

Subversion: The Definitive Guide

by Ben Collins-Sussman, Brian W. Fitzpatrick, and C. Michael Pilato

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Preface

"Find a good opening quote." --Anonymous

In the world of open-source software, the Concurrent Versions System (CVS) has long been the tool of choice for version control. And rightly so. CVS itself is free software, and its wonderful “non-locking” development model—which allows dozens of far-flung programmers to share their work—fits the collaborative model of the open-source world very well. CVS and its semi-chaotic development model have become cornerstones of open-source culture.

But like many tools, CVS is starting to show its age. Subversion is a relatively new version control system designed to be the successor to CVS. The designers set out to win the hearts of CVS users in two ways: by creating an open-source version control system with a similar design (and “look and feel”) as CVS, and by attempting to fix most of CVS’s noticeable flaws. While the result isn’t necessarily the next great evolution in version control design, Subversion *is* very powerful, very useable, and very flexible.

Audience

This book is written for computer literate folk who want to use Subversion to manage their data. While Subversion runs on a number of different operating systems, its primary user interface is command-line based. For that reason, the examples in this book assume the reader is using a Unix-like operating system, and is relatively comfortable with Unix and command-line interfaces.

Most readers are probably programmers or sysadmins who need to track changes to source code; this is the most common use for Subversion, and therefore it is the scenario underlying all of the book’s examples. But keep in mind that Subversion can be used to manage changes to any sort of information: images, music, databases, documentation, and so on. To Subversion, all data is just data.

While this book is written with the assumption that the reader has never used version control, we’ve also tried to make it easy for former CVS users to get up to speed quickly. Special sidebars may discuss CVS from time to time, and a special appendix summarizes most of the differences between CVS and Subversion.

How This Book is Organized

The first three chapters of this book form a general introduction to Subversion. We begin with a discussion of Subversion’s features, discuss its design and user model, and then lead into a guided tour. All readers, regardless of experience, should read these chapters. They form the backbone of the rest of the book.

Chapters four, five, and six discuss the more complex topics of branching, repository administration, and other advanced features such as properties, externals, and access control. Sysadmins and power-users will definitely want to read these chapters.

Chapter seven is specially written for programmers who want to use Subversion’s APIs in their own software, or want to work on Subversion itself.

The book ends with reference material. Chapter eight is a reference guide for all Subversion commands, and the appendices cover a number of useful topics. These are the chapters you’re mostly likely to come back to after you’ve finished the book.

Conventions used in this book

O’Reilly almost certainly needs to fill this in, depending on how they typeset the book.

Note that the source code examples are just that—examples. While they will compile with the proper compiler incantations, they are intended to illustrate the problem at hand, not necessarily serve as examples of good programming style.

This Book is Free

This book started out as bits of documentation written by Subversion project developers, which were then coalesced into a single work and rewritten. As such, it has always had the same free, open-source license as Subversion itself. In fact, the book was written in the public eye, as a part of Subversion. This means two things:

- You will always find the latest version of this book in Subversion's own source tree.
- You can distribute and make changes to this book however you wish — it's under a free license. Of course, rather than distribute your own private version of this book, we'd much rather you send feedback and patches to the Subversion developer community. See Section , “Contributing to Subversion” to learn about joining this community.

You can send publishing comments and questions to O'Reilly here: ###insert boilerplate.

A relatively recent online version of this book can be found at <http://www.svnbook.org>.

Acknowledgements

Huge list of thanks to the many svn developers who sent patches/feedback on this book.

Also, individual-author acknowledgements to specific friends and family.

Chapter 1. Introduction

Version control is the art of managing changes to information. It has long been a critical tool to programmers, who typically spend their time making small changes to software and then undoing those changes the next day. Imagine a team of these programmers working concurrently, and you can see why a good version control system is needed to manage the potential chaos.

What is Subversion?

Subversion is a free/open-source version control system. That is, Subversion manages files and directories over time. The tree of files are placed into a central *repository*. The repository is much like an ordinary file server, except that it remembers every change ever made to your files and directories. This allows you to recover older versions of your data, or examine the history of how your data changed. In this regard, many people think of a version control system as a sort of “time machine”.

Some version control systems are also software configuration management (SCM) systems. These systems are specifically tailored to manage trees of source code, and have many features that are specific to software development (such as natively understanding programming languages). Subversion, however, is not one of these systems; it is a general system that can be used to manage *any* sort of collection of files, including source code.

Subversion's History

In 1995, Karl Fogel and Jim Blandy founded Cyclic Software, a company for commercially supporting and improving the Concurrent Versions System (CVS). Cyclic made the first public release of a network-enabled CVS (contributed by Cygnus software.) In 1999, Karl Fogel published a book about CVS and the open-source development model it enables. Karl and Jim had long talked about writing a replacement for CVS; Jim had even drafted a new, theoretical repository design, and had come up with a good project name. Finally, in February of 2000, Brian Behlendorf of CollabNet (<http://www.collab.net>) offered Karl a full-time job to write a CVS replacement. Karl gathered a team together and work began in May. Because Subversion was developed openly under a free license, it quickly attracted a community of developers.

The original design team settled on some simple goals. It was decided that Subversion should be a functional replacement for CVS; it should match CVS's features, preserve the same development model, but still fix the most obvious flaws. And Subversion should be similar enough to CVS such that any CVS user could start using it with little effort.

After fourteen months of coding, Subversion became “self-hosting” on August 31, 2001. That is, Subversion developers stopped using CVS to manage Subversion's own source code and started using Subversion instead.

While CollabNet is credited with initiating and funding a very large chunk of the work (it pays the salaries of a few full-time Subversion developers), the project is still a typical open-source project, governed by the usual meritocratic rules. CollabNet owns the copyright on the code, but that copyright is an Apache/BSD-style license which is fully compliant with the Debian Free Software Guidelines. In other words, anyone is free to download, modify, and redistribute Subversion as he pleases; no permission from CollabNet or anyone else is required.

Subversion's Features

How does Subversion improve upon CVS's design? Here's a short list to whet your appetite. If you're not familiar with CVS, you may not understand all of these features. Fear not: Chapter 2 will provide you with a gentle introduction to version control.

Directory versioning

The Subversion repository doesn't only track the history of individual files; instead, it implements a “virtual” versioned filesystem that tracks changes to trees over time.

	Files <i>and</i> directories are versioned. As a result, there are real client-side move and copy commands that operate on files and directories.
Atomic commits	A commit either goes into the repository completely, or not all. This allows developers to commit changes as logical “changesets”.
Versioned metadata	Each file and directory has an invisible set of “properties” attached. You can invent and store any arbitrary key/value pairs you wish. Properties are versioned over time, just like file contents.
Choice of network layers	Subversion has an abstracted notion of repository access, making it easy for people to implement new network mechanisms. Subversion's “advanced” network server is a module for the Apache web server, which speaks a variant of HTTP called WebDAV/DeltaV. This gives Subversion a big advantage in stability and interoperability, and provides various key features for free: authentication, authorization, wire compression, and repository browsing, for example. A smaller, standalone svn server process is also available. This server speaks a custom protocol which can be easily tunneled over ssh.
Consistent data handling	Subversion expresses file differences using a binary differencing algorithm, which works identically on both text (human-readable) and binary (human-unreadable) files. Both types of files are stored equally compressed in the repository, and differences are transmitted in both directions across the network.
Efficient branching and tagging	There's no need for branching/tagging to be proportional to project size. Subversion creates branches and tags by simply copying the project, using a mechanism similar to a hard-link. Thus these operations take only a very small, constant amount of time.
Hackability	Subversion has no historical baggage; it is implemented a collection of shared C libraries with well-defined APIs. This makes Subversion extremely maintainable and usable by other applications and languages.

Installing Subversion

Subversion is built on a portability layer called APR (the Apache Portable Runtime library). This means Subversion should work on any operating system that the Apache httpd server runs on: Windows, Linux, all flavors of BSD, Mac OS X, Netware, and others.

The easiest way to get Subversion is to find a binary package of some sort for your operating system. Subversion's website (<http://subversion.tigris.org>) often has binaries available for download, posted by volunteers. The site usually contains graphical installer packages for users for Microsoft operating systems. If you run a Unix-like operating system, you can use your system's native package-distribution system (rpm, deb, ports tree) to get Subversion.

Alternately, you can build Subversion directly from source code. From the website, you can download the latest source-code release. After unpacking it, follow the instructions in INSTALL to build it. Note that released source package contains everything you need to build a commandline-client capable of talking to a remote repository (in particular, the apr, apr-util, and neon libraries.) But Subversion has many other dependencies, such as Berkeley DB and possibly Apache httpd. If you want to do a “full” build, make sure you have all of packages documented in the INSTALL file. If you plan to work on Subversion itself, you can use your client program to grab the latest, bleeding-edge source code. This is documented in Section , “Get the Source Code”.

Subversion's components

Subversion, once installed, has a number of different pieces. Here's a quick overview of what you get.

svn	The command-line client program. This is the main tool used to manage data, and its use is covered in Chapters 2, 3, 4, and 6.
svnlook	A tool for inspecting a Subversion repository, discussed in Chapter 5.
svnadmin	A tool for tweaking or repairing a Subversion repository, used mainly by system administrators, also discussed in Chapter 5.
mod_dav_svn	A plug-in module for the Apache-2.X web server; used to make your repository available to others over a network. Discussed in Chapter 5.
svnserve	A standalone server program, runnable as a daemon process; another way to make your repository available to others over a network. Discussed in Chapter 5.
svnversion	A program for reporting the mixed-revision state of a working copy. (See Chapter 2 to understand mixed-revision working copies.)

Assuming you have Subversion installed correctly, you should be ready to start. The next two chapters will walk you through the usage of the command-line client program.

Chapter 2. Basic Concepts

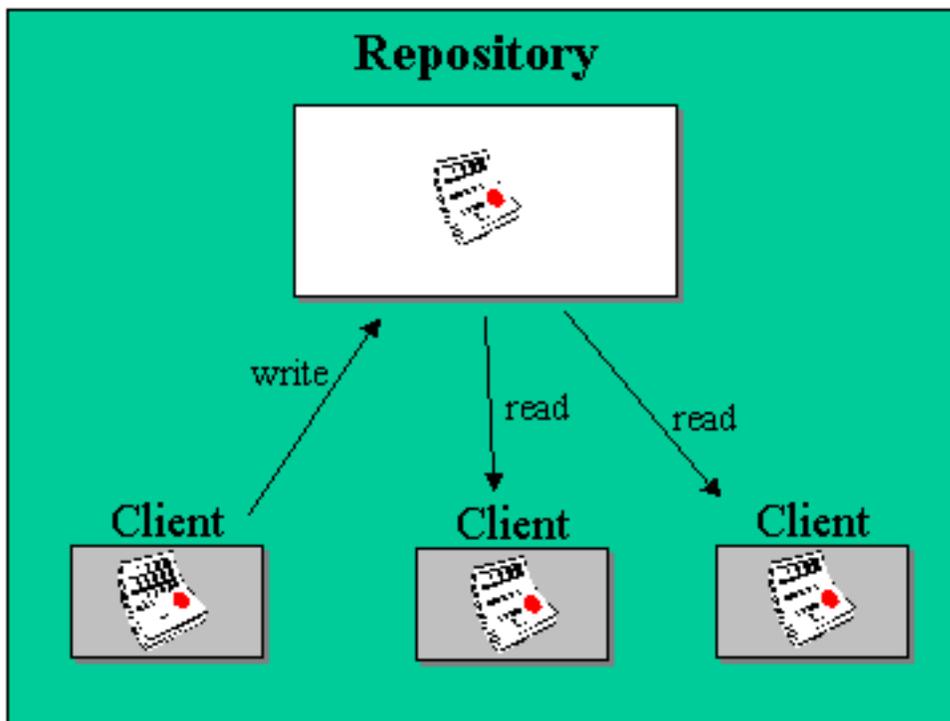
This chapter is a short, casual introduction to Subversion. If you're new to version control, this chapter is definitely for you. We begin with a discussion of general version control concepts, work our way into the specific ideas behind Subversion, and show some simple examples of Subversion in use.

Even though the examples in this chapter show people sharing collections of program source code, keep in mind that Subversion can manage any sort of file collection -- it's not limited to helping computer programmers.

The Repository

Subversion is a centralized system for sharing information. At its core is a *repository*, which is a central store of data. The repository stores information in the form of a *filesystem tree*—a typical hierarchy of files and directories. Any number of *clients* connect to the repository, and then read or write to these files. By writing data, a client makes the information available to others; by reading data, the client receives information from others.

Figure 2.1. A typical client/server system



So why is this interesting? So far, this sounds like the definition of a typical file server. And indeed, the repository *is* a kind of file server, but it's not your usual breed. What makes the Subversion repository special is that *it remembers every change* ever written to it: every change to every file, and even changes to the directory tree itself, such as the addition, deletion, and rearrangement of files and directories.

When a client reads data from the repository, it normally sees only the latest version of the filesystem tree. But the client also has the ability to view *previous* states of the filesystem. For example, a client can ask historical questions like, "what did this directory contain last Wednesday?", or "who was the last person to change this file, and what changes did they make?" These are the sorts of questions that are at the heart of any *version control system*: systems

that are designed to record and track changes to data over time.

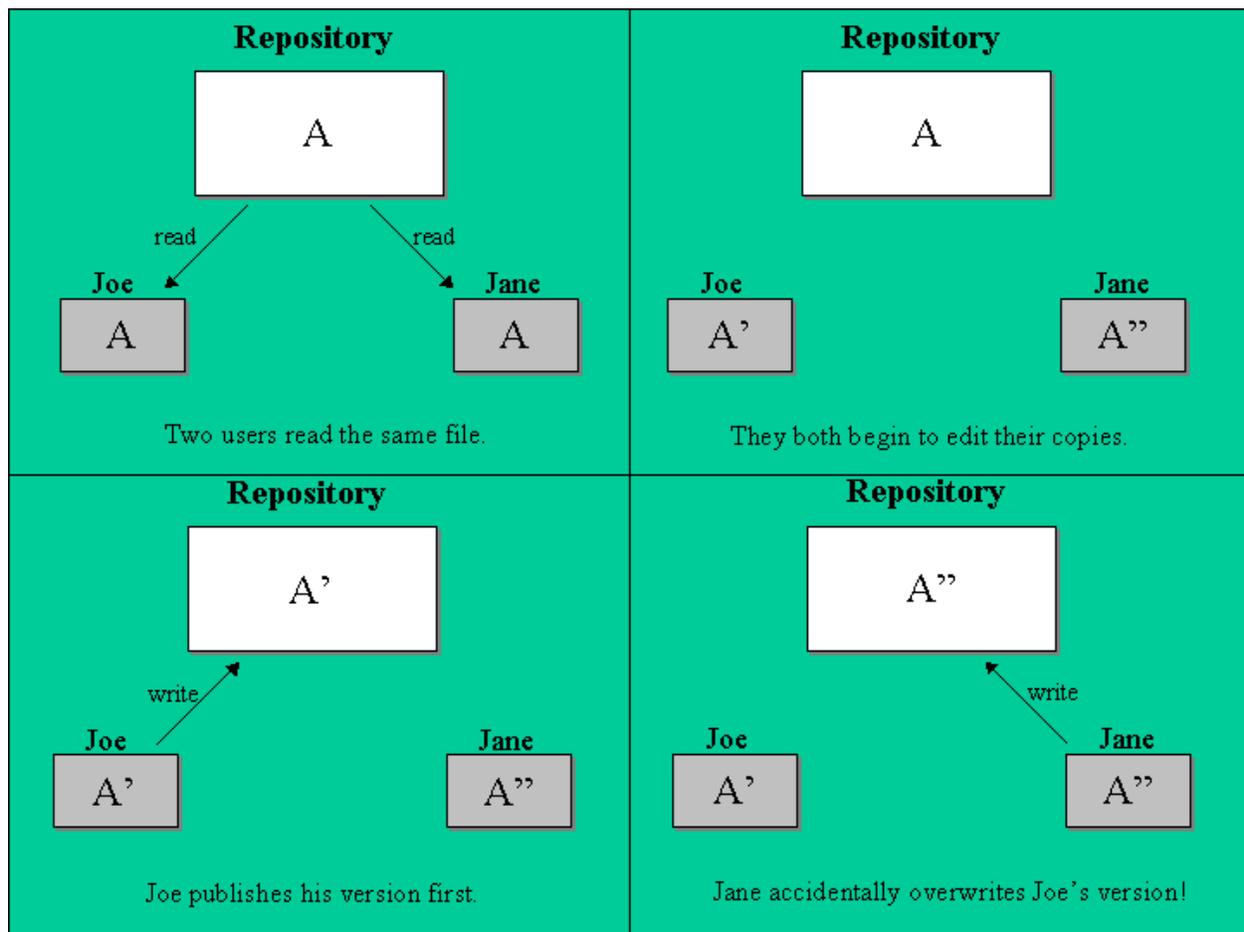
Versioning Models

The Problem of File-Sharing

All version control systems have to solve the same fundamental problem: how will the system allow users to share information, but prevent them from accidentally stepping on each other's feet? It's all too easy for users to accidentally overwrite each other's changes in the repository.

Consider this scenario: suppose we have two co-workers, Jane and Joe. They each decide to edit the same repository file at the same time. If Joe saves his changes to the repository first, then it's possible that (a few moments later) Jane could accidentally overwrite them with her own new version of the file. While Joe's version of the file won't be lost forever (because the system remembers every change), any changes Joe made *won't* be present in Jane's newer version of the file, because she never saw Joe's changes to begin with. Joe's work is still effectively lost—or at least missing from the latest version of the file—and probably by accident. This is definitely a situation we want to avoid!

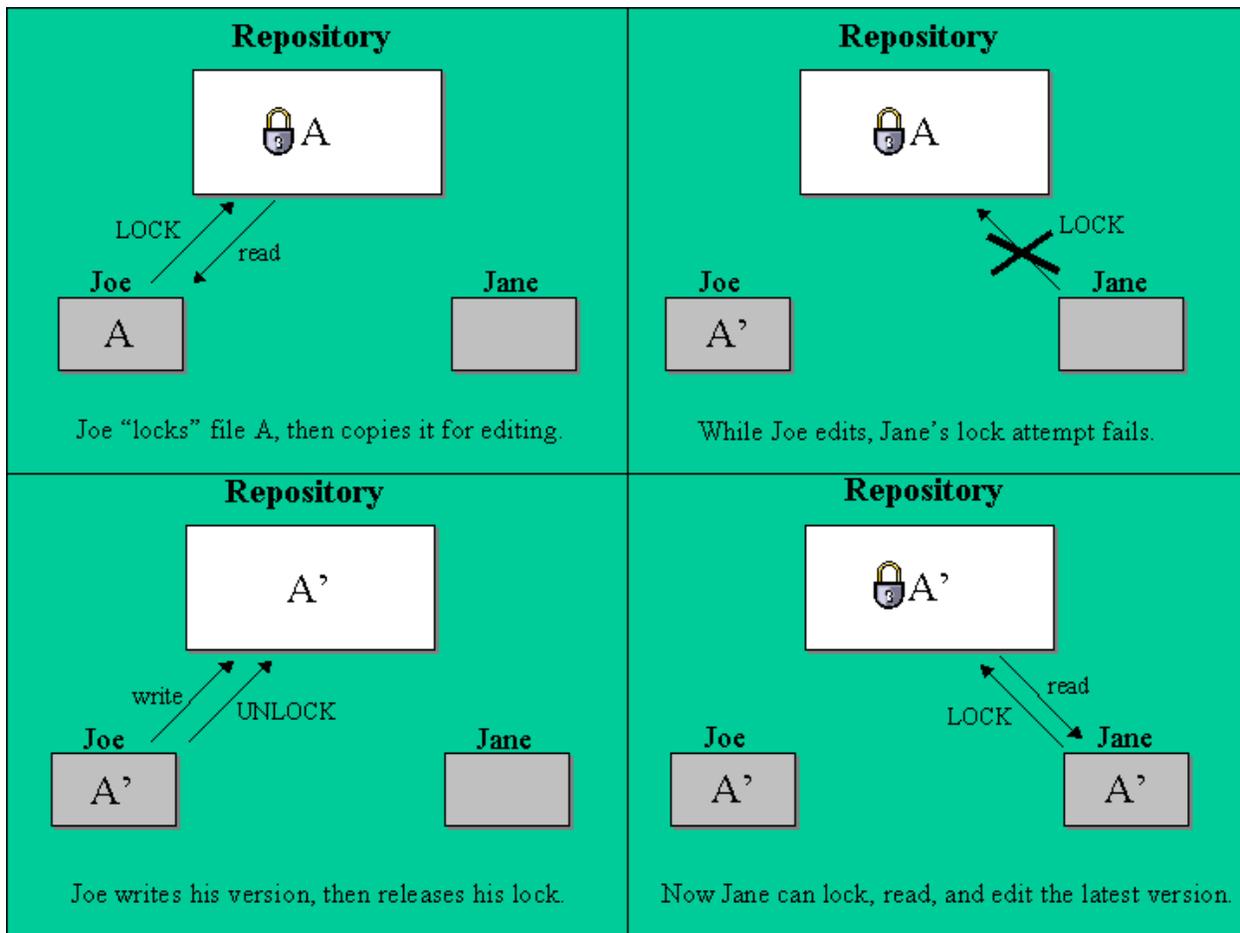
Figure 2.2. The problem to avoid



The Lock-Modify-Unlock Solution

Many version control systems use a *lock-modify-unlock* model to address this problem, which is a very simple solution. In such a system, the repository allows only one person to change a file at a time. First Joe must "lock" the file before he can begin making changes to it. Locking a file is a lot like borrowing a book from the library; if Joe has locked a file, then Jane cannot make any changes to it. If she tries to lock the file, the repository will deny the request. All she can do is read the file, and wait for Joe to finish his changes and release his lock. After Joe unlocks the file, his turn is over, and now Jane can take her turn by locking and editing.

Figure 2.3. The lock-modify-unlock solution



The problem with the lock-modify-unlock model is that it's a bit restrictive, and often becomes a roadblock for users:

- *Locking may cause administrative problems.* Sometimes Joe will lock a file and then forget about it. Meanwhile, because Jane is still waiting to edit the file, her hands are tied. And then Joe goes on vacation. Now Jane has to get an administrator to release Joe's lock. The situation ends up causing a lot of unnecessary delay and wasted time.
- *Locking may cause unnecessary serialization.* What if Joe is editing the beginning of a text file, and Jane simply wants to edit the end of the same file? These changes don't overlap at all. They could easily edit the file simultaneously, and no great harm would come, assuming the changes were properly merged together. There's no need for them to take turns in this situation.

- *Locking may create a false sense of security.* Pretend that Joe locks and edits file A, while Jane simultaneously locks and edits file B. But suppose that A and B depend on one another, and the changes made to each are semantically incompatible. Suddenly A and B don't work together anymore. The locking system was powerless to prevent the problem—yet it somehow provided a sense of false security. It's easy for Joe and Jane to imagine that by locking files, each is beginning a safe, insulated task, and thus inhibits them from discussing their incompatible changes early on.

