ albatross ß | less
```

3.3 Coloured output

Do you get wafers with it?

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Albatross supports terminal colours by including the `-a` option (or `--ansi-level` for the long option) followed by the corresponding colour level. The following levels are available:

| Level | Description |
|-------|-----------------------------|
| n | No colours at all (default) |
| a16 | ANSI 16 colours |
| a256 | ANSI 256 colours |
| tc | Support for true colours |

Note that colours might mess the output when passed to a terminal pager. You might need to either adjust the terminal pager accordingly (e.g, `less -r` makes control characters to be displayed) or disable colours altogether (which is the default behaviour).

3.4 Table styles

Albatross provides 6 table styles. Include the `-b` option (or `--border-style` for the long option) followed by the corresponding border style. The following styles are available:

- Style 1:

| | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| Font name | Available styles |
| 3270Medium Nerd Font | Medium |
| ... | |

- Style 2:

| |
|----------------------|
| Font name |
| 3270Medium Nerd Font |
| ... |

- Style 3:

| | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| Font name | Available styles |
| 3270Medium Nerd Font | Medium |
| ... | |

- Style 4:

| Font name | Available styles |
|----------------------|------------------|
| 3270Medium Nerd Font | Medium |

...

- Style 5:

| Font name | Available styles |
|----------------------|------------------|
| 3270Medium Nerd Font | Medium |

...

- Style 6:

| Font name | Available styles |
|----------------------|------------------|
| 3270Medium Nerd Font | Medium |

...

These are the keys to be used as option values:

| Key | Description |
|-----|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | Style 1 (ASCII) |
| 2 | Style 2 (rounded corners) |
| 3 | Style 3 (blank) |
| 4 | Style 4 (double lines) |
| 5 | Style 5 (square corners, default) |
| 6 | Style 6 (heavy lines) |

License

Course you don't get
bloody wafers with it.
Albatross!

Monty Python

Albatross is licensed under the New BSD License. Please note that the New BSD License has been verified as a GPL-compatible free software license by the Free Software Foundation, and has been vetted as an open source license by the Open Source Initiative.

Changelog

How much is it?

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0.2.0 (current)

Added

- Inclusion of a man page.

Fixed

- Windows paths were incorrectly parsed, causing font names and styles to be displayed incorrectly.

0.1.0 (2020-12-07)

- Initial release.

The team

Ninepence.

Monty Python

Albatross is brought to you by the Island of T_EX. If you want to support T_EX development by a donation, the best way to do this is donating to the T_EX Users Group.

No albatrosses were harmed during the making of this user manual.