The Copy-Modify-Merge Solution

Subversion, CVS, and other version control systems use a *copy-modify-merge* model as an alternative to locking. In this model, each user's client reads the repository and creates a personal *working copy* of the file or project. Users then work in parallel, modifying their private copies. Finally, the private copies are merged together into a new, final version. The version control system often assists with the merging, but ultimately a human being is responsible for making it happen correctly.

Here's an example. Say that Joe and Jane each create working copies of the same project, copied from the repository. They work concurrently, and make changes to the same file "A" within their copies. Jane saves her changes to the repository first. When Joe attempts to save his changes later, the repository informs him that his file A is *out-of-date*. In other words, that file A in the repository has somehow changed since he last copied it. So Joe asks his client to *merge* any new changes from the repository into his working copy of file A. Chances are that Jane's changes don't overlap with his own; so once he has both sets of changes integrated, he saves his working copy back to the repository.

Figure 2.4. The copy-modify-merge solution

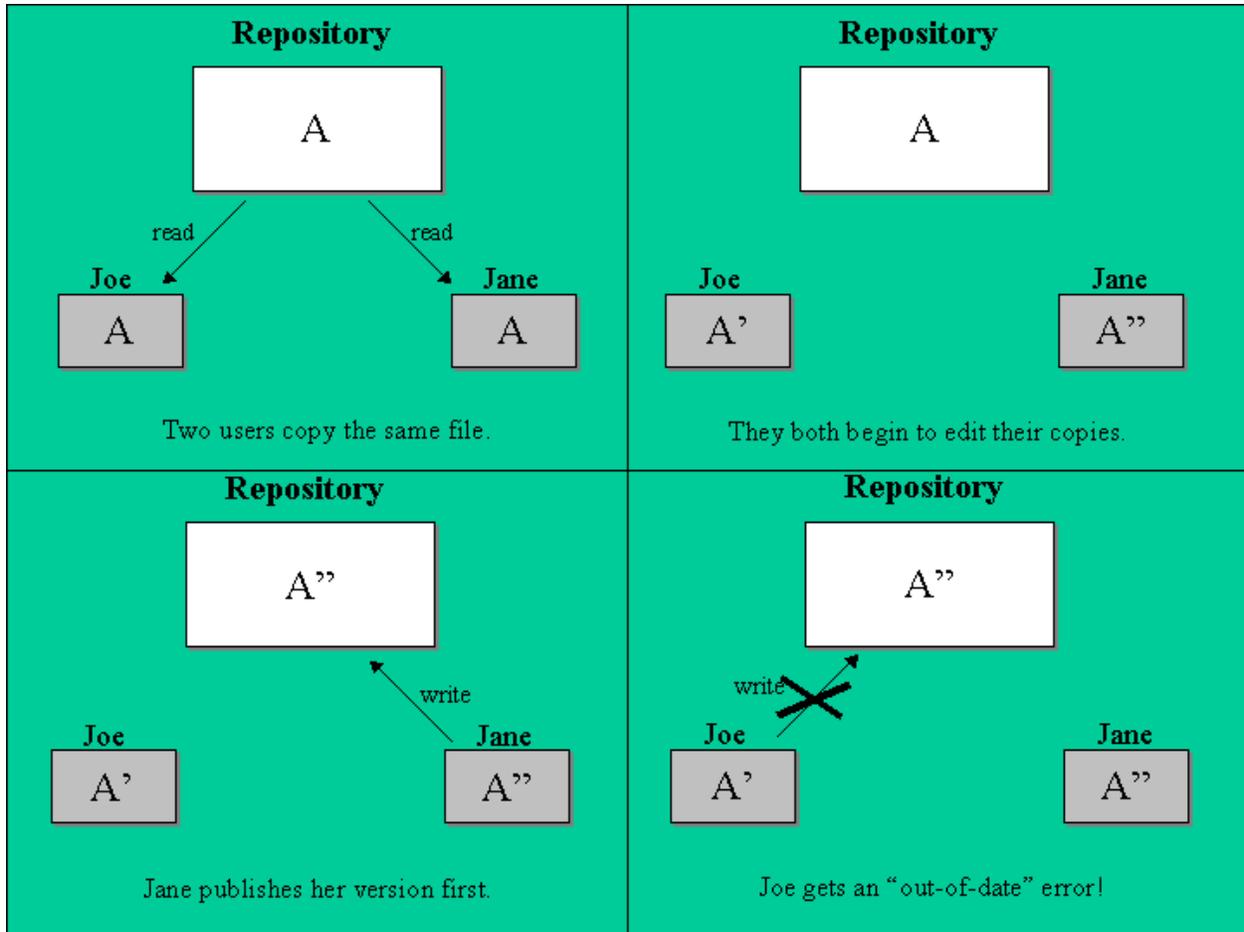
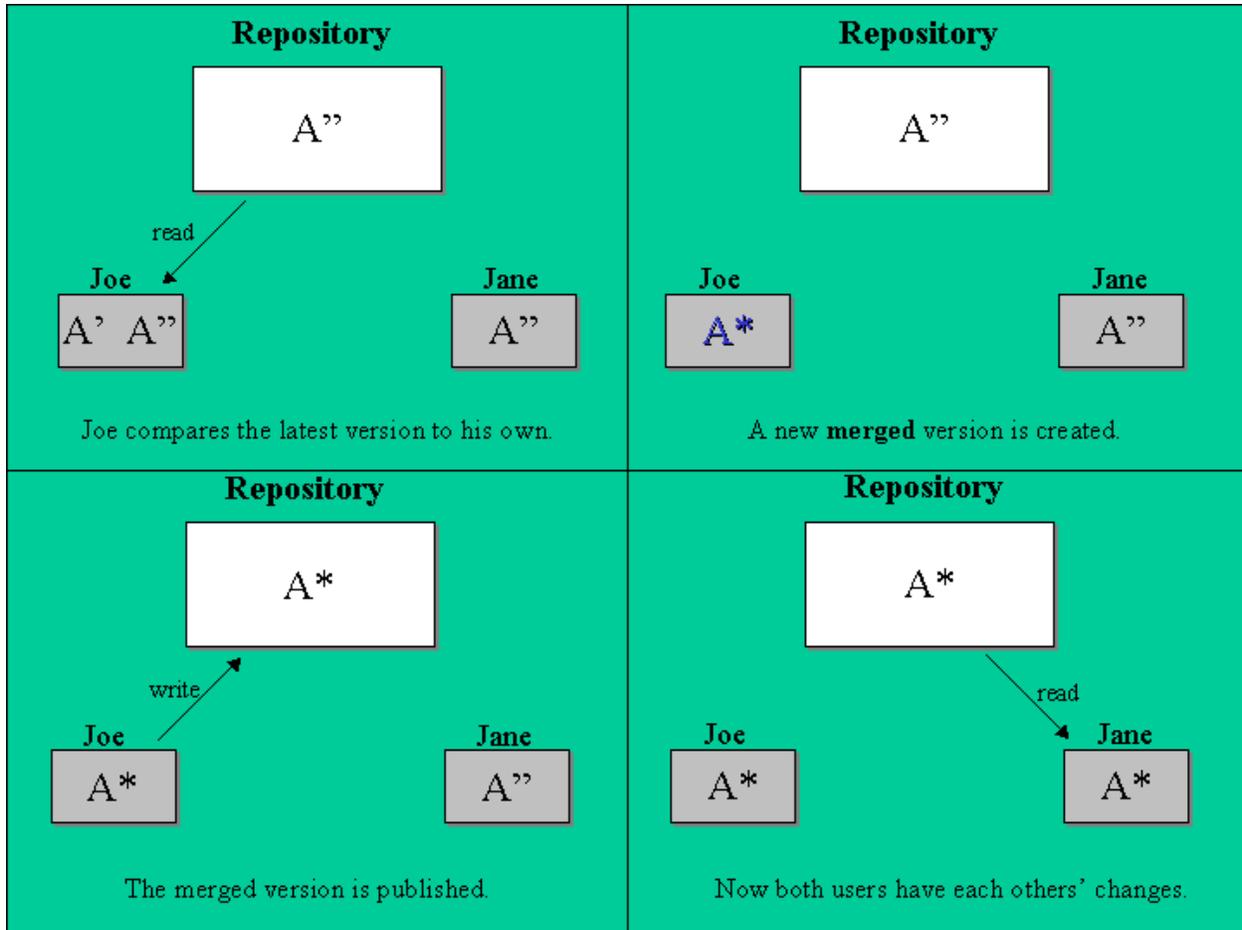


Figure 2.5. ...copy-modify-merge continued



But what if Jane's changes *do* overlap with Joe's changes? What then? This situation is called a *conflict*, and it's usually not much of a problem. When Joe asks his client to merge the latest repository changes into his working copy, his copy of file A is somehow flagged as being in a state of conflict: he'll be able to see both sets of conflicting changes, and manually choose between them. Note that software can't automatically resolve conflicts; only humans are capable of understanding and making the necessary intelligent choices. Once Joe has manually resolved the overlapping changes (perhaps by discussing the conflict with Jane!), he can safely save the merged file back to the repository.

The copy-modify-merge model may sound a bit chaotic, but in practice, it runs extremely smoothly. Users can work in parallel, never waiting for one another. When they work on the same files, it turns out that most of their concurrent changes don't overlap at all; conflicts are infrequent. And the amount of time it takes to resolve conflicts is far less than the time lost by a locking system.

In the end, it all comes down to one critical factor: user communication. When users communicate poorly, both syntactic and semantic conflicts increase. No system can force users to communicate perfectly, and no system can detect semantic conflicts. So there's no point in being lulled into a false promise that a locking system will somehow prevent conflicts; in practice, locking seems to inhibit productivity more than anything else.

Subversion in action

Working copies

You've already read about working copies; now we'll demonstrate how the Subversion client creates and uses them.

A Subversion working copy is an ordinary directory tree on your local system, containing a collection of files. You can edit these files however you wish, and if they're source code files, you can compile your program from them in the usual way. Your working copy is your own private work area: Subversion will never incorporate other people's changes, nor make your own changes available to others, until you explicitly tell it to do so.

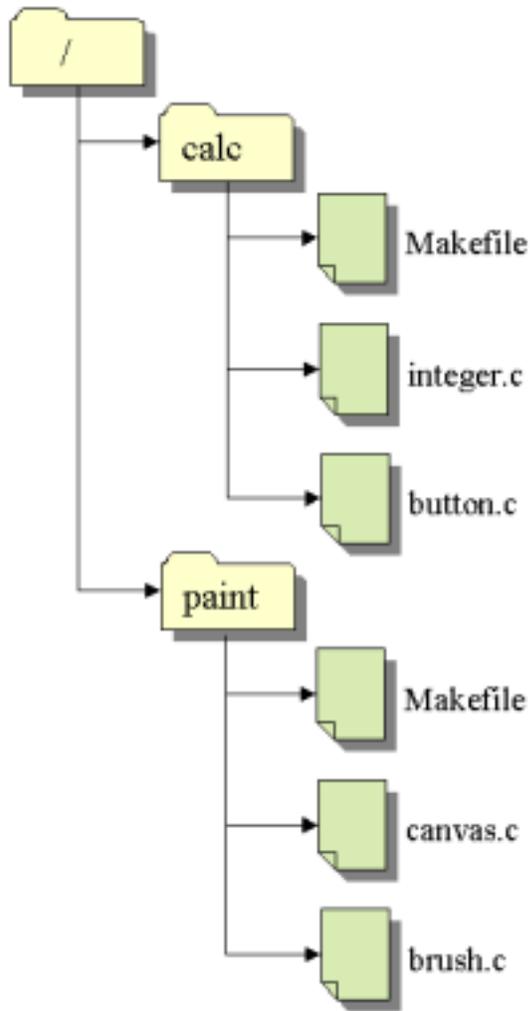
After you've made some changes to the files in your working copy and verified that they work properly, Subversion provides you with commands to "publish" your changes to the other people working with you on your project (by writing to the repository). If other people publish their own changes, Subversion provides you with commands to merge those changes into your working directory (by reading from the repository).

A working copy also contains some extra files, created and maintained by Subversion, to help it carry out these commands. In particular, each directory in your working copy contains a subdirectory named `.svn`, also known as the working copy *administrative directory*. The files in each administrative directory help Subversion recognize which files contain unpublished changes, and which files are out-of-date with respect to others' work.

A typical Subversion repository often holds the files (or source code) for several projects; usually, each project is a subdirectory in the repository's filesystem tree. In this arrangement, a user's working copy will usually correspond to a particular subtree of the repository.

For example, suppose you have a repository that contains two software projects.

Figure 2.6. The repository's filesystem



In other words, the repository's root directory has two subdirectories: `paint` and `calc`.

To get a working copy, you must *check out* some subtree of the repository. (The term "check out" may sound like it has something to do with locking or reserving resources, but it doesn't; it simply creates a private copy of the project for you.) For example, if you check out `/calc`, you will get a working copy like this:

```
$ svn checkout http://svn.example.com/repos/calc
A calc
A calc/Makefile
A calc/integer.c
A calc/button.c

$ ls -a calc
Makefile integer.c button.c .svn/
```

The list of letter A's indicates that Subversion is adding a number of items to your working copy. You now have a personal copy of the repository's `/calc` directory, with one additional entry—`.svn`—which holds the extra information needed by Subversion, as mentioned earlier.

Suppose you make changes to `button.c`. Since the `.svn` directory remembers the file's modification date and original contents, Subversion can tell that you've changed the file. However, Subversion does not make your changes

public until you explicitly tell it to. The act of publishing your changes is more commonly known as *committing* (or *checking in*) changes to the repository.

To publish your changes to others, you can use Subversion's **commit** command:

```
$ svn commit button.c
Sending button.c
Transmitting file data..
Committed revision 57.
```

Now your changes to `button.c` have been committed to the repository; if another user checks out a working copy of `/calc`, they will see your changes in the latest version of the file.

Suppose you have a collaborator, Sally, who checked out a working copy of `/calc` at the same time you did. When you commit your change to `button.c`, Sally's working copy is left unchanged; Subversion only modifies working copies at the user's request.

To bring her project up to date, Sally can ask Subversion to *update* her working copy, by using the Subversion **update** command. This will incorporate your changes into her working copy, as well as any others that have been committed since she checked it out.

```
$ pwd
/home/sally/calc

$ ls -a
.svn/ Makefile integer.c button.c

$ svn update
U button.c
```

The output from the **svn update** command indicates that Subversion updated the contents of `button.c`. Note that Sally didn't need to specify which files to update; Subversion uses the information in the `.svn` directory, and further information in the repository, to decide which files need to be brought up to date.

Revisions

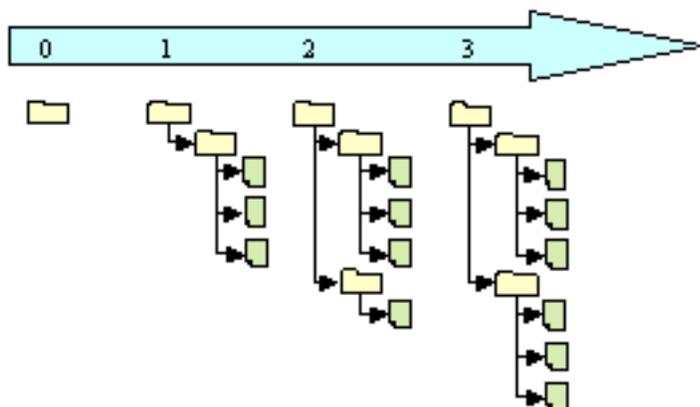
A **svn commit** operation can publish changes to any number of files and directories as a single atomic transaction. In your working copy, you can change files' contents, create, delete, rename and copy files and directories, and then commit the complete set of changes as a unit.

In the repository, each commit is treated as an atomic transaction: either all the commit's changes take place, or none of them take place. Subversion tries to retain this atomicity in the face of program crashes, system crashes, network problems, and other users' actions.

Each time the repository accepts a commit, this creates a new state of the filesystem tree, called a *revision*. Each revision is assigned a unique natural number, one greater than the number of the previous revision. The initial revision of a freshly created repository is numbered zero, and consists of nothing but an empty root directory.

A nice way to visualize the repository is as a series of trees. Imagine an array of revision numbers, starting at 0, stretching from left to right. Each revision number has a filesystem tree hanging below it, and each tree is a snapshot of the way the repository looked after each commit.

Figure 2.7. The repository



Global revision numbers

Unlike those of many other version control systems, Subversion's revision numbers apply to *entire trees*, not individual files. Each revision number selects an entire tree, a particular state of the repository after some committed change. Another way to think about it is that revision N represents the state of the repository filesystem after the Nth commit. When a Subversion user talks about "revision 5 of `foo.c`", they really mean "`foo.c` as it appears in revision 5." Notice that in general, revisions N and M of a file do *not* necessarily differ! Because CVS uses per-file revision numbers, CVS users might want to look at Appendix A, "SVN for CVS Users", for more details.

It's important to note that working copies do not always correspond to any single revision in the repository; they may contain files from several different revisions. For example, suppose you check out a working copy from a repository whose most recent revision is 4:

```
calc/Makefile:4
    integer.c:4
    button.c:4
```

At the moment, this working directory corresponds exactly to revision 4 in the repository. However, suppose you make a change to `button.c`, and commit that change. Assuming no other commits have taken place, your commit will create revision 5 of the repository, and your working copy will now look like this:

```
calc/Makefile:4
    integer.c:4
    button.c:5
```

Suppose that, at this point, Sally commits a change to `integer.c`, creating revision 6. If you use **svn update** to bring your working copy up to date, then it will look like this:

```
calc/Makefile:6
    integer.c:6
    button.c:6
```

Sally's changes to `integer.c` will appear in your working copy, and your change will still be present in `button.c`. In this example, the text of `Makefile` is identical in revisions 4, 5, and 6, but Subversion will mark your working copy of `Makefile` with revision 6 to indicate that it is still current. So, after you do a clean update at the top of your working copy, it will generally correspond to exactly one revision in the repository.

How working copies track the repository

For each file in a working directory, Subversion records two essential pieces of information in the `.svn/` administrative area:

- what revision your working file is based on (this is called the file's *working revision*), and
- a timestamp recording when the local copy was last updated by the repository.

Given this information, by talking to the repository, Subversion can tell which of the following four states a working file is in:

Unchanged, and current The file is unchanged in the working directory, and no changes to that file have been committed to the repository since its working revision. A **svn commit** of the file will do nothing, and a **svn update** of the file will do nothing.

Locally changed, and current The file has been changed in the working directory, and no changes to that file have been committed to the repository since its base revision. There are local changes that have not been committed to the repository, thus a **svn commit** of the file will succeed in publishing your changes, and a **svn update** of the file will do nothing.

Unchanged, and out-of-date The file has not been changed in the working directory, but it has been changed in the repository. The file should eventually be updated, to make it current with the public revision. A **svn commit** of the file will do nothing, and a **svn update** of the file will fold the latest changes into your working copy.

Locally changed, and out-of-date The file has been changed both in the working directory, and in the repository. A **svn commit** of the file will fail with an "out-of-date" error. The file should be updated first; a **svn update** command will attempt to merge the public changes with the local changes. If Subversion can't complete the merge in a plausible way automatically, it leaves it to the user to resolve the conflict.

This may sound like a lot to keep track of, but the **svn status** command will show you the state of any item in your working copy. For more information on that command, see Section , "svn status".

The limitations of mixed revisions

As a general principle, Subversion tries to be as flexible as possible. One special kind of flexibility is the ability to have a working copy containing mixed revision numbers.

At first, it may not be entirely clear why this sort of flexibility is considered a feature, and not a liability. After completing a commit to the repository, the freshly committed files and directories are at more recent working revision than the rest of the working copy. It looks like a bit of a mess. As demonstrated earlier, the working copy can always be brought to a single working revision by running **svn update**. Why would someone *deliberately* want a mixture of working revisions?

Assuming your project is sufficiently complex, you'll discover that it's sometimes nice to forcibly "backdate" portions of your working copy to an earlier revision; you'll learn how to do that in Chapter 3. Perhaps you'd like to test an earlier version of a sub-module, contained in a subdirectory, or perhaps you'd like to examine a number of previous versions of a file in the context of the latest tree.

However you make use of mixed-revisions in your working copy, there are limitations to this flexibility.

First, you cannot commit the deletion of a file or directory which isn't fully up-to-date. If a newer version of the item exists in the repository, your attempt to delete will be rejected, to prevent you from accidentally destroying changes

you've not yet seen.

Second, you cannot commit a metadata change to a directory unless it's fully up-to-date. You'll learn about attaching “properties” to items in Chapter 6. A directory's working revision defines a specific set of entries and properties, and thus committing a property change to an out-of-date directory may destroy properties you've not yet seen.

Summary

We've covered a number of fundamental Subversion concepts in this chapter:

- We've introduced the notions of the central repository, the client working copy, and the array of repository revision trees.
- We've seen some simple examples of how two collaborators can use Subversion to publish and receive changes from one another, using the 'copy-modify-merge' model.
- We've talked a bit about the way Subversion tracks and manages information in a working copy.

At this point, you should have a good idea of how Subversion works in the most general sense. Armed with this knowledge, you should now be ready to jump into the next chapter, which is a detailed tour of Subversion's commands and features.

Chapter 3. Guided Tour

Now we will go into the details of using Subversion. By the time you reach the end of this chapter, you will be able to perform almost all the tasks you need to use Subversion in a normal day's work. You'll start with an initial check-out of your code, and walk through making changes and examining those changes. You'll also see how to bring changes made by others into your working copy, examine them, and work through any conflicts that might arise.

Note that this chapter is not meant to be an exhaustive list of all Subversion's commands—rather, it's a conversational introduction to the most common Subversion tasks you'll encounter. This chapter assumes that you've read and understood Chapter 2, *Basic Concepts* and are familiar with the general model of Subversion. For a complete reference of all commands, see Chapter 8, *Subversion Complete Reference*.

Help!

Before reading on, here is the most important command you'll ever need when using Subversion: **svn help**. The Subversion command-line client tries to be self-documenting—at any time, a quick **svn help <subcommand>** will describe the syntax, switches, and behavior of the **subcommand**.

Import

You use **svn import** to import a new project into a Subversion repository. While this is most likely the very first thing you will do when you set up your Subversion server, it's not something that happens very often. For a detailed description of import, see Section , “svn import” later in this chapter.

Revisions: Numbers, Keywords, and Dates, Oh My!

Before we go on, you should know a bit about how to identify a particular revision in your repository. As you learned in Section , “Revisions”, a revision is a “snapshot” of the repository at a particular moment in time. As you continue to commit and grow your repository, you need a mechanism for identifying these snapshots.

You specify these revisions by using the `--revision (-r)` switch plus the revision you want (**svn --revision REV**) or you can specify a range by separating two revisions with a colon (**svn --revision REV1:REV2**). And subversion lets you refer to these revisions by number, keyword, or date.

Revision Numbers

When you create a new Subversion repository, it begins its life at revision zero and each successive commit increases the revision number by one. After your commit completes, the Subversion client informs you of the new revision number:

```
$ svn commit --message "Corrected number of cheese slices."
Sending          sandwich.txt
Transmitting file data .
Committed revision 3.
```

If at any point in the future you want to refer to that revision (We'll see how and why we might want to do that later in this chapter), you can refer to it as “3”.

Revision Keywords

The Subversion client understands a number of *revision keywords*. These keywords can be used instead of integer

arguments to the `--revision` switch, and are resolved into specific revision numbers by Subversion:

HEAD	The latest revision in the repository.
BASE	The “pristine” revision of an item in a working copy.
COMMITTED	The last revision in which an item changed.
PREV	The revision just <i>before</i> the last revision in which an item changed. (Technically, COMMITTED - 1).

Here are some examples of revision keywords in action (don't worry if the commands don't make sense yet; we'll be explaining these commands as we go through the chapter):

```
$ svn diff --revision PREV:COMMITTED foo.c
# shows the last change committed to foo.c

$ svn log --revision HEAD
# shows log message for the latest repository commit

$ svn diff --revision HEAD
# compares your working file (with local mods) to the latest version
# in the repository.

$ svn diff --revision BASE:HEAD foo.c
# compares your “pristine” foo.c (no local mods) with the
# latest version in the repository

$ svn log --revision BASE:HEAD
# shows all commit logs since you last updated

$ svn update --revision PREV foo.c
# rewinds the last change on foo.c.
# (foo.c's working revision is decreased.)
```

These keywords allow you to perform many common (and helpful) operations without having to look up specific revision numbers or remember the exact revision of your working copy.

Revision Dates

Anywhere that you specify a revision number or revision keyword, you can also specify a date by specifying the date inside curly braces “{}”. You can even access a range of changes in the repository using both dates and revisions together!

Subversion accepts an incredible number of date formats —just remember to use quotes around any date that contains spaces. Here are just a few of the formats that Subversion accepts:

```
$ svn co --revision {2/17/02}
$ svn co --revision {"17 Feb"}
$ svn co --revision {"17 Feb 2002"}
$ svn co --revision {"17 Feb 2002 15:30"}
$ svn co --revision {"17 Feb 2002 15:30:12 GMT"}
$ svn co --revision {"10 days ago"}
$ svn co --revision {"last week"}
$ svn co --revision {"yesterday"}
...
```

When you specify a date as a revision, Subversion finds the most recent revision of the repository as of that date:

```
$ svn log --revision {11/28/2002}
-----
rev 12:  ira | 2002-11-27 12:31:51 -0600 (Wed, 27 Nov 2002) | 6 lines
...
```

Is Subversion a Day Early?

If you specify a single date as a revision without specifying a time of day (for example 11/27/02, you may think that Subversion should give you the last revision that took place on the 27th of November. Instead, you'll get back a revision from the 26th, or even earlier. Remember that Subversion will find the *most recent revision of the repository* as of the date you give. If you give a date without a timestamp, like 11/27/02, Subversion assumes a time of 00:00:00, so looking for the most recent revision won't return anything on the day of the 27th.

If you want to include the 27th in your search, you can either specify the 27th with the time ("27 Nov 2002 23:59"), or just specify the next day ("28 Nov 2002").

You can also use a range of dates. Subversion will find all revisions between both dates, inclusive:

```
$ svn log --revision {2002-11-20}:{2002-11-29}
...
```

As we pointed out, you can also mix dates and revisions:

```
$svn log -r {11/20/02}:4040
```

Initial Checkout

Most of the time, you will start using a Subversion repository by doing a *checkout* of your project. “Checking out” a repository creates a copy of it on your local machine. This copy contains the HEAD (latest revision) of the Subversion repository that you specify on the command line:

```
$ svn co http://svn.collab.net/repos/svn/trunk
A trunk/subversion.dsw
A trunk/svn_check.dsp
A trunk/COMMITTERS
A trunk/configure.in
A trunk/IDEAS
...
Checked out revision 2499.
```

Repository Layout

If you're wondering what trunk is all about in the above URL, it's part of the way that we recommend you lay out your Subversion repository. That is, when you create a new Subversion repository, you should make three top-level directories: trunk, tags, and branches. This may seem a little odd at the moment, but we'll talk a lot more about these in Chapter 4, *Branching and Merging*.

Although the above example checks out the trunk directory, you can just as easily check out any deep subdirectory of a repository by specifying the subdirectory in the checkout URL:

```
$ svn co http://svn.collab.net/repos/svn/trunk/doc/book/tools
A  tools/readme-dblite.html
A  tools/fo-stylesheet.xsl
A  tools/svnbook.el
A  tools/dtd
A  tools/dtd/dblite.dtd
...
Checked out revision 3678.
```

Since Subversion uses a “copy-modify-merge” model instead of “lock-modify-unlock,” (see Chapter 2, *Basic Concepts*) you're now ready to start making changes to the files and directories that you've checked out, known collectively as your *working copy*. You can even delete the entire working copy and forget about it—there's no need to notify the Subversion server unless you're ready to *commit* a new file or directory, or changes to existing ones.

What's with the `.svn` directory?

Every directory in a working copy contains an *administrative area*, a subdirectory named `.svn`. Usually, directory listing commands won't show this subdirectory, but it is nevertheless an important directory. Whatever you do, don't delete or change anything in the administrative area! Subversion depends on it to manage your working copy.

While you can certainly check out a working copy with the URL of the repository as the only argument, you can also specify a directory after your repository URL. This places your working copy into the new directory that you name. For example:

```
$ svn co http://svn.collab.net/repos/svn/trunk subv
A  subv/subversion.dsw
A  subv/svn_check.dsp
A  subv/COMMITTERS
A  subv/configure.in
A  subv/IDEAS
...
Checked out revision 2499.
```

That will place your working copy in a directory named `subv` instead of a directory named `trunk` as we did previously.

Basic Workcycle

Subversion has numerous features, options, bells and whistles, but on a day-to-day basis, odds are that you will only use a few of them. In this section we'll run through the most common things that you might find yourself doing with Subversion in the course of a day's work.

The typical work cycle looks like this:

- Update your working copy
- Make changes
- Examine your changes

- Merge others' changes
- Commit your changes

Update Your Working Copy

When working on a project with a team, you'll want to *update* your working copy: that is, receive any changes from other developers on the project. You'll use **svn update** to bring your working copy into sync with the latest revision in the repository.

```
$ svn update
U ./foo.c
U ./bar.c
Updated to revision 2.
```

In this case, someone else checked in modifications to both `foo.c` and `bar.c` since the last time you updated, and Subversion has updated your working copy to include those changes.

Let's examine the output of **svn update** a bit more. When the server sends changes to your working copy, a letter code is displayed next to each item to let you know what actions Subversion performed to bring your working copy up-to-date:

U <code>foo</code>	File <code>foo</code> was Updated (received changes from the server).
A <code>foo</code>	File or directory <code>foo</code> was Added to your working copy.
D <code>foo</code>	File or directory <code>foo</code> was Deleted from your working copy.
R <code>foo</code>	File or directory <code>foo</code> was Replaced in your working copy; that is, <code>foo</code> was deleted, and a new item with the same name was added. While they may have the same name, the repository considers them to be distinct objects with distinct histories.
G <code>foo</code>	File <code>foo</code> received new changes from the repository, but your local copy of the file had your modifications. The changes did not intersect, however, so Subversion has merged the repository's changes into the file without a problem.
C <code>foo</code>	File <code>foo</code> received Conflicting changes from the server. The changes from the server directly overlap your own changes to the file. No need to panic, though. This overlap needs to be resolved by a human (you); we discuss this situation later in this chapter.

Make Changes to Your Working Copy

Now you can get to work and make changes in your working copy. It's usually most convenient to decide on a particular change (or set of changes) to make, such as writing a new feature, fixing a bug, etc. The Subversion commands that you will use here are **svn add**, **svn delete**, **svn copy**, and **svn move**. However, if you are merely editing a file (or files) that is already in Subversion, you may not need to use any of these commands until you commit. Changes you can make to your working copy:

File changes	This is the simplest sort of change. You don't need to tell Subversion that you intend to change a file; just make your changes. Subversion will be able to automatically detect which files have been changed.
--------------	---

Tree changes You can ask Subversion to “mark” files and directories for scheduled removal, addition, copying, or moving. While these changes may take place immediately in your working copy, no additions or removals will happen in the repository until you decide to commit.

To make file changes, just use your text editor, word processor, or graphics program—whatever tool you would normally use. Subversion handles binary files just as easily as it handles text files (and just as efficiently too).

Here is an overview of the four Subversion subcommands that you'll use most often to make tree changes (we'll cover **svn import** and **svn mkdir** later).

svn add foo Schedule `foo` to be added to the repository. When you next commit, `foo` will become a child of its parent directory. Note that if `foo` is a directory, everything underneath `foo` will be scheduled for addition. If you only want to schedule `foo` itself, pass the `-nonrecursive (-N)` switch.

svn delete foo Schedule `foo` to be deleted from the repository. If `foo` is a file, it is immediately deleted from your working copy. If `foo` is a directory, it is not deleted, but Subversion schedules it for deletion. When you commit your changes, `foo` will be removed from your working copy and the repository. 1

svn copy foo bar Create a new item `bar` as a duplicate of `foo`. `bar` is automatically scheduled for addition. When `bar` is added to the repository on the next commit, its copy-history is recorded (as having originally come from `foo`.)

svn move foo bar This command is exactly the same as running **svn copy foo bar; svn delete foo**. That is, `bar` is scheduled for addition as a copy of `foo`, and `foo` is scheduled for removal.

Changing the Repository Without a Working Copy

Earlier in this chapter, we said that you have to commit any changes that you make in order for the repository to reflect these changes. That's not entirely true—there *are* some use-cases that immediately commit tree changes to the repository. This only happens when a subcommand is operating directly on a URL, rather than on a working-copy path. (In particular, specific uses of **svn mkdir**, **svn copy**, **svn move**, and **svn delete** can work with URLs).

URL operations behave in this manner because commands that operate on a working copy can use the working copy as a sort of “staging area” to set up your changes before committing them to the repository. Commands that operate on URLs don't have this luxury, so when you operate directly on a URL, any of the above actions represent an immediate commit.

Examine Your Changes

Once you've finished making changes, you need to commit them to the repository, but before you do so, it's usually a good idea to take a look at exactly what you've changed. By examining your changes before you commit, you can not only make a more accurate log message, but you may discover that you've inadvertently changed a file, and this gives you a chance to revert those changes before committing. You can see exactly what changes you've made by using **svn status**, **svn diff**, and **svn revert**. You will usually use the first two commands to find out what files have changed in your working copy, and then perhaps the third to revert some (or all) of those changes.

Subversion has been optimized to help you with this task, and is able to do many things without communicating with the repository. In particular, your working copy contains a secret cached “pristine” copy of each version controlled file within the `.svn` area. Because of this, Subversion can quickly show you how your working files have changed, or even allow you to undo your changes without contacting the repository. You can get back anything you delete by checking out (or updating your working copy) a revision earlier than the one in which you deleted it.

svn status

You'll probably use the **svn status** command more than any other Subversion command.

CVS Users: Hold That Update!

You're probably used to using **cv**s **update** to see what changes you've made to your working copy. **svn status** will give you all the information you need regarding what has changed in your working copy—without accessing the repository.

In Subversion, **update** does just that—it updates your working copy with any changes committed to the repository since the last time you've updated your working copy. You'll have to break the habit of using the **update** command to see what local modifications you've made.

If you run **svn status** at the top of your working copy with no arguments, it will detect all file and tree changes you've made. This example is designed to show all the different status codes that **svn status** can return. Note that the text following # is not printed by **svn status**.

```
$ svn status
  L   ./abc.c           # svn has a lock in its .svn directory for abc.c
M    ./bar.c           # the content in bar.c has local modifications
  M   ./baz.c           # baz.c has property but no content modifications
?    ./foo.o           # svn doesn't manage foo.o
!    ./foo.c           # svn knows foo.c but a non-svn program deleted it
~    ./qux             # versioned as dir, but is file, or vice versa
A +  ./moved_dir       # added with history of where it came from
M +  ./moved_dir/README # added with history and has local modifications
D    ./stuff/fish.c    # this file is scheduled for deletion
A    ./stuff/loot/bloo.h # this file is scheduled for addition
C    ./stuff/loot/lump.c # this file has conflicts from an update
  S  ./stuff/squawk    # this file or dir has been switched to a branch
```

In this output format **svn status** prints five columns of characters, followed by several whitespace characters, followed by a file or directory name. The first column tells the status of a file or directory and/or its contents. The codes printed here are:

A file_or_dir	The file or directory file_or_dir has been scheduled for addition into the repository.
M file	The contents of file file have been modified.
D file_or_dir	The file or directory file_or_dir has been scheduled for deletion from the repository.
? file_or_dir	The file or directory file_or_dir is not under version control. You can silence the question marks by either passing the <code>--quiet (-q)</code> switch to svn status , or by setting the <code>svn:ignore</code> property on the parent directory. For more information on ignored files, see Section , “svn:ignore”.
! file_or_dir	The file or directory file_or_dir is under version control but is missing from the working copy. This happens if the file or directory is removed using a non-Subversion command. A quick svn update or svn revert file_or_dir will restore the missing file or directory.
~ file_or_dir	The file or directory file_or_dir is in the repository as one kind of object, but what's actually in your working copy is some other kind. For example, Subversion

might have a file in the repository, but you removed the file and created a directory in its place, without using the **svn delete** nor **svn add** commands.

C file file_or_dir is in a state of conflict. That is, changes received from the server during an update overlap with local changes that you have in your working copy. You must resolve this conflict before committing your changes to the repository.

The second column tells the status of a file or directory's properties. If an M appears in the second column, then the properties have been modified, otherwise a whitespace will be printed.

The third column will only show whitespace or an L which means that Subversion has locked the item in the .svn working area. You will see an L if you run **svn status** in a directory where an **svn commit** is in progress—perhaps when you are editing the log message. If Subversion is not running, then presumably Subversion was interrupted and the lock needs to be cleaned up by running **svn cleanup** (more about that later in this chapter).

The fourth column will only show whitespace or a + which means that the file or directory is scheduled to be added or modified with additional attached history. This typically happens when you **svn move** or **svn copy** a file or directory. If you see A +, this means the item is scheduled for addition-with-history. It could be a file, or the root of a copied directory. + means the item is part of a subtree scheduled for addition-with-history, i.e. some parent got copied, and it's just coming along for the ride. M + means the item is part of a subtree scheduled for addition-with-history, *and* it has local modifications. When you commit, first the parent will be added-with-history (copied), which means this file will automatically exist in the copy. Then the local modifications will be uploaded into the copy.

The fifth column will only show whitespace or an S. This signifies that the file or directory has been switched from the path of the rest of the working copy (using **svn switch**) to a branch.

If you pass a specific path to **svn status**, it gives you information about that item alone:

```
$ svn status stuff/fish.c
D      stuff/fish.c
```

svn status also has a **--verbose** (-v) switch, which will show you the status of *every* item in your working copy, even if it has not been changed:

```
$ svn status --verbose
M      44      23      sally      ./README
      44      30      sally      ./INSTALL
M      44      20      harry      ./bar.c
      44      18      ira        ./stuff
      44      35      harry      ./stuff/trout.c
D      44      19      ira        ./stuff/fish.c
      44      21      sally      ./stuff/things
A      0       ?       ?          ./stuff/things/blee.h
      44      36      harry      ./stuff/things/gloo.c
```

This is the “long form” output of **svn status**. The first column remains same, but the second column shows the working-revision of the item. The third and fourth columns show the revision in which the item last changed, and who changed it.

None of the above invocations to **svn status** contact the repository, they work only locally by comparing the meta-data in the .svn directory with the working copy. Finally, there is the **--show-updates** (-u) switch, which contacts the repository and adds information about things that are *out-of-date*:

```
$ svn status --show-updates --verbose
```

```

M      *      44      23    sally    ./README
M      *      44      20    harry    ./bar.c
      *      44      35    harry    ./stuff/trout.c
D      *      44      19    ira     ./stuff/fish.c
A      *      0       ?     ?     ./stuff/things/bloo.h

```

Notice the two asterisks: if you were to run **svn update** at this point, you would receive changes to `README` and `trout.c`. This tells you some very useful information—you'll need to update and get the server changes on `README` before you commit, or the repository will reject your commit for being out-of-date. (More on this subject later).

svn diff

Another way to examine your changes is with the **svn diff** command. You can find out *exactly* how you've modified things by running **svn diff** with no arguments, which prints out file changes in unified diff format:

```

$ svn diff
Index: ./bar.c
=====
--- ./bar.c
+++ ./bar.c Mon Jul 15 17:58:18 2002
@@ -1,7 +1,12 @@
+#include <sys/types.h>
+#include <sys/stat.h>
+#include <unistd.h>
+
+#include <stdio.h>

int main(void) {
- printf("Sixty-four slices of American Cheese...\n");
+ printf("Sixty-five slices of American Cheese...\n");
return 0;
}

Index: ./README
=====
--- ./README
+++ ./README Mon Jul 15 17:58:18 2002
@@ -193,3 +193,4 @@
+Note to self: pick up laundry.

Index: ./stuff/fish.c
=====
--- ./stuff/fish.c
+++ ./stuff/fish.c Mon Jul 15 17:58:18 2002
-Welcome to the file known as 'fish'.
-Information on fish will be here soon.

Index: ./stuff/things/bloo.h
=====
--- ./stuff/things/bloo.h
+++ ./stuff/things/bloo.h Mon Jul 15 17:58:18 2002
+Here is a new file to describe
+things about bloo.

```

The **svn diff** command produces this output by comparing your working files against the cached “pristine” copies within the `.svn` area. Files scheduled for addition are displayed as all added-text, and files scheduled for deletion are displayed as all deleted text.

Output is displayed in *unified diff format*. That is, removed lines are prefaced with a `-` and added lines are prefaced with a `+`. **svn diff** also prints filename and offset information useful to the **patch** program, so you can generate “patches” by redirecting the diff output to a file:

```
$ svn diff > patchfile
```

You could, for example, email the patchfile to another developer for review or testing prior to commit.

svn revert

Now suppose you see the above diff output, and realize that your changes to `README` are a mistake; perhaps you accidentally typed that text into the wrong file in your editor.

This is a perfect opportunity to use **svn revert**.

```
$ svn revert README
Reverted ./README
```

Subversion reverts the file to its pre-modified state by overwriting it with the cached “pristine” copy from the `.svn` area. But also note that **svn revert** can undo *any* scheduled operations—for example, you might decide that you don’t want to add a new file after all:

```
$ svn status foo
?      foo

$ svn add foo
A      foo

$ svn revert foo
Reverted foo

$ svn status foo
?      foo
```

Or perhaps you mistakenly removed a file from version control:

```
$ svn status README
      README

$ svn delete README
D      README

$ svn revert README
Reverted README

$ svn status README
      README
```

Look Ma! No Network!

All three of these commands (**svn status**, **svn diff**, and **svn revert**) can be used without any network access. This makes it easy to manage your changes-in-progress when you are somewhere without a network connection (e.g. traveling on an airplane, riding on a commuter train, on the flight deck of the Space Shuttle, etc.).

Subversion does this by keeping private caches of pristine versions of each versioned file inside of the `.svn` administrative areas. This allows Subversion to report—and revert—local modifications to those files *without network ac-*

cess. This cache (called the "text-base") also allows Subversion to send the user's local modifications during a commit to the server as a compressed delta against the pristine version. Having this cache is a tremendous benefit—even if you have a fast net connection, it's much faster to send only a file's changes rather than the whole file to the server. At first glance, this might not seem that important, but imagine the repercussions if you try to commit a 1 line change to a 400MB file and have to send the whole file to the server!

Resolving conflicts (Merging others' changes)

We've already seen how `svn status -u` can predict conflicts. Suppose you run `svn update` and some interesting things occur:

```
$ svn update
U ./INSTALL
G ./README
C ./bar.c
```

The `U` and `G` codes are no cause for concern; those files cleanly absorbed changes from the repository. The files marked with `U` contained no local changes but were updated with changes from the repository. The `G` stands for merged, which means that the file had local changes to begin with, but the changes coming from the repository didn't overlap in any way.

But the `C` stands for conflict. This means that the changes from the server overlapped with your own, and now you have to manually choose between them.

Whenever a conflict occurs, your Subversion client does the three things:

- Subversion prints a `C` during the update, and remembers that the file is “conflicted.”
- Subversion places *conflict markers* into the file, to visibly demonstrate the overlapping areas.
- For every conflicted file, Subversion places three extra files in your working copy:

<code>filename.*.mine</code>	This is your file as it existed in your working copy before you updated your working copy—that is, without conflict markers. This file has your latest changes in it and nothing else.
<code>filename.*.rOLDREV</code>	This is the file that was the BASE revision before you updated your working copy. That is, the file that you checked out before you made your latest edits.
<code>filename.*.rNEWREV</code>	This is the file that your Subversion client just received from the server when you updated your working copy. This file corresponds to the HEAD revision of the repository.

Here `*` represents some random digits that Subversion chooses, `OLDREV` is the revision number of the file in your `.svn` directory, and `NEWREV` is the revision number of the repository HEAD.

For example, Sally makes changes to the file `sandwich.txt` in the repository. Harry has just changed the file in his working copy and checked it in. Sally updates her working copy before checking in and she gets a conflict:

```
$ svn update
C sandwich.txt
```

```
Updated to revision 2.
$ ls -l
sandwich.txt
sandwich.txt.r2
sandwich.txt.r1
sandwich.txt.mine
$
```

At this point, Subversion will *not* allow you to commit the file `sandwich.txt` until the three temporary files are removed.

```
$ svn ci --message "Add a few more things"
subversion/libsvn_client/commit.c:654: (apr_err=155015, src_err=0)
svn: A conflict in the working copy obstructs the current operation
svn: Commit failed (details follow):
subversion/libsvn_client/commit_util.c:180: (apr_err=155015, src_err=0)
svn: Aborting commit: '/home/sally/svn-work/sandwich.txt' remains in conflict.
```

If you get a conflict, you need to do one of three things:

- Merge the conflicted text “by hand” (by examining and editing the conflict markers within the file).
- Copy one of the temporary files on top of your working file.
- Run `svn revert <filename>` to throw away all of your local changes.

Once you've resolved the conflict, you need to let Subversion know by removing the three temporary files. When those files are gone, Subversion no longer considers the file to be in a state of conflict anymore.

```
$ svn resolve sandwich.txt
Resolved conflicted state of sandwich.txt
```

Merging conflicts by hand

Merging conflicts by hand can be quite intimidating the first time you attempt it, but with a little practice, it can become as easy as falling off a bike.

Here's an example. Let's say that, due to a miscommunication between you and your collaborator, Sally, both edit the file named `sandwich.txt` at the same time. Sally commits her changes, and when you go to update your working copy, you get a conflict and we're going to have to edit `sandwich.txt` to resolve the conflicts. First, let's take a look at the file:

```
Top piece of bread
Mayonnaise
Lettuce
Tomato
Provolone
<<<<<<< .mine
Salami
Mortadella
Prosciutto
=====
Sauerkraut
Grilled Chicken
>>>>>>> .r2
Creole Mustard
```

Bottom piece of bread

The strings of less-than signs, equal signs, and greater-than signs are called *conflict markers*. The text between the first two sets of markers is composed of the changes you made in the conflicting area:

```
<<<<<< .mine
Salami
Mortadella
Prosciutto
=====
```

Whereas the text between the second and third sets of conflict markers is the text from Sally's commit:

```
=====
Sauerkraut
Grilled Chicken
>>>>>> .r2
```

Usually you won't want to just delete the conflict markers and Sally's changes—she's going to be awfully surprised when the sandwich arrives and it's not what she wanted. So this is where you pick up the phone or walk across the office and explain to Sally that you can't get sauerkraut from an Italian deli.² Once you've agreed on the changes you will check in, edit your file and remove the conflict markers.

```
Top piece of bread
Mayonnaise
Lettuce
Tomato
Provolone
Salami
Mortadella
Prosciutto
Creole Mustard
Bottom piece of bread
```

Now run **svn resolve** and you're now ready to commit your changes:

```
$ svn resolve sandwich.txt
$ svn commit -m "Go ahead and use my sandwich, discarding Sally's edits."
```

Remember, if you ever get confused while editing the conflicted file, you can always consult the three files that Subversion creates for you in your working copy—including your file as it was before you updated.

Copying a file onto your working file

If you get a conflict and decide that you want to throw out your changes, you can merely copy one of the temporary files created by Subversion over the file in your working copy:

```
$ svn update
C sandwich.txt
Updated to revision 2.
$ ls sandwich.*
sandwich.txt  sandwich.txt.mine  sandwich.txt.r2  sandwich.txt.r1
```

²And if you ask them for it, they may very well ride you out of town on a rail

```
$ cp sandwich.txt.r2 sandwich.txt
$ svn resolve
$ svn commit -m "Go ahead and use Sally's sandwich, discarding my edits."
```

Punting: Using `svn revert`

If you get a conflict, and upon examination decide that you want to throw out your changes and start your edits again, just revert your changes:

```
$ svn revert sandwich.txt
Reverted sandwich.txt
$ ls sandwich.*
sandwich.txt
```

Note that when you revert a conflicted file, you don't have to run **svn resolve**.

Now you're ready to check in your changes. Note that **svn resolve**, unlike most of the other commands we've dealt with in this chapter, requires an argument. In any case, you want to be careful and only run **svn resolve** when you're certain that you've fixed the conflict in your file—once the temporary files are removed, Subversion will let you commit a file with conflict markers.

Commit your changes

Finally! Your edits are finished, you've merged all changes from the server, and you're ready to commit your changes to the repository.

The **svn commit** command sends all of your changes to the repository. When you commit a change, you need to supply a *log message*, describing your change. Your log message will be attached to the new revision you create. If your log message is brief, you may wish to supply it on the command line using the `--message` (or `-m`):

```
$ svn commit --message "Corrected number of cheese slices."
Sending      sandwich
Transmitting file data .
Committed revision 3.
```

However, if you've been composing your log message as you work, you may want to tell Subversion to get the message from a file by passing the filename with the `--file` switch:

```
svn ci --file logmsg
Sending      sandwich
Transmitting file data .
Committed revision 4.
```

If you fail to specify either the `--message` or `--file` switch, then Subversion will automatically launch your favorite editor (as defined in the environment variable `$EDITOR`) for composing a log message.

The repository doesn't know or care if your changes make any sense as a whole; it only checks to make sure that nobody else has changed any of the same files that you did when you weren't looking. If somebody *has* done that, the entire commit will fail with a message informing you that one or more of your files is out-of-date:

```
$ svn commit --message "Add another rule"
Sending      rules.txt
```

```
subversion/libsvn_client/commit.c:655: (apr_err=160028, src_err=0)
svn: Transaction is out of date
svn: Commit failed (details follow):
subversion/libsvn_repos/commit.c:112: (apr_err=160028, src_err=0)
svn: out of date: `rules.txt' in txn `g'
$
```

At this point, you need to run **svn update**, deal with any merges or conflicts that result, and attempt your commit again.

That covers the basic work cycle for using Subversion. There are many other features in Subversion that you can use to manage your repository and working copy, but you can get by quite easily using only the commands that we've discussed so far in this chapter.

Examining History

As we mentioned earlier, the repository is like a time machine. It keeps a record of every change ever committed, and allows you to explore this history by examining previous versions of files and directories as well as the metadata that accompanies them. With a single Subversion command, you can check out (or restore an existing working copy) the repository exactly as it was at any date or revision number in the past. However, sometimes you just want to *peer into* the past instead of *going into* the past.

There are several commands that can provide you with historical data from the repository. **svn log** shows you broad information: log messages attached to revisions, and which paths changed in each revision. **svn diff**, on the other hand, can show you the specific details of how a file changed over time. **svn cat** can be used to retrieve any file as it existed in a particular revision number and display it on your screen. And finally, **svn list** can display the files in a directory for any given revision.

svn log

To find out information about the history of a file or directory, use the **svn log** command. **svn log** will provide you with a record of who made changes to a file or directory, at what revision it changed, the time and date of that revision, and, if it was provided, the log message that accompanied the commit.

```
$ svn log
-----
rev 3:  sally | Mon, 15 Jul 2002 18:03:46 -0500 | 1 line
Added include lines and corrected # of cheese slices.
-----
rev 2:  harry | Mon, 15 Jul 2002 17:47:57 -0500 | 1 line
Added main() methods.
-----
rev 1:  sally | Mon, 15 Jul 2002 17:40:08 -0500 | 2 lines
Initial import
-----
```

Note that the log messages are printed in *reverse chronological order* by default. If you wish to see a different range of revisions in a particular order, or just a single revision, pass the `--revision (-r)` switch:

```
$ svn log --revision 5:19      # shows logs 5 through 19 in chronological order
$ svn log -r 19:5             # shows logs 5 through 19 in reverse order
$ svn log -r 8                # shows log for revision 8
```

You can also examine the log history of a single file or directory. For example:

```
$ svn log foo.c
...
$ svn log http://foo.com/svn/trunk/code/foo.c
...
```

These will display log messages *only* for those revisions in which the working file (or URL) changed.

If you want even more information about a file or directory, **svn log** also takes a `--verbose (-v)` switch. Because Subversion allows you to move and copy files and directories, it is important to be able to track path changes in the filesystem, so in verbose mode, **svn log** will include a list of *changed-paths* in a revision in its output:

```
$ svn log -r 8 -v
-----
rev 8:  sally | 2002-07-14 08:15:29 -0500 | 1 line
Changed paths:
U /trunk/code/foo.c
U /trunk/code/bar.h
A /trunk/code/doc/README

Frozzled the sub-space winch.
-----
```

Why Does svn log Gives Me an Empty Response?

After working with Subversion for a bit, most users will come across something like this:

```
$ svn log -r 2
-----
$
```

At first glance, this seems like an error, but you need to remember that while revisions are repository-wide, **svn log** operates on a path in the repository (If you supply no path, Subversion defaults to ". "). As a result, if you're operating in a subdirectory of your working copy and attempt to log a revision where nothing beneath your current directory changed, Subversion will give you an empty log. If you want to see what changed in that revision, try running the same command from the top directory of your working copy.

svn diff

We've already seen **svn diff** before—it displays file differences in unified diff format; it was used to show the local modifications made to our working copy before committing to the repository.

In fact, it turns out that there are *three* distinct uses of **svn diff**:

- Examine local changes
- Compare your working copy to the repository
- Compare repository to repository

Examining local changes

As we've seen, invoking **svn diff** with no switches will compare your working files to the cached “pristine” copies in the `.svn` area:

```
$ svn diff
Index: rules.txt
=====
--- rules.txt (revision 3)
+++ rules.txt (working copy)
@@ -1,4 +1,5 @@
  Be kind to others
  Freedom = Responsibility
  Everything in moderation
-Chew with your mouth open
+Chew with your mouth closed
+Listen when others are speaking
$
```

Comparing working copy to repository

If a single `--revision (-r)` number is passed, then your working copy is compared to the specified revision in the repository.

```
$ svn diff --revision 3 rules.txt
Index: rules.txt
=====
--- rules.txt (revision 3)
+++ rules.txt (working copy)
@@ -1,4 +1,5 @@
  Be kind to others
  Freedom = Responsibility
  Everything in moderation
-Chew with your mouth open
+Chew with your mouth closed
+Listen when others are speaking
$
```

Comparing repository to repository

If two revision numbers, separated by a colon, are passed via `--revision (-r)`, then the two revisions are directly compared.

```
$ svn diff --revision 2:3 rules.txt
Index: rules.txt
=====
--- rules.txt (revision 2)
+++ rules.txt (revision 3)
@@ -1,4 +1,4 @@
  Be kind to others
-Freedom = Chocolate Ice Cream
+Freedom = Responsibility
  Everything in moderation
  Chew with your mouth closed
$
```

Not only can you use **svn diff** to compare files in your working copy to the repository, but if you supply a URL argument, you can examine the differences between items in the repository without even having a working copy. This

is especially useful if you wish to inspect changes in a file when you don't have a working copy on your local machine:

```
$ svn diff --revision 4:5 http://svn.red-bean.com/repos/example/trunk/text/rules.txt
...
$
```

svn cat

If you want to examine an earlier version of a file and not necessarily the differences between two files, you can use **svn cat**:

```
$ svn cat --revision 2 rules.txt
Be kind to others
Freedom = Chocolate Ice Cream
Everything in moderation
Chew with your mouth closed
$
```

You can also redirect the output directly into a file:

```
$ svn cat --revision 2 rules.txt > rules.txt.v2
$
```

You're probably wondering why we don't just use **svn update --revision** to update the file to the older revision. There are a few reasons why we might prefer to use **svn cat**.

First, you may want to see the differences between two revisions of a file using an external diff program (perhaps a graphical one, or perhaps your file is in such a format that the output of unified diff is nonsensical). In this case, you'll need to grab a copy of the old revision, redirect it to a file, and pass both that and the file in your working copy to your external diff program.

Sometimes it's easier to look at an older version of a file in its entirety as opposed to just the differences between it and another revision.

svn list

The **svn list** command shows you what files are in a repository directory without actually downloading the files to your local machine:

```
$ svn list http://svn.collab.net/repos/svn
README
branches/
clients/
tags/
trunk/
```

If you want a more detailed listing, pass the **--verbose (-v)** flag to get output like this.

```
$ svn list --verbose http://svn.collab.net/repos/svn
-   2755   kfogel      1331 Jul 28 02:07 README
-   2773   sussman        0 Jul 29 15:07 branches/
```

```
_ 2769 cmpilato      0 Jul 29 12:07 clients/
_ 2698 rooneg       0 Jul 24 18:07 tags/
_ 2785 brane        0 Jul 29 19:07 trunk/
```

The columns tell you if a file has any properties (“P” if it does, “_” if it doesn't), the revision it was last updated at, the user who last updated it, the size if it is a file, the date it was last updated, and the item's name.

A Final Word on History

In addition to all of the above commands, you can use **svn update** and **svn checkout** with the `--revision` switch to take an entire working copy “back in time” 3:

```
$ svn checkout --revision 1729 # Checks out a new working copy at r1729
...
$ svn update --revision 1729 # Updates an existing working copy to r1729
...
```

Other Frequently Used Commands

While not as frequently used as the commands previously discussed in this chapter, you will need these commands on occasion.

svn cleanup

When Subversion modifies your working copy (or any information within `.svn`), it tries to do so as safely as possible. Before changing anything, it writes its intentions to a logfile, executes the commands in the logfile, then removes the logfile (This is similar in design to a journaled filesystem). If a Subversion operation is interrupted (If you hit Control-C, or if the machine crashes, for example), the logfiles remain on disk. By re-executing the logfiles, Subversion can complete the previously started operation, and your working copy can get itself back into a consistent state.

And this is exactly what **svn cleanup** does: it searches your working copy and runs any leftover logs, removing locks in the process. If Subversion ever tells you that some part of your working copy is “locked”, then this is the command that you should run. Also, **svn status** will display an `L` next to locked items:

```
$ svn status
L  ./somedir
M  ./somedir/foo.c

$ svn cleanup
$ svn status
M  ./somedir/foo.c
```

svn import

The import command is a quick way to move an unversioned tree of files into a repository.

There are two ways to use this command:

```
$ svnadmin create /usr/local/svn/newrepos
$ svn import file:///usr/local/svn/newrepos mytree
```

3See? We told you that Subversion was a time machine.

```
Adding mytree/foo.c
Adding mytree/bar.c
Adding mytree/subdir
Adding mytree/subdir/quux.h
Transmitting file data....
Committed revision 1.
```

The above example places the contents of directory `mytree` directly into the root of the repository:

```
/foo.c
/bar.c
/subdir
/subdir/quux.h
```

If you give **svn import** a third argument, it will use the argument as the name of a new subdirectory to create within the URL.

```
$ svnadmin create /usr/local/svn/newrepos
$ svn import file:///usr/local/svn/newrepos mytree fooproject
Adding mytree/foo.c
Adding mytree/bar.c
Adding mytree/subdir
Adding mytree/subdir/quux.h
Transmitting file data....
Committed revision 1.
```

The repository would now look like this:

```
/fooproject/foo.c
/fooproject/bar.c
/fooproject/subdir
/fooproject/subdir/quux.h
```

Summary

Now we've covered most of the Subversion client commands. Notable exceptions are those dealing with branching and merging (see Chapter 4, *Branching and Merging*) and properties (see Section , "Properties"). However, you may want to take a moment to skim through Chapter 8, *Subversion Complete Reference* to get an idea of all the many different commands that Subversion has—and how you can use them to make your work easier.

Chapter 4. Branching and Merging

Branching, tagging, and merging are concepts common to almost all version control systems. If you're not familiar with these ideas, we provide a good introduction in this chapter. If you are familiar, then hopefully you'll find it interesting to see how Subversion implements these ideas.

Branching is a fundamental part of version control. If you're going to allow Subversion to manage your data, then this is a feature you'll eventually come to depend on. This chapter assumes that you're already familiar with Subversion's basic concepts (Chapter 2, *Basic Concepts*).

What's a branch?

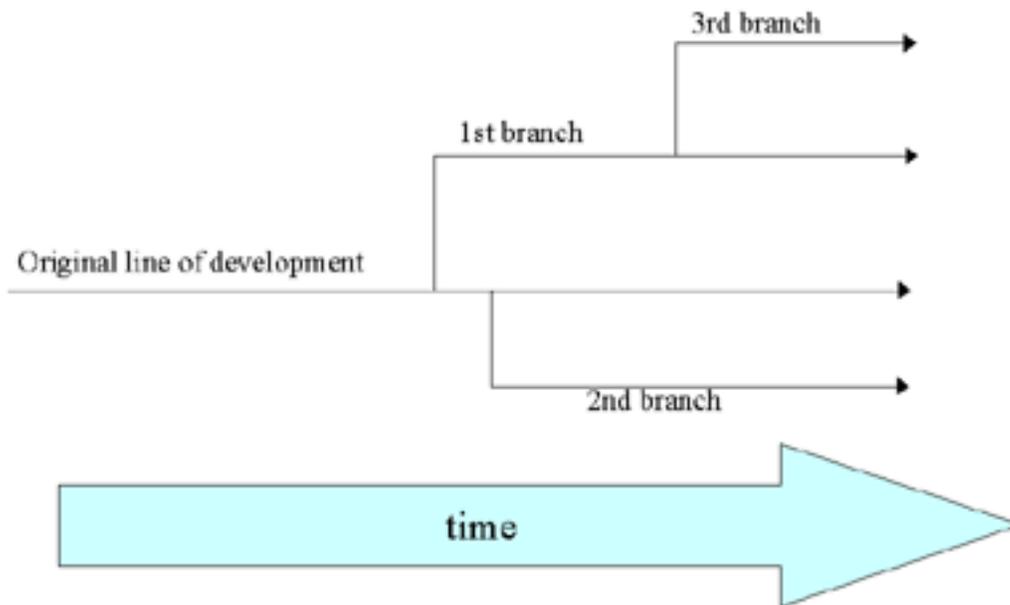
Suppose it's your job to maintain a document for a division in your company, a handbook of some sort. One day a different division asks you for the same handbook, but with a few parts 'tweaked' for them, since they do things slightly differently.

What do you do in this situation? You do the obvious thing: you make a second copy of your document, and begin maintaining the two copies separately. As each department asks you to make small changes, you incorporate them into one copy or the other.

You often want to make the same change to both copies. For example, if you discover a typo in the first copy, it's very likely that the same typo exists in the second copy. The two documents are almost the same, after all; they only differ in small, specific ways.

This is the basic concept of a *branch* — namely, a line of development that exists independently of another line, yet still shares a common history if you look far enough back in time. A branch always begins life as a copy of something, and moves on from there, generating its own history.

Figure 4.1. Branches of development



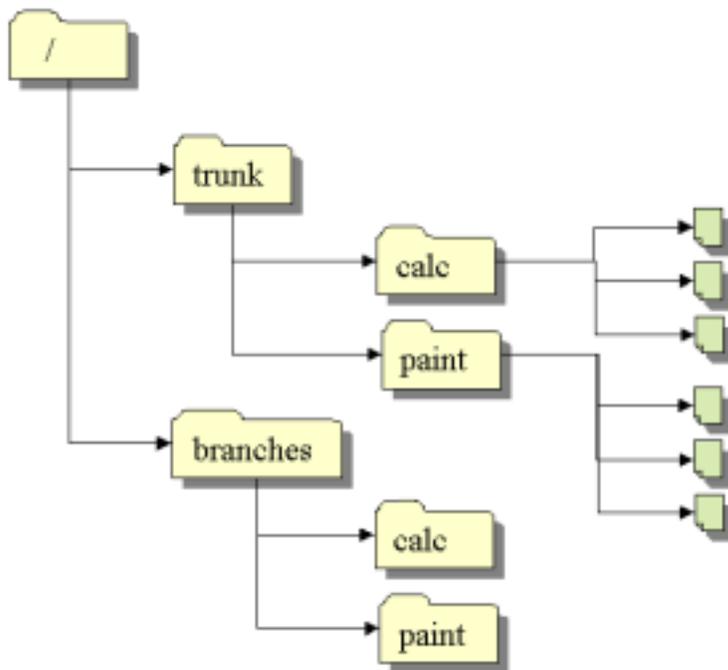
Subversion has commands to help you maintain parallel branches of your files and directories. It allows you to create branches by copying your data, and remembers that the copies are related to one another. It also helps you duplicate changes from one branch to another. Finally, it can make portions of your working copy reflect different branches, so that you can "mix and match" different lines of development in your daily work.

Using branches

At this point, you should understand how each commit creates an entire new filesystem tree (called a "revision") in the repository. If not, go back and read about revisions in Section , "Revisions".

For this chapter, we'll go back to the same example from Chapter 2. Remember that you and your collaborator, Sally, are sharing a repository that contains two projects, `paint` and `calc`. Notice, however, that this time somebody has created two new top-level directories in the repository, called `trunk` and `branches`. The projects themselves are subdirectories of `trunk`, which we'll explain later on.

Figure 4.2. Starting repository layout



As before, assume that you and Sally both have working copies of the `/trunk/calc` project.

Let's say that you've been given the task of performing a radical reorganization of the project. It will take a long time to `calc`, and will affect all the files in the project. The problem here is that you don't want to interfere with Sally, who is in the process of fixing small bugs here and there. She's depending on the fact that the latest version of the project is always usable. If you start committing your changes bit-by-bit, you'll surely break things for Sally.

One strategy is to crawl into a hole: you and Sally can stop sharing information for a week or two. That is, start gutting and reorganizing all the files in your working copy, but don't commit or update until you're completely finished with the task. There are a number of problems with this, though. First, it's not very safe. Most people like to save their work to the repository frequently, should something bad accidentally happen to their working copy. Second, it's not very flexible. If you do your work on different computers (perhaps you have a working copy of `/trunk/calc` on two different machines), you'll need to manually copy your changes back and forth, or just do all the work on a single computer. Finally, when you're finished, you might find it very difficult to commit your changes. Sally (or others) may have made many other changes in the repository that are difficult to merge into your working copy -- especially all at once.

The better solution is to create your own branch, or line of development, in the repository. This allows you to save your half-broken work frequently without interfering with others, yet you can still selectively share information with your collaborators. You'll see exactly how this works later on.

Creating a branch

Creating a branch is very simple -- you make a copy of the project in the repository using the **svn copy** command. Subversion is not only able to copy single files, but whole directories as well. In this case, you want to make a copy of the `/trunk/calc` directory. Where should the new copy live? Wherever you wish -- it's a matter of project policy. Let's say that your team has a policy of creating branches in the `/branches/calc` area of the repository, and you want to name your branch "my-calc-branch". You'll want to create a new directory, `/branches/calc/my-calc-branch`, which starts as a copy of `/trunk/calc`.

There are two different ways to make a copy. We'll demonstrate the messy way first, just to make the concept clear.

To begin, check out a working copy of the root (/) of the repository:

```
$ svn checkout http://svn.example.com/repos bigwc
A bigwc/branches/
A bigwc/branches/calc
A bigwc/branches/paint
A bigwc/trunk/
A bigwc/trunk/calc
A bigwc/trunk/calc/Makefile
A bigwc/trunk/calc/integer.c
A bigwc/trunk/calc/button.c
A bigwc/trunk/paint
A bigwc/trunk/paint/Makefile
A bigwc/trunk/paint/canvas.c
A bigwc/trunk/paint/brush.c
Checked out revision 340.
```

Making a copy is now simply a matter of passing two working-copy paths to the **svn copy** command:

```
$ cd bigwc
$ svn copy trunk/calc branches/calc/my-calc-branch
$ svn status
A +  branches/calc/my-calc-branch
```

In this case, the **svn copy** command recursively copies the `trunk/calc` working directory to a new working directory, `branches/calc/my-calc-branch`. As you can see from the **svn status** command, the new directory is now scheduled for addition to the repository. But also notice the + sign next to the letter A. This indicates that the scheduled addition is a *copy* of something, not something new. When you commit your changes, Subversion will create `/branches/calc/my-calc-branch` in the repository by copying `/trunk/calc`, rather than resending all of the working copy data over the network:

```
$ svn commit -m "Creating a private branch of /trunk/calc."
Adding      branches/calc/my-calc-branch
Committed revision 341.
```

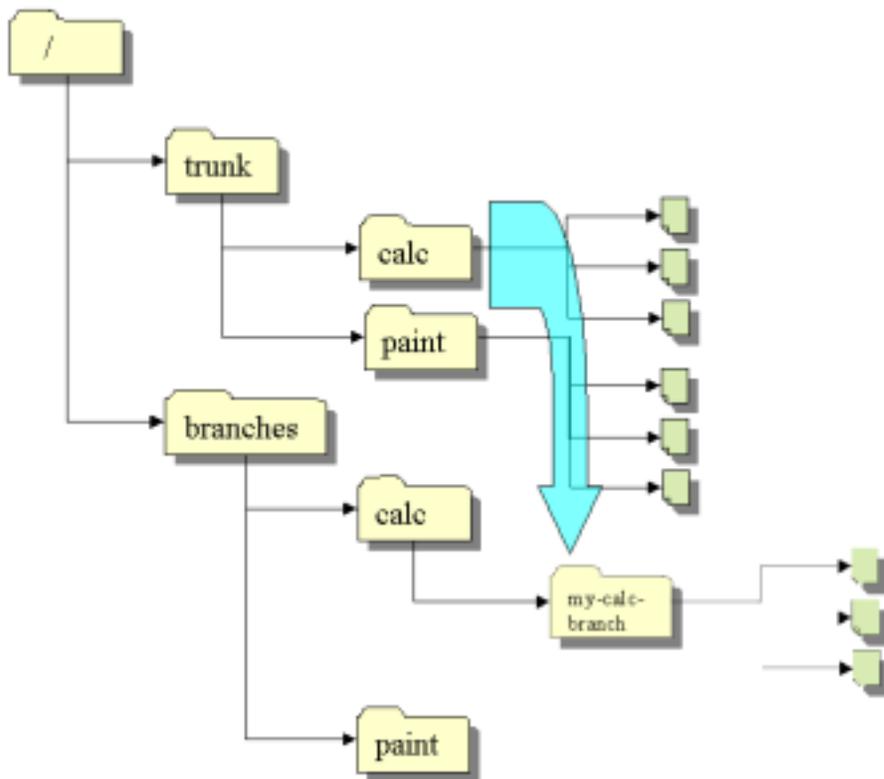
And now the easier method of creating a branch, which we should have told you about in first place: **svn copy** is able to operate on two URLs.

```
$ svn copy http://svn.example.com/repos/trunk/calc \
           http://svn.example.com/repos/branches/calc/my-calc-branch \
           -m "Creating a private branch of /trunk/calc"

Committed revision 341.
```

There's really no difference between these two methods. Both procedures create a new directory in revision 341, and the new directory is a copy of `/trunk/calc`. Notice that the second method, however, performs an *immediate* commit. It's an easier procedure, because it doesn't require you to check out a large mirror of the repository. In fact, this technique doesn't even require you to have a working copy at all.

Figure 4.3. Repository with new copy



Cheap copies

Subversion's repository has a clever design. When you copy a directory, you don't need to worry about the repository growing huge -- Subversion doesn't actually duplicate any data. Instead, it creates a new directory entry that points to an *existing* tree. If you're a Unix user, this is the same concept as a hard-link. From there, the copy is said to be "lazy". That is, if you commit a change to one file within the copied directory, then only that file changes -- the rest of the files continue to exist as links to the original files in the original directory.

This is why you'll often hear Subversion users talk about "cheap copies". It doesn't matter how large the directory is -- it takes a very tiny, constant amount of time to make a copy of it. In fact, this feature is the basis of how commits work in Subversion: each revision is a "cheap copy" of the previous revision, with a few items lazily changed within. (To read more about this, visit Subversion's website and read about the "bubble up" method in Subversion's design documents.)

The point here is that copies are cheap, both in time and space. Make branches as often as you want.

Working with your branch

Now that you've created a new branch of the project, you can check out a new working copy to start using it:

```
$ svn checkout http://svn.example.com/repos/branches/calc/my-calc-branch
A my-calc-branch/Makefile
A my-calc-branch/integer.c
A my-calc-branch/button.c
Checked out revision 341.
```

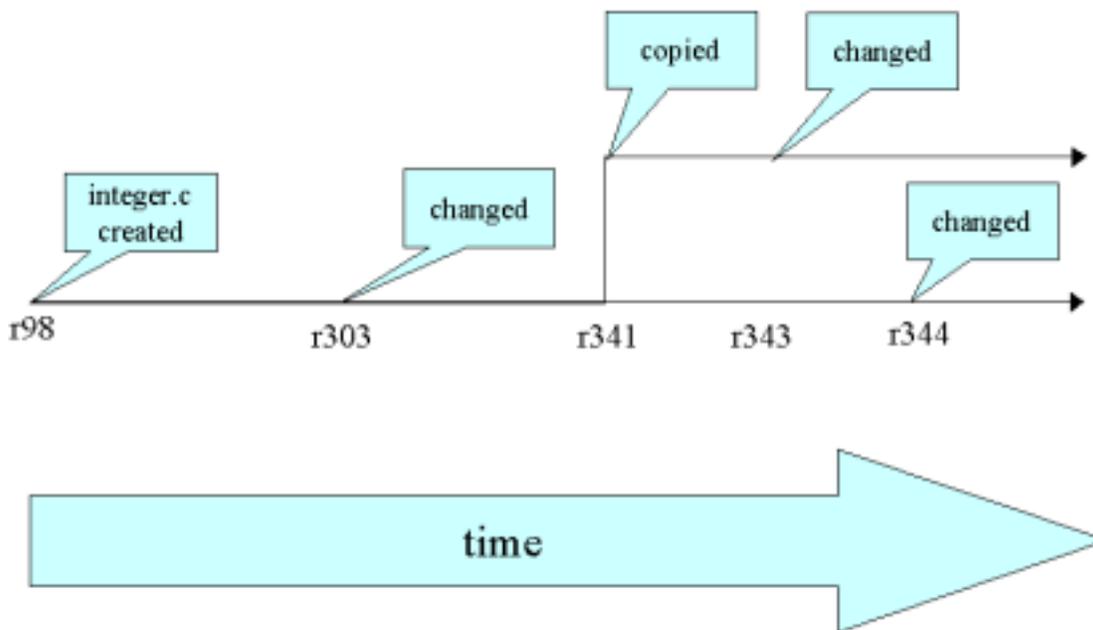
There's nothing special about this working copy; it simply mirrors a different location of the repository. When you commit changes, however, Sally won't ever see them when she updates. Her working copy is of `/trunk/calc`.

Let's pretend that a week goes by, and the following commits happen:

- You make a change to `/branches/calc/my-calc-branch/button.c`, which creates revision 342.
- You make a change to `/branches/calc/my-calc-branch/integer.c`, which creates revision 343.
- Sally makes a change to `/trunk/calc/integer.c`, which creates revision 344.

There are now two independent lines of development happening on `integer.c`:

Figure 4.4. The branching of one file's history



Things get interesting when you look at the history of changes made to your copy of `integer.c`:

```
$ pwd
/home/user/my-calc-branch

$ svn log integer.c
-----
rev 343:  user | 2002-11-07 15:27:56 -0600 (Thu, 07 Nov 2002) | 2 lines
* integer.c:  frozzled the wazjub.
-----
rev 303:  sally | 2002-10-29 21:14:35 -0600 (Tue, 29 Oct 2002) | 2 lines
```

```
* integer.c:  changed a docstring.
-----
rev 98:  sally | 2002-02-22 15:35:29 -0600 (Fri, 22 Feb 2002) | 2 lines
* integer.c:  adding this file to the project.
-----
```

Notice that Subversion is tracing the history of your `integer.c` all the way back through time, traversing the point where it was copied. (Remember that your branch was created in revision 341.) Now look what happens when Sally runs the same command on her copy of the file:

```
$ pwd
/home/sally/calc

$ svn log integer.c
-----
rev 344:  sally | 2002-11-07 15:27:56 -0600 (Thu, 07 Nov 2002) | 2 lines
* integer.c:  fix a bunch of spelling errors.
-----
rev 303:  sally | 2002-10-29 21:14:35 -0600 (Tue, 29 Oct 2002) | 2 lines
* integer.c:  changed a docstring.
-----
rev 98:  sally | 2002-02-22 15:35:29 -0600 (Fri, 22 Feb 2002) | 2 lines
* integer.c:  adding this file to the project.
-----
```

Sally sees her own revision 344 change, but not the change you made in revision 343. As far as Subversion is concerned, these two commits affected different files in different repository locations. However, Subversion *does* show that the two files share a common history. Before the branch-copy was made in revision 341, they used to be the same file. That's why you and Sally both see revisions 303 and 98.

The moral of the story

There are two important lessons that you should remember from this section.

1. Unlike many other version control systems, Subversion's branches exist a *normal filesystem directories* in the repository, not in some extra dimension.
2. Subversion has no internal concept of a "branch" — only copies. When you copy a directory, the resulting directory is only a "branch" because *you* attach that meaning to it. You may think of the directory differently, or treat it differently, but to Subversion it's just an ordinary directory that happens to have been created by copying.

Copying changes between branches

Now you and Sally are working on parallel branches of the project. The good news is that you're not interfering with each other. The bad news is that it's very easy to drift *too* far apart. Remember that one of the problems with the "crawl in a hole" strategy is that by the time you're finished with your branch, it may be near-impossible to merge your changes back into the main branch without a huge number of conflicts.

Instead, you and Sally should continue to share changes as you work. It's up to you to decide which changes are worth sharing; Subversion gives you the ability to selectively "copy" changes between branches.

In the previous section, we mentioned that both you and Sally made changes to `integer.c` on different branches. If you look at Sally's log message for revision 344, you can see that she fixed some spelling errors. No doubt, your copy of the same file still has the same spelling errors. It's likely that your future changes to this file will be affecting the same areas that have the spelling errors, so you're in for some potential conflicts when you merge your branches someday. It's better, then, to receive Sally's change now, *before* you start working too heavily in the same places.

It's time to use the `svn merge` command. This command, it turns out, is a very close cousin to the `svn diff` command (which you read about in Chapter 3). Both commands are able to compare any two objects in the repository and describe the differences. For example, you can ask `svn diff` to show you the exact change made by Sally in revision 344:

```
$ svn diff -r 343:344 http://svn.example.com/repos/trunk/calc
Index: integer.c
=====
--- integer.c (revision 343)
+++ integer.c (revision 344)
@@ -147,7 +147,7 @@
     case 6:  sprintf(info->operating_system, "HPFS (OS/2 or NT)"); break;
     case 7:  sprintf(info->operating_system, "Macintosh"); break;
     case 8:  sprintf(info->operating_system, "Z-System"); break;
-    case 9:  sprintf(info->operating_system, "CPM"); break;
+    case 9:  sprintf(info->operating_system, "CP/M"); break;
     case 10: sprintf(info->operating_system, "TOPS-20"); break;
     case 11: sprintf(info->operating_system, "NTFS (Windows NT)"); break;
     case 12: sprintf(info->operating_system, "QDOS"); break;
@@ -164,7 +164,7 @@
     low = (unsigned short) read_byte(gzfile); /* read LSB */
     high = (unsigned short) read_byte(gzfile); /* read MSB */
     high = high << 8; /* interpret MSB correctly */
-    total = low + high; /* add them togethe for correct total */
+    total = low + high; /* add them together for correct total */

     info->extra_header = (unsigned char *) my_malloc(total);
     fread(info->extra_header, total, 1, gzfile);
@@ -241,7 +241,7 @@
     Store the offset with ftell() ! */

     if ((info->data_offset = ftell(gzfile)) == -1) {
-    printf("error: ftell() returned -1.\n");
+    printf("error: ftell() returned -1.\n");
     exit(1);
     }
@@ -249,7 +249,7 @@
     printf("I believe start of compressed data is %u\n", info->data_offset);
     #endif

-    /* Set postion eight bytes from the end of the file. */
+    /* Set position eight bytes from the end of the file. */

     if (fseek(gzfile, -8, SEEK_END)) {
         printf("error: fseek() returned non-zero\n");
     }

```

The `svn merge` is almost exactly the same. Instead of printing the differences to your terminal, however, it applies them directly to your working copy as *local modifications*:

```
$ svn merge -r 343:344 http://svn.example.com/repos/trunk/calc
U integer.c

$ svn status
M integer.c

```

The output of **svn merge** shows that your copy of `integer.c` was patched. It now contains Sally's change — it has been "copied" from her branch to your working copy, and now exists as a local modification. At this point, it's up to you to review the local modification and make sure it works correctly.

In another scenario, it's possible that things may not have gone so well, and that `integer.c` may have entered a conflicted state. You might need to resolve the conflict using standard procedures (see Chapter 3), or if you decide that the merge was a bad idea altogether, simply give up and **svn revert** the local change.

But assuming the you've reviewed the merged change, you can **svn commit** the change as usual. At that point, the change has been merged into your repository branch. In version control terminology, this act of copying changes between branches is commonly called *porting* changes.

Why not use patches instead?

A question may be on your mind, especially if you're a Unix user: why bother to use **svn merge** at all? Why not simply use the operating system's **patch** command to accomplish the same job? For example:

```
$ svn diff -r 343:344 http://svn.example.com/repos/trunk/calc > patchfile
$ patch -p0 < patchfile
Patching file integer.c using Plan A...
Hunk #1 succeeded at 147.
Hunk #2 succeeded at 164.
Hunk #3 succeeded at 241.
Hunk #4 succeeded at 249.
done
```

In this particular case, yes, there really is no difference. But **svn merge** has special abilities that surpass the **patch** program. The file format used by **patch** is quite limited; it's only able to tweak file contents. There's no way to represent changes to *trees*, such as the addition, removal, or renaming of files and directories. If Sally's change had, say, added a new directory, the output of **svn diff** wouldn't have mentioned it at all. **svn diff** only outputs the limited patch-format, so there are some ideas it simply can't express. ⁴ The **svn merge** command, however, can express tree-changes by directly applying them to your working copy.

A word of warning: while **svn diff** and **svn merge** are very similar in concept, they do have different syntax in many cases. Be sure to read about them in Chapter 8 for details, or ask **svn help**. For example, **svn merge** requires a working-copy path as a target, i.e. a place where it should apply the tree-changes. If the target isn't specified, it assumes you want the changes applied to the current working directory. If you want changes applied somewhere else, you'll need to say so:

```
$ svn merge -r 343:344 http://svn.example.com/repos/trunk/calc my-calc-branch
U   my-calc-branch/integer.c
```

The repeated merge problem

Merging changes sounds simple enough, but in practice it can become a headache. The problem is that if you repeatedly merge changes from one branch to another, you may accidentally merge the same change *twice*. When this happens, sometimes things will work fine. When patching a file, Subversion typically notices if the file already has the change, and does nothing. But if the already-existing change has been modified in any way, you'll get a conflict. Ideally, Subversion would automatically prevent applying changes more than once.

This is a problem that plagues many version control systems, including both CVS and Subversion. For now, the only way to avoid this problem in Subversion is to carefully keep track of which changes have been merged, and which haven't. When you create a branch directory, you need to track what revision it was created in — make a note some-

⁴In the future, the Subversion project plans to use (or invent) an expanded patch format that describes tree-changes.

where to yourself. When you merge a revision (or range of revisions) into your working copy, you'll need to remember them as well. If you forget any of this information, you can rediscover it by examining the output of **svn log -v branch-dir**. But the point is that each subsequent merge needs to be carefully constructed by hand, making sure that previously-merged revisions aren't re-merged again.

Of course, Subversion has plans to solve this problem sometime after release 1.0. All of this merging information can be tracked in property metadata (see Section , "Properties"), and thus Subversion will someday be able to automatically avoid repeated merges.

Removing a change from the repository

A common use for **svn merge** is to roll back a change that has already been committed. Suppose you decide that the change made way back in revision 303, which changed `integer.c`, is completely wrong. It never should have been committed. You can use **svn merge** to "undo" the change in your working copy, and then commit the local modification to the repository. All you need to do is do specify a *reverse* difference:

```
$ svn merge -r 303:302 http://svn.example.com/trunk/cal
U integer.c

$ svn status
M integer.c

$ svn commit -m "Undoing change committed in r303."
Sending integer.c
Transmitting file data .
Committed revision 350.
```

One way to think about a repository revision is as a specific group of changes (some version control systems call these *changesets*). By using the `-r` switch, you can ask **svn merge** to apply a changeset, or whole range of changesets, to your working copy. In our case of undoing a change, we're asking **svn merge** to apply changeset #303 to our working copy *backwards*.

Keep in mind that rolling back a change like this is just like any other **svn merge** operation, so you should use **svn status** and **svn diff** to confirm that your work is in the state you want it to be in, and then use **svn commit** to send the final version to the repository. After committing, this particular changeset is no longer reflected in the HEAD revision.

Again, you may be thinking: well, that really didn't undo the commit, did it? The change still exists in revision 303. If somebody checks out a version of the `calc` project between revisions 303 and 349, they'll still see the bad change, right?

Yes, that's true. When we talk about "removing" a change, we're really talking about "removing it from HEAD". The original change still exists in the repository's history. For most situations, this is good enough. Most people are only interested in tracking the HEAD of a project anyway. There are special cases, however, where you really might want to destroy all evidence of the commit. (Perhaps somebody accidentally committed a confidential document.) This isn't so easy, it turns out, because Subversion was deliberately designed to never lose information. Revisions are immutable trees which build upon one another. Removing a revision from history would cause a domino effect, creating chaos in all subsequent revisions and possibly invalidating all working copies. ⁵

Switching a working copy

The **svn switch** command transforms an existing working copy into a different branch. While this command isn't strictly necessary for working with branches, it provides a nice shortcut to users. In our earlier example, after creating your private branch, you checked out a fresh working copy of the new repository directory. Instead, you can

⁵The Subversion project has plans, however, to someday implement an **svnadmin obliterate** command that would accomplish the task of permanently deleting information.

simply ask Subversion to change your working copy of `/trunk/calc` to mirror the new branch location:

```
$ cd calc
$ svn info | grep Url
Url: http://svn.example.com/trunk/calc
$ svn switch http://svn.example.com/branches/calc/my-calc-branch
U   integer.c
U   button.c
U   Makefile
Updated to revision 341.
$ svn info | grep Url
Url: http://svn.example.com/branches/calc/my-calc-branch
```

After "switching" to the branch, your working copy is no different than what you would get from doing a fresh checkout of the directory. And it's usually more efficient to use this command, because often branches only differ by a small degree. The server sends only the minimal set of changes necessary to make your working copy reflect the branch.

Of course, **svn switch** also takes a `--revision (-r)` option, so you need not always move your working copy to the "tip" of the branch.

Of course, most projects are more complicated than our `calc` example. Users often create a branch of a project's subdirectory, and then use **svn switch** to move that specific subdirectory in their working copy to the new branch. Or sometimes users will only switch a single working file to a branch. That way, they can continue to receive normal updates to most of their working copy, but the "switched" portions will remain immune (unless someone commits a change to their branch). This feature adds a whole new dimension to the concept of a "mixed working copy" — not only can working copies contain a mixture of working revisions, but a mixture of repository locations as well.

If your working copy contains a number of switched subtrees from different repository locations, it continues to function as normal. When you update, you'll receive patches to each subtree as appropriate. When you commit, your local changes will still be applied as a single, atomic change to the repository.

Note that while it's okay for your working copy to reflect a mixture of repository locations, these locations must all be within the *same* repository. Subversion repositories aren't yet able to communicate with one another; that's a feature planned beyond Subversion 1.0.

Switches and updates

Have you noticed that the output of **svn switch** and **svn update** look the same? The switch command is actually a superset of the update command.

When you run **svn update**, you're asking the repository to compare two trees. The repository does so, and then sends a description of the differences back to the client. The only difference between **svn switch** and **svn update** is that the update command always compares two identical paths.

That is, if your working copy is a mirror of `/trunk/calc`, then **svn update** will automatically compare your working copy of `/trunk/calc` to `/trunk/calc` in the HEAD revision. If you're switching your working copy to a branch, then **svn switch** will compare your working copy of `/trunk/calc` to some *other* branch-directory in the HEAD revision.

In other words, an update moves your working copy through time. A switch moves your working copy through time *and* space.

Because **svn switch** is essentially a variant of **svn update**, it shares the same behaviors; any local modifications in your working copy are preserved when new data arrives from the repository. This allows you to perform all sorts of

clever tricks.

For example, suppose you have a working copy of `/trunk` and make a number of changes to it. Then you suddenly realize that you meant to make the changes to a branch instead. No problem! When you **svn switch** your working copy to the branch, the local changes will remain. You can then test and commit them to the branch.

Tags

Another common version control concept is a *tag*. A tag is just a "snapshot" of a project in time. In Subversion, this idea already seems to be everywhere. Each repository revision is exactly that — a snapshot of the filesystem after each commit.

However, people often want to give more human-friendly names to tags, like "release-1.0". And they want to make snapshots of smaller subdirectories of the filesystem. After all, it's not so easy to remember that release-1.0 of a piece of software is a particular subdirectory of revision 4822.

Creating a simple tag

Once again, **svn copy** comes to the rescue. If you want to create a snapshot of `/trunk/calc` exactly as it looks in the HEAD revision, then make a copy of it:

```
$ svn copy http://svn.example.com/repos/trunk/calc \
           http://svn.example.com/repos/tags/calc/release-1.0 \
           -m "Tagging the 1.0 release of the 'calc' project."
```

Committed revision 351.

This example assumes that a `/tags/calc` directory already exists. After the copy completes, the new `release-1.0` directory is forever a snapshot of how the project looked in the HEAD revision at the time you made the copy. Of course you might want to be more precise about exactly which revision you copy, in case somebody else may have committed changes to the project when you weren't looking. So if you know that revision 350 of `/trunk/calc` is exactly the snapshot you want, you can specify it by passing `-r 350` to the **svn copy** command.

But wait a moment: isn't this tag-creation procedure the same procedure we used to create a branch? Yes, in fact, it is. In Subversion, there's no difference between a tag and a branch. Both are just ordinary directories that are created by copying. Just as with branches, the only reason a copied directory is a "tag" is because *humans* have decided to treat it that way: as long as nobody ever commits to the directory, it forever remains a snapshot. If people start committing to it, it becomes a branch.

If you are administering a repository, there are two approaches you can take to managing tags. The first approach is "hands off": as a matter of project policy, decide where your tags will live, and make sure all users know how to treat the directories they copy in there. (That is, make sure they know not to commit to them.) The second approach is more paranoid: you can use one of the access-control scripts provided with Subversion to prevent anyone from doing anything but creating new copies in the tags-area (###cross-ref a section that demonstrates how to use these scripts?). The paranoid approach, however, isn't usually necessary. If a user accidentally commits a change to a tag-directory, you can simply undo the change as discussed in the previous section. This is version control, after all.

Creating a complex tag

Sometimes you may want your "snapshot" to be more complicated than a single directory at a single revision.

For example, pretend your project is much larger than our `calc` example: suppose it contains a number of subdirectories and many more files. In the course of your work, you may decide that you need to create a working copy that is designed to have specific features and bugfixes. You can accomplish this by selectively pinning files or directories at particular revisions (using **svn update -r** liberally), or by switching files and directories to particular branches (making use of **svn switch**). When you're done, your working copy is a hodgepodge of repository locations from dif-

ferent revisions. But after testing, you know it's the precise combination of data you need.

Time to make a snapshot. Copying one URL to another won't work here. In this case, you want to make a snapshot of your exact working copy arrangement and store it in the repository. Luckily, the **svn copy** actually has four different uses (which you can read about in Chapter 8), including the ability to copy a working-copy tree to the repository:

```
$ ls
./    ../    my-working-copy/

$ svn copy my-working-copy http://svn.example.com/repos/tags/cal/newtag

Committed revision 352.
```

Now there is a new directory in the repository, `/tags/cal/mytag`, which is an exact snapshot of your working copy — mixed revisions, urls, and all.

Other users have found interesting uses for this feature. Sometimes there are situations where you have a bunch of local changes made to your working copy, and you'd like a collaborator to see them. Instead of running **svn diff** and sending a patchfile (which won't capture tree changes), you can instead use **svn copy** to "upload" your working copy to a private area of the repository. Your collaborator can then either checkout a verbatim copy of your working copy, or use **svn merge** to receive your exact changes.

Branch maintenance

You may have noticed by now that Subversion is extremely flexible. Because it implements branches and tags with the same underlying mechanism (directory copies), and because branches and tags appear in normal filesystem space, many people find Subversion intimidating. It's almost *too* flexible. In this section, we'll offer some suggestions for arranging and managing your data over time.

Repository layout

There are some standard, recommended ways to organize a repository. Most people create a `trunk` directory to hold the "main line" of development, a `branches` directory to contain branch copies, and a `tags` directory to contain tag copies. If a repository holds only one project, then often people create these top-level directories:

```
/trunk
/branches
/tags
```

If a repository contains multiple projects, people often index their layout by branch:

```
/trunk/paint
/trunk/calc
/branches/paint
/branches/calc
/tags/paint
/tags/calc
```

...or by project:

```
/paint/trunk
/paint/branches
/paint/tags
/calc/trunk
/calc/branches
/calc/tags
```

Of course, you're free to ignore these common layouts. You can create any sort of variation, whatever works best for you or your team. Remember that whatever you choose, it's not a permanent commitment. You can reorganize your repository at any time. Because branches and tags are ordinary directories, the **svn mv** command can move or rename them however you wish. Switching from one layout to another is just a matter of issuing a series of server-side moves; if you don't like the way things are organized in the repository, just juggle the directories around.

Data lifetimes

Another nice feature of Subversion's model is that branches and tags can have finite lifetimes, just like any other versioned item. For example, suppose you eventually finish all your work on your personal branch of the `calc` project. After merging all of your changes back into `/trunk/calc`, there's no need for your private branch directory to stick around anymore:

```
$ svn remove http://svn.example.com/repos/branches/calc/my-calc-branch \  
             -m "Removing obsolete branch of calc project."
```

Committed revision 375.

And now your branch is gone. Of course it's not really gone: the directory is simply missing from the HEAD revision, no longer distracting anyone. If you look at an earlier revision (by means of **svn checkout -r**, **svn switch -r**, or **svn list -r**), you'll still be able to see your old branch.

If browsing your deleted directory isn't enough, you can always bring it back. Resurrecting data is very easy in Subversion. If there's a deleted directory (or file) that you'd like to bring back into HEAD, simply use **svn copy -r** to copy it from the old revision:

```
$ svn copy -r 374 http://svn.example.com/repos/branches/calc/my-calc-branch \  
                http://svn.example.com/repos/branches/calc/my-calc-branch
```

Committed revision 376.

In our example, your personal branch had a relatively short lifetime: you may have created it to fix a bug or implement a new feature. When your task is done, so is the branch. In software development, though, it's also common to have two "main" branches running side-by-side for very long periods. For example, suppose it's time to release a stable `calc` project to the public, and you know it's going to take a couple of months to shake bugs out of the software. You don't want people to add new features to the project, but you don't want to tell all developers to stop programming either. So instead, you create a "stable" branch of the software that won't change much:

```
$ svn cp http://svn.example.com/repos/trunk/calc \  
         http://svn.example.com/branches/calc/stable-1.0 \  
         -m "Creating stable branch of calc project."
```

Committed revision 377.

And now developers are free to continue adding cutting-edge (or experimental) features to `/trunk/calc`, and you can declare a project policy that only bugfixes are to be committed to `/branches/calc/stable-1.0`. That is, as people continue to work on the trunk, a human selectively ports bugfixes over to the stable branch. Even after the stable branch has shipped, you'll probably continue to maintain the branch for a long time — that is, as long as you continue to support that release for customers.

Summary

We've covered a lot of ground in this chapter. We've discussed the concepts of tags and branches, and demonstrated how Subversion implements these concepts by copying directories with the **svn copy** command. We've shown how

to use **svn merge** to copy changes from one branch to another, or roll back bad changes. We've gone over the use of **svn switch** to create mixed-location working copies. And we've talked about how one might manage the organization and lifetimes of branches in a repository.

Remember the Subversion mantra: branches are cheap. So use them liberally!

Chapter 5. Repository Administration

The Subversion repository is the central storehouse of versioned data for any number of projects. As such, it becomes an obvious candidate for all the love and attention an administrator can offer. While the repository is generally a low-maintenance item, it is important to understand how to properly configure and care for it so that potential problems are avoided, and actual problems safely resolved.

In this chapter, we'll discuss how to create and configure a Subversion repository, and how to expose that repository for network accessibility. We'll also talk about repository maintenance, including the use of the **svnlook** and **svnadmin** tools (which are provided with Subversion). We'll address some common questions and mistakes, and give some suggestions on how to arrange the data in the repository.

If you plan to access a Subversion repository only in the role of a user whose data is under version control (that is, via a Subversion client), you can skip this chapter altogether. However, if you are, or wish to become, a Subversion repository administrator, you should definitely pay attention to this chapter.

Of course, one cannot administer a repository unless one has a repository to administer.

Repository Basics

Understanding Transactions and Revisions

Conceptually speaking, a Subversion repository is a sequence of directory trees. Each tree is a snapshot of how the files and directories versioned in your repository looked at various points in time. These snapshots are created as a result of client operations, and are called revisions.

Every revision begins life as a transaction tree. When doing a commit, a client builds a Subversion transaction that mirrors their local changes (plus any additional changes that might have been made to the repository since the beginning of the client's commit process), and then instructs the repository to store that tree as the next snapshot in the sequence. If the commit succeeds, the transaction is effectively promoted into a new revision tree, and is assigned a new revision number. If the commit fails for some reason, the transaction is destroyed and the client is informed of the failure.

At the moment, updates work in a similar way. The client builds a temporary transaction tree that mirrors the state of the working copy. The repository then compares that transaction tree with the revision tree at the request revision (usually the most recent, or “youngest” tree), and sends back information that informs the client about what changes are needed to transform their working copy into a replica of that revision tree. After the update completes, the temporary transaction is deleted.

The use of transaction trees is the only way to make permanent changes to repository's versioned filesystem. However, it's important to understand that the lifetime of a transaction is completely flexible. In the case of updates, transactions are temporary trees that are immediately destroyed. In the case of commits, transactions are transformed into permanent revisions (or removed if the commit fails). In the case of an error or bug, it's possible that a transaction can be accidentally left lying around in the repository (not really affecting anything, but still taking up space).

In theory, someday whole workflow applications might revolve around more fine-grained control of transaction lifetime. It is feasible to imagine a system whereby each transaction slated to become a revision is left in stasis well after the client finishes describing its changes to repository. This would enable each new commit to be reviewed by someone else, perhaps a manager or engineering QA team, who can choose to promote the transaction into a revision, or abort it.

What does all of this have to do with repository administration? The answer is simple: if you're administering a Sub-

⁶This may sound really prestigious and lofty, but we're just talking about anyone who is interested in that mysterious realm beyond the working copy where everyone's data hangs out.

version repository, you're going to have to examine revisions and transactions as part of monitoring the health of your repository.

Unversioned Properties

Transactions and revisions in the Subversion repository can have properties attached to them. These properties are generic key-to-value mappings, and are used to store information about the tree to which they are attached. The names and values of these properties are stored in the repository's filesystem, along with the rest of your tree data.

Revision and transaction properties are useful for associating information with a tree that is not strictly related to the files and directories in that tree—the kind of information that isn't managed by client working copies. For example, when a new commit transaction is created in the repository, Subversion adds a property to that transaction named `svn:date`—a timestamp representing the time that the transaction was created. By the time the commit process is finished, and the transaction is promoted to a permanent revision, the tree has also been given a property to store the username of the revision's author (`svn:author`) and a property to store the log message attached to that revision (`svn:log`).

Revision and transaction properties are *unversioned properties*—as they are modified, their previous values are permanently discarded. Also, while revision trees themselves are immutable, the properties attached to those trees are not. You can add, remove, and modify revision properties at any time in the future. If you commit a new revision and later realize that you had some misinformation or spelling error in your log message, you can simply replace the value of the `svn:log` property with a new, corrected log message.

Repository Creation and Configuration

Creating a Subversion repository is an incredibly simple task. The `svnadmin` utility, provided with Subversion, has a subcommand for doing just that. To create a new repository, just run:

```
$ svnadmin create path/to/repos
```

This creates a new repository in the directory `path/to/repos`. This new repository begins life at revision 0, which is defined to consist of nothing but the top-level root (`/`) filesystem directory. Initially, revision 0 also has a single revision property, `svn:date`, set to the time at which the repository was created.

You may have noticed that the path argument to `svnadmin` was just a regular filesystem path and not a URL like the `svn` client program uses when referring to repositories. Both `svnadmin` and `svnlook` are considered server-side utilities—they are used on the machine where the repository resides to examine or modify aspects of the repository, and are in fact unable to perform tasks across a network. A common mistake made by Subversion newcomers is trying to pass URLs (even "local" `file:` ones) to these two programs.

So, after you've run the `svnadmin create` command, you have a shiny new Subversion repository in its own directory. Let's take a peek at what is actually created inside that subdirectory.

```
$ ls repos
dav/  db/  format  hooks/  locks/  README
```

With the exception of the `README` file, the repository directory is a collection of subdirectories. As in other areas of the Subversion design, modularity is given high regard, and hierarchical organization is preferred to cluttered chaos. Here is a brief description of all of the items you see in your new repository directory:

dav	A directory provided to Apache and <code>mod_dav_svn</code> for their private housekeeping data.
db	The main Berkeley DB environment, full of DB tables that comprise the data store for Subversion's filesystem (where all of your versioned data resides).

format	A file whose contents are a single integer value that dictates the version number of the repository layout.
hooks	A directory full of hook script templates (and hook scripts themselves, once you've installed some).
locks	A directory for Subversion's repository locking data, used for tracking accessors to the repository.
README	A file which merely informs its readers that they are looking at a Subversion repository.

In general, you shouldn't tamper with your repository “by hand”. The **svnadmin** tool should be sufficient for any changes necessary to your repository, or you can look to third-party tools (such as Berkeley DB's tool suite) for tweaking relevant subsections of the repository. Some exceptions exist, though, and we'll cover those here.

Hook scripts

A *hook* is a program triggered by some repository event, such as the creation of a new revision or the modification of an unversioned property. Each hook is handed enough information to tell what that event is, what target(s) it's operating on, and the username of the person who triggered the event. Depending on the hook's output or return status, the hook program may continue the action, stop it, or suspend it in some way.

The `hooks` subdirectory is, by default, filled with templates for various repository hooks.

```
$ ls repos/hooks/
post-commit.tmpl          pre-revprop-change.tmpl
post-revprop-change.tmpl start-commit.tmpl
pre-commit.tmpl
```

There is one template for each hook that the Subversion repository implements, and by examining the contents of those template scripts, you can see what triggers each such script to run and what data is passed to that script. Also present in many of these templates are examples of how one might use that script, in conjunction with other Subversion-supplied programs, to perform common useful tasks. To actually install a working hook, you need only place some executable program or script into the `repos/hooks` directory which can be executed as the name (like **start-commit** or **post-commit**) of the hook.

On Unix platforms, this means supplying a script or program (which could be a shell script, a Python program, a compiled C binary, or any number of other things) named exactly like the name of the hook. Of course, the template files are present for more than just informational purposes—the easiest way to install a hook on Unix platforms is to simply copy the appropriate template file to a new file that lacks the `.tmpl` extension, customize the hook's contents, and ensure that the script is executable. Windows, however, uses file extensions to determine whether or not a program is executable, so you would need to supply a program whose basename is the name of the hook, and whose extension is one of the special extensions recognized by Windows for executable programs, such as `.exe` or `.com` for programs, and `.bat` for batch files.

Currently there are five true hooks implemented by the Subversion repository.

<code>start-commit</code>	This is run before the commit transaction is even created. It is typically used to decide if the user has commit privileges at all. The repository passes two arguments to this program: the path to the repository, and username which is attempting the commit. If the program returns a non-zero exit value, the commit is stopped before the transaction is even created.
<code>pre-commit</code>	This is run when the transaction is complete, but before it is committed. Typically, this hook is used to protect against commits that are disallowed due to content or location (for example, your site might require that all commits to a certain branch include a ticket number from the bug tracker, or that the incoming log message is non-empty).

The repository passes two arguments to this program: the path to the repository, and the name of the transaction being committed. If the program returns a non-zero exit value, the commit is aborted and transaction is removed.

The Subversion distribution includes some access control scripts (located in the `tools/hook-scripts` directory of the Subversion source tree) that can be called from **pre-commit** to implement fine-grained access control. At this time, this is the only method by which administrators can implement finer-grained access control beyond what `httpd.conf` offers. In a future version of Subversion, we plan to implement ACLs directly in the filesystem.

`post-commit`

This is run after the transaction is committed, and a new revision is created. Most people use this hook to send out descriptive emails about the commit or to make a backup of the repository. The repository passes two arguments to this program: the path to the repository, and the new revision number that was created. The exit code of the program is ignored.

The Subversion distribution includes a **commit-email.pl** script (located in the `tools/hook-scripts/` directory of the Subversion source tree) that can be used to send email with (and/or append to a log file) a description of a given commit. This mail contains a list of the paths that were changed, the log message attached to the commit, the author and date of the commit, as well as a GNU diff-style display of the changes made to the various versioned files as part of the commit.

Another useful tool provided by Subversion is the **hot-backup.py** script (located in the `tools/backup/` directory of the Subversion source tree). This script performs hot backups of your Subversion repository (a feature supported by the Berkeley DB database back-end), and can be used to make a per-commit snapshot of your repository for archival or emergency recovery purposes.

`pre-revprop-change`

Because Subversion's revision properties are not versioned, making modifications to such a property (for example, the `svn:log` commit message property) will overwrite the previous value of that property forever. Since data can be potentially lost here, Subversion supplies this hook (and its counterpart, `post-revprop-change`) so that repository administrators can keep records of changes to these items using some external means if they so desire.

This hook runs just before such a modification is made to the repository. The repository passes four arguments to this hook: the path to the repository, the revision on which the to-be-modified property exists, the authenticated username of the person making the change, and name of the property itself.

`post-revprop-change`

As mentioned earlier, this hook is the counterpart of `pre-revprop-change` hook. In fact, for the sake of paranoia this script will not run unless the `pre-revprop-change` hook exists. When both of these hooks are present, the `post-revprop-change` hook runs just after a revision property has been changed, and is typically used to send an email containing the new value of the changed property. The repository passes four arguments to this hook: the path to the repository, the revision on which the property exists, the authenticated username of the person making the change, and name of the property itself.

The Subversion distribution includes a **propchange-email.pl** script (located in the `tools/hook-scripts/` directory of the Subversion source tree) that can be used to send email with (and/or append to a log file) the details of a revision property change. This mail contains the revision and name of the changed property, the user who made the change, and the new property value.

Subversion will attempt to execute hooks as the same user who owns the process which is accessing the Subversion repository. In most cases, the repository is being accessed via Apache HTTP server and `mod_dav_svn`, so this user is the same user that Apache runs as. The hooks themselves will need to be configured with OS-level permissions that allow that user to execute them. Also, this means that any file or programs (including the Subversion repository itself) accessed directly or indirectly by the hook will be accessed as the same user. In other words, be alert to potential permission-related problems that could prevent the hook from performing the tasks you've written it to perform.

Berkeley DB configuration

The Berkeley DB environment has its own set of default configuration values for things like the number of locks allowed to be taken out at any given time, or the size cutoff for Berkeley's journaling log file, etc. Subversion's filesystem code additionally chooses default values for some of the Berkeley DB configuration options. However, sometimes your particular repository, with its unique collection of data and access patterns, might require a different set of configuration option values.

The folks at Sleepycat (the producers of Berkeley DB) understand that different databases have different requirements, and so they have provided a mechanism for runtime overriding of many of the configuration values for the Berkeley DB environment. Berkeley checks for the presence of a file named `DB_CONFIG` in each environment directory, and parses the options found in that file for use with that particular Berkeley environment.

The Berkeley configuration file for your repository is located in the `db` environment directory, at `repos/db/DB_CONFIG`. Subversion itself creates this file when it creates the rest of the repository. The file initially contains some default options, as well as pointers to the Berkeley DB online documentation so you can read about what those options do. Of course, you are free to add any of the supported Berkeley DB options to your `DB_CONFIG` file. Just be aware that while Subversion never attempts to read or interpret the contents of the file, and makes no use of the option settings in it, you'll want to avoid any configuration changes that may cause Berkeley DB to behave in a fashion that is unexpected by the rest of the Subversion code.

Repository Maintenance

An Administrator's Toolkit

svnlook

svnlook is a tool provided by Subversion for examining the various revisions and transactions in a repository. No part of this program attempts to change the repository—it's a “read-only” tool. **svnlook** is typically used by the repository hooks for reporting the changes that are about to be committed (in the case of the **pre-commit** hook) or that were just committed (in the case of the **post-commit** hook) to the repository. A repository administrator may use this tool for diagnostic purposes.

svnlook has a straightforward syntax:

```
$ svnlook help
general usage: svnlook SUBCOMMAND REPOS_PATH [ARGS & OPTIONS ...]
Note: any subcommand which takes the '--revision' and '--transaction'
      options will, if invoked without one of those options, act on
      the repository's youngest revision.
Type "svnlook help <subcommand>" for help on a specific subcommand.
...
```

Nearly every one of **svnlook**'s subcommands can operate on either a revision or a transaction tree, printing information about the tree itself, or how it differs from the previous revision of the repository. You use the `--revision` and `--transaction` options to specify which revision or transaction, respectively, to examine. Note that while revision numbers appear as natural numbers, transaction names are alphanumeric strings. Keep in mind that the filesystem only allows browsing of uncommitted transactions (transactions that have not resulted in a new revision). Most

repositories will have no such transactions, because transactions are usually either committed (which disqualifies them from viewing) or aborted and removed.

In the absence of both the `--revision` and `--transaction` options, **svnlook** will examine the youngest (or “HEAD”) revision in the repository. So the following two commands do exactly the same thing when 19 is the youngest revision in the repository located at `/path/to/repos`:

```
$ svnlook info /path/to/repos
$ svnlook info /path/to/repos --revision 19
```

The only exception to these rules about subcommands is the **svnlook youngest** subcommand, which takes no options, and simply prints out the HEAD revision number.

```
$ svnlook youngest /path/to/repos
19
```

Output from **svnlook** is designed to be both human- and machine-parsable. Take as an example the output of the `info` subcommand:

```
$ svnlook info path/to/repos
sally
2002-11-04 09:29:13 -0600 (Mon, 04 Nov 2002)
27
Added the usual
Greek tree.
```

The output of the `info` subcommand is defined as:

1. The author, followed by a newline.
2. The date, followed by a newline.
3. The number of characters in the log message, followed by a newline.
4. The log message itself, followed by a newline.

This output is human-readable, meaning items like the timestamp are displayed using a textual representation instead of something more obscure (such as the number of nanoseconds since the Tasty Freeze guy drove by). But this output is also machine-parsable—because the log message can contain multiple lines and be unbounded in length, **svnlook** provides the length of that message before the message itself. This allows scripts and other wrappers around this command to make intelligent decisions about the log message, such as how much memory to allocate for the message, or at least how many bytes to skip in the event that this output is not the last bit of data in the stream.

Another common use of **svnlook** is to actually view the contents of a revision or transaction tree. Examining the output of **svnlook tree** command, which displays the directories and files in the requested tree (optionally showing the filesystem node revision IDs for each of those paths) can be extremely helpful to administrators deciding on whether or not it is safe to remove a seemingly dead transaction. It is also quite useful for Subversion developers who are diagnosing filesystem-related problems when they arise.

```
$ svnlook tree path/to/repos --show-ids
/ <0.0.1>
A/ <2.0.1>
  B/ <4.0.1>
    lambda <5.0.1>
  E/ <6.0.1>
    alpha <7.0.1>
```

```
beta <8.0.1>
F/ <9.0.1>
mu <3.0.1>
C/ <a.0.1>
D/ <b.0.1>
gamma <c.0.1>
G/ <d.0.1>
pi <e.0.1>
rho <f.0.1>
tau <g.0.1>
H/ <h.0.1>
chi <i.0.1>
omega <k.0.1>
psi <j.0.1>
iota <l.0.1>
```

svnlook can perform a variety of other queries, displaying subsets of bits of information we've mentioned previously, reporting which paths were modified in a given revision or transaction, showing textual and property differences made to files and directories, and so on. The following is a brief description of the current list of subcommands accepted by **svnlook**, and the output of those subcommands:

author	Print the tree's author.
date	Print the tree's datestamp.
changed	List all files and directories that changed in the tree.
diff	Print unified diffs of changed files.
dirs-changed	List the directories in the tree that were themselves changed, or whose file children were changed.
info	Print the tree's author, datestamp, log message character count, and log message.
log	Print the tree's log message.
tree	Print the tree listing, optionally revealing the filesystem node revision IDs associated with each path.
youngest	Print the youngest revision number.

svnadmin

The **svnadmin** program is the repository administrator's best friend. Besides providing the ability to create Subversion repositories, this program allows you perform several maintenance operations on those repositories. The syntax of **svnadmin** is similar to that of **svnlook**:

```
$ svnadmin help
general usage: svnadmin SUBCOMMAND REPOS_PATH [ARGS & OPTIONS ...]
Type "svnadmin help <subcommand>" for help on a specific subcommand.
```

Available subcommands:

```
create
createtxn
dump
```

...

We've already mentioned **svnadmin**'s `create` subcommand (see Section , "Repository Creation and Configuration"). Most of the others we will cover in more detail later in this chapter. For now, let's just take a quick glance at what each of the available subcommands offers.

create	Creates a new Subversion repository.
createtxn	Creates a transaction in the repository based on a given existing revision.
dump	Dumps the contents of the repository, bounded by a given set of revisions, using a portable dump format.
load	Loads a set of revisions into a repository from a stream of data that uses the same portable dump format generated by the <code>dump</code> subcommand.
lscr	List the revisions in which a given path in the repository was modified.
lstxns	List the names of uncommitted Subversion transactions which currently exist in the repository.
recover	Perform recovery steps on a repository that is in need of such, generally after a fatal error has occurred which prevented a process from cleanly shutting down its communication with the repository.
rmtxns	Cleanly remove Subversion transactions from the repository (conveniently fed by output from the <code>lstxns</code> subcommand).
setlog	Replace the current value of the <code>svn:log</code> (commit log message) property on a given revision in the repository with a new value.

svnshell.py

The Subversion source tree also comes with a shell-like interface to the repository. The **svnshell.py** Python script (located in `tools/examples/` in the source tree) uses Subversion's language bindings (so you have to have those properly compiled and installed in order for this script to work) to connect to the repository and filesystem libraries.

Once started, the program behaves similarly to a shell program, allowing you to browse the various directories in your repository. Initially, you are “positioned” in the root directory of the HEAD revision of the repository, and presented with a command prompt. You can use the `help` command at any time to display a list of available commands and what they do.

```
$ svnshell.py /path/to/repos
<rev: 2 />$ help
Available commands:
  cat FILE      : dump the contents of FILE
  cd DIR        : change the current working directory to DIR
  exit          : exit the shell
  ls [PATH]     : list the contents of the current directory
  lstxns        : list the transactions available for browsing
  setrev REV    : set the current revision to browse
  settxn TXN    : set the current transaction to browse
  youngest      : list the youngest browsable revision number
<rev: 2 />$
```

Navigating the directory structure of your repository is done in the same way you would navigate a regular Unix or Windows shell—using the `cd` command. At all times, the command prompt will show you what revision (prefixed by `rev:`) or transaction (prefixed by `txn:`) you are currently examining, and at what path location in that revision or transaction. You can change your current revision or transaction with the `setrev` and `settxn` commands, respectively. As in a Unix shell, you can use the `ls` command to display the contents of the current directory, and you can use the `cat` command to display the contents of a file.

Example 5.1. Using `svnshell` to navigate the repository

```

<rev: 2 />$ ls
  REV  AUTHOR  NODE-REV-ID  SIZE  DATE NAME
-----
    1   sally <   2.0.1>      Nov 15 11:50 A/
    2   harry <   1.0.2>      56 Nov 19 08:19 iota
<rev: 2 />$ cd A
<rev: 2 /A>$ ls
  REV  AUTHOR  NODE-REV-ID  SIZE  DATE NAME
-----
    1   sally <   4.0.1>      Nov 15 11:50 B/
    1   sally <   a.0.1>      Nov 15 11:50 C/
    1   sally <   b.0.1>      Nov 15 11:50 D/
    1   sally <   3.0.1>      23 Nov 15 11:50 mu
<rev: 2 /A>$ cd D/G
<rev: 2 /A/D/G>$ ls
  REV  AUTHOR  NODE-REV-ID  SIZE  DATE NAME
-----
    1   sally <   e.0.1>      23 Nov 15 11:50 pi
    1   sally <   f.0.1>      24 Nov 15 11:50 rho
    1   sally <   g.0.1>      24 Nov 15 11:50 tau
<rev: 2 /A>$ cd ../..
<rev: 2 />$ cat iota
This is the file 'iota'.
Added this text in revision 2.

<rev: 2 />$ setrev 1; cat iota
This is the file 'iota'.

<rev: 1 />$ exit
$

```

As you can see in the previous example, multiple commands may be specified at a single command prompt, separated by a semicolon. Also, the shell understands the notions of relative and absolute paths, and will properly handle the "." and ".." special path components.

The `youngest` command displays the youngest revision. This is useful for determining the range of valid revisions you can use as arguments to the `setrev` command—you are allowed to browse all the revisions (recalling that they are named with integers) between 0 and the youngest, inclusively. Determining the valid browsable transactions isn't quite as pretty. Use the `lstxns` command to list the transactions that you are able to browse. The list of browsable transactions is the same list that `svnadmin lstxns` returns, and the same list that is valid for use with `svnlook's -transaction` option.

Once you've finished using the shell, you can exit cleanly by using the `exit` command. Alternatively, you can supply an end-of-file character—Control-D (though some Win32 Python distributions use the Windows Control-Z convention instead).

Berkeley DB Utilities

Currently, the Subversion repository has only one database back-end—Berkeley DB. All of your filesystem's structure and data live in a set of tables within the `db` subdirectory of your repository. This subdirectory is a regular Berkeley DB environment directory, and can therefore be used in conjunction with any of Berkeley's database tools (you can see the documentation for these tools at SleepyCat's website, <http://www.sleepycat.com/>). For day-to-day Subversion use, these tools are unnecessary, however, they do provide some important functionality that is currently not provided by Subversion itself.

For example, because Subversion uses Berkeley DB's logging facilities, the database first writes out a description of any modifications it is about to make, and then makes the modification itself. This is to ensure that if something goes wrong, the database system can back up to a previous *checkpoint*—a location in the log files known not to be corrupt—and replay transactions until the data is restored to a usable state. This functionality is one of the main reasons why Berkeley DB was chosen as Subversion's initial database back-end.

Over time, these log files can accumulate. That is actually a feature of the database system—you should be able to recreate your entire database using nothing but the log files, so these files are important for catastrophic database recovery. But typically, you'll want to archive the log files that are no longer in use by Berkeley DB, and then remove them from disk to conserve space. Berkeley DB provides a **db_archive** utility for, among other things, listing the log files that are associated with a given database and which are no longer in use. That way, you know which files to archive and remove.

Subversion's own repository uses a `post-commit` hook script, which, after performing a “hot backup” of the repository, removes these excess logfiles. In the Subversion source tree, the script `tools/backup/hot-backup.py` illustrates the safe way to perform a backup of a Berkeley DB database environment while it's being actively accessed: recursively copy the entire repository directory, then re-copy the logfiles listed by **db_archive -l**.

Generally speaking, only the truly paranoid would need to backup their entire repository every time a commit occurred. Subversion's repository is truly paranoid for what should be obvious reasons! However, assuming that a given repository has some other redundancy mechanism in place with relatively fine granularity (per-commit, for example), a hot backup of the database might be something that a repository administrator would want to include as part of a system-wide nightly backup. For more repositories, archived commit emails alone are sufficient restoration sources, at least for the last few commits. But it's your data; protect it as much as you'd like.

Berkeley DB also comes with a pair of utilities for converting the database tables to and from flat ASCII text files. The **db_dump** and **db_load** programs write and read, respectively, a custom file format which describes the keys and values in a Berkeley DB database. Since Berkeley databases are not portable across machine architectures, this format is a useful way to transfer those databases from machine to machine, irrespective of architecture or operating system.

Repository Cleanup

Your Subversion repository will generally require very little attention once it is configured to your liking. However, there are times when some manual assistance from an administrator might be in order. The **svnadmin** utility provides some helpful functionality to assist you in performing such tasks as

- modifying commit log messages,
- removing dead transactions,
- recovering “wedged” repositories, and
- migrating repository contents to a different repository.

Perhaps the most commonly used of **svnadmin**'s subcommands is `setlog`. When a transaction is committed to the repository and promoted to a revision, the descriptive log message associated with that new revision (and provided by the user) is stored as an unversioned property attached to the revision itself. In other words, the repository remembers only the latest value of the property, and discards previous ones.

Sometimes a user will have an error in her log message (a misspelling or some misinformation, perhaps). If the repository is configured (using the `pre-revprop-change` and `post-revprop-change` hooks; see Section , “Hook scripts”) to accept changes to this log message after the commit is finished, then the user can “fix” her log message remotely using the **svn** program's `propset` command (see Chapter 8, *Subversion Complete Reference*). However, because of the potential to lose information forever, Subversion repositories are not, by default, configured to allow changes to unversioned properties— except by an administrator.

If a log message needs to be changed by an administrator, this can be done using **svnadmin setlog**. This command changes the log message (the `svn:log` property) on a given revision of a repository, reading the new value from a provided file.

```
$ echo "Here is the new, correct log message" > newlog.txt
$ svnadmin setlog myrepos newlog.txt -r 388
```

Don't Lose That Log Message!

Administrators should be aware that using **svnadmin setlog** bypasses any revision property hook scripts that might be active for the repository. Be extremely careful with this subcommand, ensuring that you are providing the correct revision number for the change.

Another common use of **svnadmin** is to query the repository for outstanding—possibly dead—Subversion transactions. In the event that commit should fail, the transaction is usually cleaned up. That is, the transaction itself is removed from the repository, and any data associated with (and only with) that transaction is removed as well. Occasionally, though, a failure occurs in such a way that the cleanup of the transaction never happens. This could happen for several reasons: perhaps the client operation was inelegantly terminated by the user, or a network failure might have occurred in the middle of an operation, etc. Regardless of the reason, these dead transactions serve only to clutter the repository and consume resources.

You can use **svnadmin**'s `lstxns` command to list the names of the currently outstanding transactions.

```
$ svnadmin lstxns myrepos
19
3a1
a45
$
```

Each item in the resultant output can then be used with **svnlook** (and its `--transaction` option) to determine who created the transaction, when it was created, what types of changes were made in the transaction—in other words, whether or not the transaction is a safe candidate for removal! If so, the transaction's name can be passed to **svnadmin rmtxns**, which will perform the cleanup of the transaction. In fact, the `rmtxns` subcommand can take its input directly from the output of `lstxns`!

```
$ svnadmin rmtxns myrepos `svnadmin lstxns myrepos`
$
```

If you use these two subcommands like this, you should consider making your repository temporarily inaccessible to clients. That way, no one can begin a legitimate transaction before you start your cleanup. The following is a little bit of shell-scripting that can quickly generate information about each outstanding transaction in your repository:

Example 5.2. `txn-info.sh` (reporting outstanding transactions)

```
#!/bin/sh

### Generate informational output for all outstanding transactions in
### a Subversion repository

SVNADMIN=/usr/local/bin/svnadmin
SVNLOOK=/usr/local/bin/svnlook

REPOS=${1}
if [ x$REPOS = x ] ; then
    echo "usage: $0 REPOS_PATH"
    exit
fi
```

```
for TXN in `${SVNADMIN} lstxns ${REPOS}`; do
  echo "---[ Transaction ${TXN} ]-----"
  ${SVNLOOK} info ${REPOS} --transaction ${TXN}
done
```

You can run the previous script using `/path/to/txn-info.sh /path/to/repos`. The output is basically a concatenation of several chunks of `svnlook info` output (see Section , “svnlook”), and will look something like:

```
$ txn-info.sh myrepos
---[ Transaction 19 ]-----
sally
2001-09-04 11:57:19 -0500 (Tue, 04 Sep 2001)
0
---[ Transaction 3a1 ]-----
harry
2001-09-10 16:50:30 -0500 (Mon, 10 Sep 2001)
39
Trying to commit over a faulty network.
---[ Transaction a45 ]-----
sally
2001-09-12 11:09:28 -0500 (Wed, 12 Sep 2001)
0
$
```

Usually, if you see a dead transaction that has no log message attached to it, this is the result of a failed update (or update-like) operation. These operations use Subversion transactions under the hood to mimic working copy state. Since they are never intended to be committed, Subversion doesn't require a log message for those transactions. Transactions that do have log messages attached are almost certainly failed commits of some sort. Also, a transaction's datestamp can provide interesting information—for example, how likely is it that an operation begun nine months ago is still active?

In short, transaction cleanup decisions need not be made unwisely. Various sources of information—including Apache's error and access logs, the logs of successful Subversion commits, and so on—can be employed in the decision-making process. Finally, an administrator can often simply communicate with a seemingly dead transaction's owner (via email, for example) to verify that the transaction is, in fact, in a zombie state.

Repository recovery

In order to protect the data in your repository, the database back-end uses a locking mechanism. This mechanism ensures that portions of the database are not simultaneously modified by multiple database accessors, and that each process sees the data in the correct state when that data is being read from the database. When a process needs to change something in the database, it first checks for the existence of a lock on the target data. If the data is not locked, the process locks the data, makes the change it wants to make, and then unlocks the data. Other processes are forced to wait until that lock is removed before they are permitted to continue accessing that section of the database.

In the course of using your Subversion repository, fatal errors (such as running out of disk space or available memory) or interruptions can prevent a process from having the chance to remove the locks it has placed in the database. The result is that the back-end database system gets “wedged”. When this happens, any attempts to access the repository hang indefinitely (since each new accessor is waiting for a lock to go away—which isn't going to happen).

First, if this happens to your repository, don't panic. Subversion's filesystem takes advantage of database transactions and checkpoints and pre-write journaling to ensure that only the most catastrophic of events can permanently destroy a database environment. A sufficiently paranoid repository administrator will be making off-site backups of the repository data in some fashion, but don't call your system administrator to restore a backup tape just yet.

Secondly, use the following recipe to attempt to “unwedge” your repository:

7e.g.: hard drive + huge electromagnet = disaster

1. Make sure that there are no processes accessing (or attempting to access) the repository. For networked repositories, this means shutting down the Apache HTTP Server, too.
2. Become the user who owns and manages the repository.
3. Run the command **svnadmin recover /path/to/repos**. You should see output like this:

```
Acquiring exclusive lock on repository db, and running recovery procedures.  
Please stand by...  
Recovery completed.  
The latest repos revision is 19.
```

4. Restart the Subversion server.

This procedure fixes almost every case of repository lock-up. Make sure that you run this command as the user that owns and manages the database, not just as `root`. Part of the recovery process might involve recreating from scratch various database files (shared memory regions, for example). Recovering as `root` will create those files such that they are owned by `root`, which means that even after you restore connectivity to your repository, regular users will be unable to access it.

If the previous procedure, for some reason, does not successfully unweave your repository, you should do two things. First, move your broken repository out of the way and restore your latest backup of it. Then, send an email to the Subversion developer list (at dev@subversion.tigris.org) describing your problem in detail. Data integrity is an extremely high priority to the Subversion developers.

Migrating a repository

A Subversion filesystem has its data spread throughout various database tables in a fashion generally understood by (and of interest to) only the Subversion developers themselves. However, circumstances may arise that call for all, or some subset, of that data to be collected into a single, portable, flat file format. Subversion provides such a mechanism, implemented in a pair of **svnadmin** subcommands: `dump` and `load`.

The most common reason to dump and load a Subversion repository is due to changes in Subversion itself. As Subversion matures, there are times when certain changes made to the back-end database schema cause Subversion to be incompatible with previous versions of the repository. The recommended course of action when you are upgrading across one of those compatibility boundaries is a relatively simple process:

1. Using your *current* version of **svnadmin**, dump your repositories to dump files.
2. Upgrade to the new version of Subversion.
3. Move your old repositories out of the way, and create new empty ones in their place using your *new* **svnadmin**.
4. Again using your *new* **svnadmin**, load your dump files into their respective, just-created repositories.
5. Finally, be sure to copy any customizations from your old repositories to the new ones, including `DB_CONFIG` files and hook scripts. You'll want to pay attention to the release notes for the new release of Subversion to see if any changes since your last upgrade affect those hooks or configuration options.

svnadmin dump will output a range of repository revisions that are formatted using Subversion's custom filesystem dump format. The dump format is printed to the standard output stream, while informative messages are printed to the standard error stream. This allows you to redirect the output stream to a file while watching the status output in your terminal window. For example:

```

$ svnadmin youngest myrepos
26
$ svnadmin dump myrepos > dumpfile
* Dumped revision 0.
* Dumped revision 1.
* Dumped revision 2.
...
* Dumped revision 25.
* Dumped revision 26.

```

At the end of the process, you will have a single file (`dumpfile` in the previous example) that contains all the data stored in your repository in the requested range of revisions.

The other subcommand in the pair, **svnadmin load**, parses the standard input stream as a Subversion repository dump file, and effectively replays those dumped revisions into the target repository for that operation. It also gives informative feedback, this time using the standard output stream:

```

$ svnadmin load newrepos < dumpfile
<<< Started new txn, based on original revision 1
    * adding path : A ... done.
    * adding path : A/B ... done.
    ...
----- Committed new rev 1 (loaded from original rev 1) >>>

<<< Started new txn, based on original revision 2
    * editing path : A/mu ... done.
    * editing path : A/D/G/rho ... done.
----- Committed new rev 2 (loaded from original rev 2) >>>

...

<<< Started new txn, based on original revision 25
    * editing path : A/D/gamma ... done.
----- Committed new rev 25 (loaded from original rev 25) >>>

<<< Started new txn, based on original revision 26
    * adding path : A/Z/zeta ... done.
    * editing path : A/mu ... done.
----- Committed new rev 26 (loaded from original rev 26) >>>

```

Note that because **svnadmin** uses standard input and output streams for the repository dump and load process, people who are feeling especially saucy can try things like this (perhaps even using different versions of **svnadmin** on each side of the pipe):

```

$ svnadmin create newrepos
$ svnadmin dump myrepos | svnadmin load newrepos

```

We mentioned previously that **svnadmin dump** outputs a range of revisions. Use the `--revision` option to specify a single revision to dump, or a range of revisions. If you omit this option, all the existing repository revisions will be dumped.

```

$ svnadmin dump myrepos --revision 23 > rev-23.dumpfile
$ svnadmin dump myrepos --revision 100:200 > revs-100-200.dumpfile

```

As Subversion dumps each new revision, it outputs only enough information to allow a future loader to re-create that revision based on the previous one. In other words, for any given revision in the dump file, only the items that were

changed in that revision will appear in the dump. The only exception to this rule is the first revision that is dumped with the current **svnadmin dump** command.

By default, Subversion will not express the first dumped revision as merely differences to be applied to the previous revision. For one thing, there is no previous revision in the dump file! And secondly, Subversion cannot know the state of the repository into which the dump data will be loaded (if it ever, in fact, occurs). To ensure that the output of each execution of **svnadmin dump** is self-sufficient, the first dumped revision is by default a full representation of every directory, file, and property in that revision of the repository.

However, you can change this default behavior. If you add the `--incremental` option when you dump your repository, **svnadmin** will compare the first dumped revision against the previous revision in the repository, the same way it treats every other revision that gets dumped. It will then output the first revision exactly as it does the rest of the revisions in the dump range—mentioning only the changes that occurred in that revision. The benefit of this is that you can create several small dump files that can be loaded in succession, instead of one large one, like so:

```
$ svnadmin dump myrepos 0 1000 > dumpfile1
$ svnadmin dump myrepos 1001 2000 --incremental > dumpfile2
$ svnadmin dump myrepos 2001 3000 --incremental > dumpfile3
```

These dump files could be loaded into a new repository with the following command sequence:

```
$ svnadmin load newrepos < dumpfile1
$ svnadmin load newrepos < dumpfile2
$ svnadmin load newrepos < dumpfile3
```

Another neat trick you can perform with this `--incremental` option involves appending to an existing dump file a new range of dumped revisions. For example, you might have a `post-commit` hook that simply appends the repository dump of the single revision that triggered the hook. Or you might have a script like the following that runs nightly to append dump file data for all the revisions that were added to the repository since the last time the script ran.

Example 5.3. Using incremental repository dumps

```
#!/usr/bin/perl

$repos_path = '/path/to/repos';
$dumpfile   = '/usr/backup/svn-dumpfile';
$last_dumped = '/var/log/svn-last-dumped';

# Figure out the starting revision (0 if we cannot read the last-dumped file,
# else use the revision in that file incremented by 1).
if (open LASTDUMPED, "$last_dumped")
{
    $new_start = <LASTDUMPED>;
    chomp $new_start;
    $new_start++;
    close LASTDUMPED;
}
else
{
    $new_start = 0;
}

# Query the youngest revision in the repos.
$youngest = `svnlook youngest $repos_path`;
chomp $youngest;

# Do the backup.
`svnadmin dump $repos_path $new_start $youngest --incremental >> $dumpfile`;
```

```
# Store a new last-dumped revision
open LASTDUMPED, "> $last_dumped" or die;
print LASTDUMPED "$youngest\n";
close LASTDUMPED;

# All done!
```

Used like this, **svnadmin**'s `dump` and `load` commands can be a valuable means by which to backup changes to your repository over time in case of a system crash or some other catastrophic event.

Finally, another possible use of the Subversion repository dump file format is conversion from a different storage mechanism or version control system altogether. Because the dump file format is, for the most part, human-readable, it should be relatively easy to describe generic sets of changes—each of which should be treated as a new revision—using this file format.

Repository Backup

###TODO: Write this. Talk about **hot-backup.py**, and use of **svnadmin dump --incremental** + `post-revprop-change` hooks (since the versioned props might differ from what was incrementally dumped). Also, discuss pros and cons of keeping full repo backups vs. per-commit ones.

Networking a Repository

A Subversion repository can be accessed simultaneously by clients running on the same machine on which the repository resides. But the typical Subversion setup involves a single server machine being accessed from clients on computers all over the office—or, perhaps, all over the world.

This section describes how to get your Subversion repository exposed outside its host machine for use by remote clients. We will cover each of Subversion's currently available server mechanisms, discussing the configuration and use of each one. After reading this section, you should be able to decide which networking setup is right for your needs, and understand how to enable such a setup on your host computer.

httpd, the Apache HTTP Server

Subversion's primary network server is the Apache HTTP Server (**httpd**), speaking the WebDAV/deltaV protocol. This protocol (an extension to HTTP 1.1; see <http://www.webdav.org/>) takes the ubiquitous HTTP protocol that is core of the World Wide Web, and adds writing—specifically, versioned writing—capabilities. The result is a standardized, robust system that is conveniently packaged as part of the Apache 2.0 software, is supported by numerous pieces of core operating system and third-party products, and which doesn't require network administrators to open up yet another custom port.⁹

Much of the following discussion includes references to Apache configuration directives. While some examples are given of the use of these directives, describing them in full is outside the scope of this chapter. The Apache team maintains excellent documentation, publicly available on their website at <http://httpd.apache.org>. For example, a general reference for the configuration directives is located at <http://httpd.apache.org/docs-2.0/mod/directives.html>.)

Also, as you make changes to your Apache setup, it is likely that somewhere along the way a mistake will be made. If you are not already familiar with Apache's logging subsystem, you should become aware of it. In your `httpd.conf` file are directives which specify the on-disk locations of the access and error logs generated by Apache (the `CustomLog` and `ErrorLog` directives, respectively). Subversion's `mod_dav_svn` uses Apache's error logging interface as well. You can always browse the contents of those files for information that might reveal the source of a problem which is not clearly noticeable otherwise.

⁸The Subversion repository dump file format resembles an RFC-822 format, the same type of format used for most email.

⁹They really hate doing that.

What You Need for HTTP-based Repository Access

To network your repository over HTTP, you basically need four components, available in two packages. You'll need Apache **httpd** 2.0, the **mod_dav** DAV module that comes with it, Subversion, and the **mod_dav_svn** filesystem provider module distributed with Subversion. Once you have all of those components, the process of networking your repository is as simple as:

- getting httpd 2.0 up and running with the mod_dav module,
- installing the mod_dav_svn plugin to mod_dav, which uses Subversion's libraries to access the repository, and
- configuring your httpd.conf file to export (or expose) the repository.

You can accomplish the first two items either by compiling **httpd** and Subversion from source code, or by installing pre-built binary packages of them on your system. For the most up-to-date information on how to compile Subversion for use with Apache HTTP Server, as well as how to compile and configure Apache itself for this purpose, see the `INSTALL` file in the top level of the Subversion source code tree.

Basic Apache Configuration

Once you have all the necessary components installed on your system, all that remains is the configuration of Apache via its `httpd.conf` file. Instruct Apache to load the `mod_dav_svn` module using the `LoadModule` directive. This directive must precede any other Subversion-related configuration items. If your Apache was installed using the default layout, your **mod_dav_svn** module should have been installed in the `modules` subdirectory of the Apache install location (often `/usr/local/apache2`). The `LoadModule` directive has a simple syntax, mapping a named module to the location of a shared library on disk:

```
LoadModule dav_svn_module      modules/mod_dav_svn.so
```

Note that if **mod_dav** was compiled as a shared object (instead of statically linked, directly to the **httpd** binary), you'll need a similar `LoadModule` statement for it, too.

At a later location in your configuration file, you now need to tell Apache where you keep your Subversion repository (or repositories). The `Location` directive has an XML-like notation, starting with an opening tag, and ending with a closing tag, with various other configuration directives in the middle. The purpose of the `Location` directive is to instruct Apache to do something special when handling requests that are directed at a given URL or one of its children. In the case of Subversion, you want Apache to simply hand off support for URLs that point at versioned resources to the DAV layer. You can instruct Apache to delegate the handling of all URLs whose path portions (the part of the URL that follows the server's name and the optional port number) begin with `/repos/` to a DAV provider whose repository is located at `/absolute/path/to/repository` using the following `httpd.conf` syntax:

```
<Location /repos>
  DAV svn
  SVNPath /absolute/path/to/repository
</Location>
```

If you plan to support multiple Subversion repositories that will reside in the same parent directory on your local disk, you can use an alternative directive, the `SVNParentPath` directive, to indicate that common parent directory. For example, if you know you will be creating multiple Subversion repositories in a directory `/usr/local/svn` that would be accessed via URLs like `http://my.server.com/svn/repos1`, `http://my.server.com/svn/repos2`, and so on, you could use the `httpd.conf` configuration syntax in the following example:

```
<Location /svn>
  DAV svn
  SVNParentPath /usr/local/svn
</Location>
```

Using the previous syntax, Apache will delegate the handling of all URLs whose path portions begin with `/svn/` to the Subversion DAV provider, which will then assume that any items in the directory specified by the `SVNParentPath` directive are actually Subversion repositories. This is a particularly convenient syntax in that, unlike the use of the `SVNPath` directive, you don't have to restart Apache in order to create and network new repositories.

Permissions, Authentication, and Authorization

At this stage, you should strongly consider the question of permissions. If you've been running Apache for some time now as your regular web server, you probably already have a collection of content—web pages, scripts and such. These items have already been configured with a set of permissions that allows them to work with Apache, or more appropriately, that allows Apache to work with those files. Apache, when used as a Subversion server, will also need the correct permissions to read and write to your Subversion repository.

You will need to determine a permission system setup that satisfies Subversion's requirements without messing up any previously existing web page or script installations. This might mean changing the permissions on your Subversion repository to match those in use by other things the Apache serves for you, or it could mean using the `User` and `Group` directives in `httpd.conf` to specify that Apache should run as the user and group that owns your Subversion repository. There is no single correct way to set up your permissions, and each administrator will have different reasons for doing things a certain way. Just be aware that permission-related problems are perhaps the most common oversight when configuring a Subversion repository for use with Apache.

And while we are speaking about permissions, we should address how the authorization and authentication mechanisms provided by Apache fit into the scheme of things. Unless you have some system-wide configuration of these things, the Subversion repositories you make available via the `Location` directives will be generally accessible to everyone. In other words,

- anyone can use their Subversion client to checkout a working copy of a repository URL (or any of its subdirectories),
- anyone can interactively browse the repository's latest revision simply by pointing their web browser to the repository URL, and
- anyone can commit to the repository.

If you want to restrict either read or write access to a repository as a whole, you can use Apache's built-in access control features. The easiest such feature is the Basic authentication mechanism, which simply uses a username and password to verify that a user is who she says she is. Apache provides an `htpasswd` utility for managing the list of acceptable usernames and passwords, those to whom you wish to grant special access to your Subversion repository. Let's grant commit access to Sally and Harry. First, we need to add them to the password file.

```
$ ### First time: use -c to create the file
$ htpasswd -c /etc/svn-auth-file harry
New password: *****
Re-type new password: *****
Adding password for user harry
$ htpasswd /etc/svn-auth-file sally
New password: *****
Re-type new password: *****
Adding password for user sally
$
```

Next, you need to add some more `httpd.conf` directives inside your `Location` block to tell Apache what to do

with your new password file. The `AuthType` directive specifies the type of authentication system to use. In this case, we want to specify the `Basic` authentication system. `AuthName` is an arbitrary name that you give for the authentication domain. Most browsers will display this name in the pop-up dialog box when the browser is querying the user for his name and password. Finally, use the `AuthUserFile` directive to specify the location of the password file you created using `htpasswd`.

After adding these three directives, your `<Location>` block should look something like this:

```
<Location /svn>
  DAV svn
  SVNParentPath /usr/local/svn
  AuthType Basic
  AuthName "Subversion repository"
  AuthUserFile /path/to/users/file
</Location>
```

Now, at this stage, if you were to restart Apache, any Subversion operations which required authentication would harvest a username and password from the Subversion client, which would either provide previously cached values for these things, or prompt the user for the information. All that remains is to tell Apache which operations actually require that authentication.

You can restrict access on all repository operations by adding the `Require valid-user` directive to your `Location` block. Using our previous example, this would mean that only clients that claimed to be either `harry` or `sally`, and which provided the correct password for their respective username, would be allowed to do anything with the Subversion repository.

Sometimes you don't need to run such a tight ship. The repository at <http://svn.collab.net/repos/svn> which holds the Subversion source code, for example, allows anyone in the world to perform read-only repository tasks (like checking out working copies and browsing the repository with a web browser), but restricts all write operations to authenticated users. To do this type of selective restriction, you can use the `Limit` and `LimitExcept` configuration directives. Like the `Location` directive, these blocks have starting and ending tags, and you would nest them inside your `<Location>` block.

The parameters present on the `Limit` and `LimitExcept` directives are HTTP request types that are affected by that block. For example, if you wanted to disallow all access to your repository except the currently supported read-only operations, you would use the `LimitExcept` directive, passing the `GET`, `PROPFIND`, `OPTIONS`, and `REPORT` request type parameters. Then the previously mentioned `Require valid-user` directive would be placed inside the `<LimitExcept>` block instead of just inside the `<Location>` block.

```
<Location /svn>
  DAV svn
  SVNParentPath /usr/local/svn
  AuthType Basic
  AuthName "Subversion repository"
  AuthUserFile /path/to/users/file
  <LimitExcept GET PROPFIND OPTIONS REPORT>
    Require valid-user
  </LimitExcept>
</Location>
```

These are only a few simple examples. For more in-depth information about Apache access control, take a look at the `Security` section of the Apache documentation's tutorials collection at <http://httpd.apache.org/docs-2.0/misc/tutorials.html>.

Server Names and the COPY Request

Subversion makes use of the `COPY` request type to perform server-side copies of files and directories. As part of the sanity checking done by the Apache modules, the source of the copy is expected to be located on the same machine as the destination of the copy. To satisfy this requirement, you might need to tell `mod_dav` the name you use as the

hostname of your server. Generally, you can use the `ServerName` directive in `httpd.conf` to accomplish this.

```
ServerName svn.red-bean.com
```

If you are using Apache's virtual hosting support via the `NameVirtualHost` directive, you may need to use the `ServerAlias` directive to specify additional names that your server is known by. Again, refer to the Apache documentation for full details.

Miscellaneous Apache Features

Several of the features already provided by Apache in its role as a robust Web server can be leveraged for increased functionality or security in Subversion as well. Subversion communicates with Apache using Neon, which is a generic HTTP/WebDAV library with support for such mechanisms as SSL (the secure socket layer) and Deflate compression (the same algorithm used by the **gzip** and **PKZIP** programs to “shrink” files into smaller chunks of data). You need only to compile support for the features you desire into Subversion and Apache, and properly configure the programs to use those features.

This means that SSL-enabled Subversion clients can access SSL-enabled Apache servers and perform all communication using an encrypted protocol, all by using `https:` URLs with their Subversion clients instead of `http:` ones. Businesses that need to expose their repositories for access outside the company firewall should be conscious of the possibility that unauthorized parties could be “sniffing” their network traffic. SSL makes that kind of unwanted attention less likely to result in sensitive data leaks. Apache can be configured such that only SSL-enabled Subversion clients can communicate with the repository.

Deflate compression places a small burden on the client and server to compress and decompress network transmissions as a way to minimize the size of the actual transmission. In cases where network bandwidth is in short supply, this kind of compression can greatly increase the speed at which communications between server and client can be sent. In extreme cases, this minimized network transmission could be the difference between an operation timing out or completing successfully.

Less interesting, but equally useful, are other features of the Apache and Subversion relationship, such as the ability to specify a custom port (instead of the default HTTP port 80) or a virtual domain name by which the Subversion repository should be accessed, or the ability to access the repository through a proxy. These things are all supported by Neon, so Subversion gets that support for free.

svnserve, a Custom Subversion Server

As an alternative to Apache, Subversion also provides a stand-alone server program, **svnserve**. This program is considerably more lightweight than Apache, and easier to configure. However, these benefits come at the cost of flexibility. You can setup **svnserve** to run in one of a couple of different ways. You can run **svnserve** as a *daemon*—a process that executes indefinitely, listening for input and then handling that input when it arrives. Or, it can run as a sort of “one-off” server process—initiated by the **inetd** daemon on Unix systems.

Adding projects

Once your repository is created and configured, all that remains is to begin using it. If you have a collection of existing data that is ready to be placed under version control, you will more than likely want to use the **svn** client program's `import` subcommand to accomplish that. Before doing this, though, you should carefully consider your long-term plans for the repository. In this section, we will offer some advice on how to plan the layout of your repository, and how to get your data arranged in that layout.

Choosing a Repository Layout

While Subversion allows you to move around versioned files and directories without any loss of information, doing so can still disrupt the workflow of those who access the repository often and come to expect things to be at certain

locations. Try to peer into the future a bit; plan ahead before placing your data under version control. By “laying out” the contents of your repositories in an effective manner the first time, you can prevent a load of future headaches.

There are a few things to consider when setting up Subversion repositories. Let's assume that as repository administrator, you will be responsible for supporting the version control system for several projects. The first decision is whether to use a single repository for multiple projects, or to give each project its own repository, or some compromise of these two.

There are benefits to using a single repository for multiple projects, most obviously the lack of duplicated maintenance. A single repository means that there is one set of hook scripts, one thing to routinely backup, one thing to dump and load if Subversion releases an incompatible new version, and so on. Also, you can easily move data between projects easily, and without losing any historical versioning information.

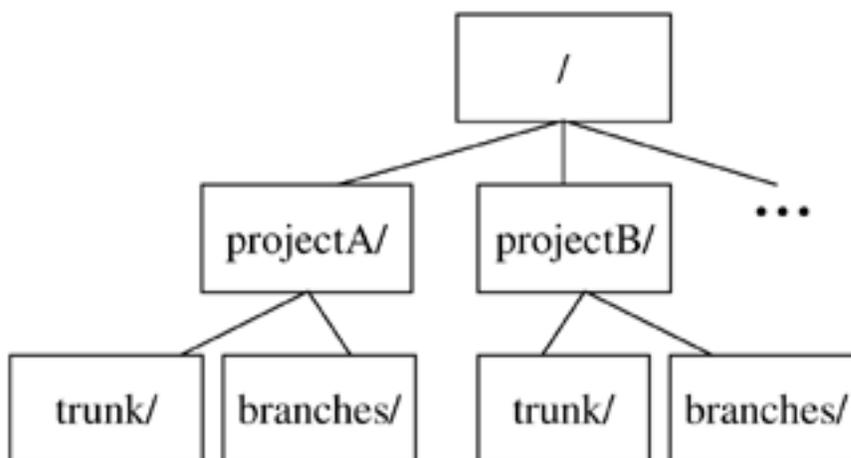
The downside of using a single repository is that different projects may have different commit mailing lists or different authentication and authorization requirements. Also, remember that Subversion uses repository-global revision numbers. Some folks don't like the fact that even though no changes have been made to their project lately, the youngest revision number for the repository keeps climbing because other projects are actively adding new revisions.

A middle-ground approach can be taken, too. For example, projects can be grouped by how well they relate to each other. You might have a few repositories with a handful of projects in each repository. That way, projects that are likely to want to share data can do so easily, and as new revisions are added to the repository, at least the developers know that those new revisions are at least remotely related to everyone who uses that repository.

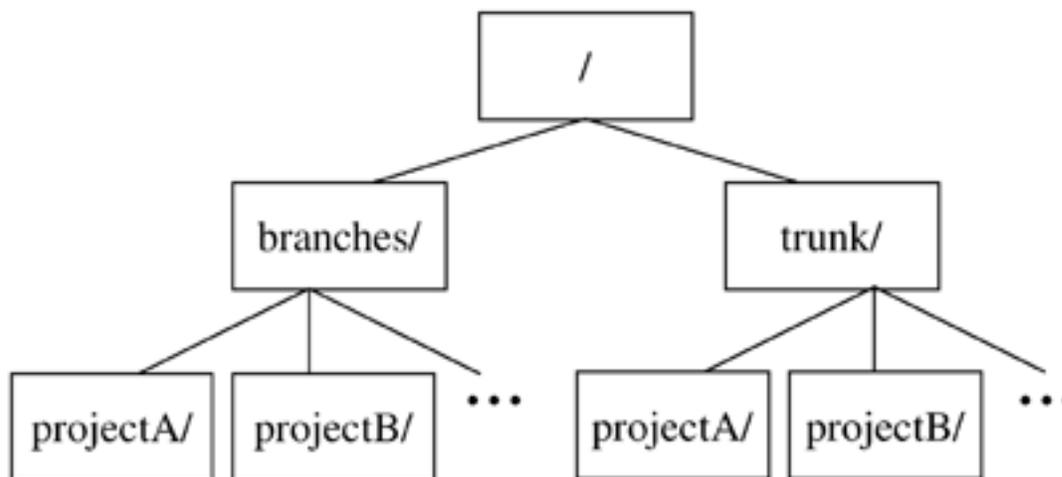
After deciding how to organize your projects with respect to repositories, you'll probably want to think about directory hierarchies in the repositories themselves. Because Subversion uses regular directory copies for branching and tagging (see Chapter 4, *Branching and Merging*), the Subversion community recommends using one of two different approaches here. Both approaches employ the use of directories named `trunk`, meaning the directory under which the main project development occurs, and `branches`, which is a directory in which to create various named branches of the main development line.

The first is to place each project in a subdirectory of the root filesystem directory, with `trunk` and `branches` directories immediately under each project directory, as demonstrated in Figure 5-1.

Figure 5.1. One suggested repository layout.



The second is to do the reverse—to have the `trunk` and `branches` directories immediately in the top level of the filesystem, each with subdirectories for all the projects in the repository, as demonstrated in Figure 5-2.

Figure 5.2. Another suggested repository layout.

Lay out your repository in whatever way you see fit. Subversion does not expect or enforce a layout schema—in its eyes, a directory is a directory is a directory. Ultimately, you should choose the repository arrangement that meets your needs and those of the projects that live there.

Creating the Layout, and Importing Initial Data

After deciding how to arrange the projects in your repository, you'll probably want to actually populate the repository with that layout and with initial project data. There are a couple of ways to do this in Subversion. You could use the `svn mkdir` command (see Chapter 8, *Subversion Complete Reference*) to create each directory in your skeletal repository layout, one-by-one. A quicker way to accomplish the same task is to use the `svn import` command (see Section , “svn import”). By first creating the layout in a temporary location on your drive, you can import the whole layout tree into the repository in a single commit:

```

$ mkdir tmpdir
$ cd tmpdir
$ mkdir projectA
$ mkdir projectA/trunk
$ mkdir projectA/branches
$ mkdir projectB
$ mkdir projectB/trunk
$ mkdir projectB/branches
...
$ svn import file:///path/to/repos . --message 'Initial repository layout'
Adding      projectA
Adding      projectA/trunk
Adding      projectA/branches
Adding      projectB
Adding      projectB/trunk
Adding      projectB/branches

Committed revision 1.
$ cd ..
$ rm -rf tmpdir
$

```

Once you have your skeletal layout in place, you can begin importing actual project data into your repository, if any

such data exists yet. Once again, there are several ways to do this. You could use the **svn import** command. You could checkout a working copy from your new repository, move and arrange project data inside the working copy, and use the **svn add** and **svn commit** commands. But once we start talking about such things, we're no longer discussing repository administration. If you aren't already familiar with the **svn** client program, see Chapter 3, *Guided Tour*.

Summary

By now you should have a basic understanding of how to create, configure, and maintain Subversion repositories. We've introduced you to the various tools that will assist you with this task. We've covered some of the basic Apache configuration steps necessary for making your repository accessible over a network. And throughout the chapter, we've noted common administration pitfalls, and suggestions for avoiding them.

All that remains is for you to decide what exciting data to store in your repository.

Chapter 6. Advanced Topics

If you've been reading this book chapter by chapter, from start to finish, you should by now have acquired enough knowledge to use the Subversion client to perform the most common version control operations. You understand how to checkout a working copy from a Subversion repository. You are comfortable with submitting and receiving changes using the **svn commit** and **svn update** functions. You've probably even developed a reflex which causes you to run the **svn status** command almost unconsciously. For all intents and purposes, you are ready to use Subversion in a typical environment.

But the Subversion feature set doesn't stop at "common version control operations".

This chapter highlights some of Subversion's features which aren't quite so regularly used. In it, we will discuss Subversion's property (or "metadata") support, and how to modify Subversion's default behaviors by tweaking its run-time configuration area. We will describe how you can use externals definitions to instruct Subversion to pull data from multiple repositories. We'll cover in detail some of the additional client- and server-side tools that are part of the Subversion distribution.

Before reading this chapter, you should be familiar with the basic file and directory versioning capabilities of Subversion. If you haven't already read about those, or if you need a refresher, we recommend that you check out Chapter 2, *Basic Concepts* and Chapter 3, *Guided Tour*. Once you've mastered the basics and consumed this chapter, you'll be a Subversion power-user—or we'll refund your money! 10

Run-time Configuration Area

Subversion provides many optional behaviors that can be controlled by the user. Many of these options are of the kind that a user would wish to apply to all Subversion operations. So, rather than forcing users to remember command-line arguments for specifying these options, and to use them for each and every operation they perform, Subversion uses configuration files, segregated into a Subversion configuration area.

The Subversion *configuration area* is a two-tiered hierarchy of option names and their values. Usually, this boils down to a special directory which contains *configuration files* (the first tier), which are just text files in standard INI format (with "sections" providing the second tier). These files can be easily edited using your favorite text editor (such as emacs or vi), and contain directives read by the client to determine which of several optional behaviors the user prefers.

Configuration Area Layout

The first time that the **svn** command-line client is executed, it creates a per-user configuration area. On Unix-like systems, this area appears as a directory named `.subversion` in the user's home directory. On Win32 systems, Subversion creates a folder named `Subversion`, typically inside the `Application Data` area of the user's profile directory. However, on this platform the exact location differs from system to system, and is dictated by the Windows registry. We will refer to the per-user configuration area using its Unix name, `.subversion`.

In addition to the per-user configuration area, Subversion also recognizes the existence of a system-wide configuration area. This gives system administrators the ability to establish defaults for all users on a given machine. Note that the system-wide configuration area does not alone dictate mandatory policy—the settings in the per-user configuration area override those in the system-wide one, and command-line arguments supplied to **svn** program have the final word on behavior. On Unix-like platforms, the system-wide configuration area is expected to be the `/etc/subversion` directory; on Windows machines, it again looks for a `Subversion` directory inside the common `Application Data` location (again, as specified by the Windows Registry). Unlike the per-user case, the **svn** program does not attempt to create the system-wide configuration area.

The `.subversion` directory currently contains three files—two configuration files (`config` and `servers`), and a

¹⁰This offer applies only to those who, like most folks, pay nothing for Subversion.

README file which describes the INI format. At the time of their creation, the files contain default values for each of the supported Subversion options, mostly commented out and grouped with textual descriptions about how the values for the key affect Subversion's behavior. To change a certain behavior, you need only to load the appropriate configuration file into a text editor, and modify the desired option value. If at any time you wish to have the default settings restore to one or more of the configuration files, you can simply delete the file, and run some innocuous **svn** command, such as **svn --version**, and the missing file will be recreated in its default state.

Configuration and the Windows Registry

In addition to the usual INI-based configuration area, Subversion clients running on Windows platforms may also use the Windows registry to hold the configuration data. The option names and their values are the same as in the INI files. The “file/section” hierarchy is preserved as well, though addressed in a slightly different fashion—in this schema, files and sections are just levels in the registry key tree.

Subversion looks for system-wide configuration values under the `HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Tigris.org\Subversion` key. For example, the `global-ignores` option, which is in the `miscellany` section of the config file, would be found at `HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Tigris.org\Subversion\Config\Miscellany\global-ignores`. Per-user configuration values should be stored under `HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Tigris.org\Subversion`.

Registry-based configuration options are parsed *before* their file-based counterparts, so are overridden by values found in the configuration files. In other words, configuration priority is granted in the following order on a Windows system:

1. Command-line options
2. The per-user INI files
3. The pre-user Registry values
4. The system-wide INI files
5. The system-wide Registry values

Also, the Windows Registry doesn't really support the notion of something being “commented out”. However, Subversion will ignore any option key whose name begins with a hash (#) character. This allows you to effectively comment out a Subversion option without deleting the entire key from the Registry, obviously simplifying the process of restoring that option.

The **svn** command-line client never attempts to write to the Windows Registry, and will not attempt to create a default configuration area there. You can create the keys you need using the **REGEDIT** program. Alternatively, you can create a `.REG` file, and then double-click on that file from the Explorer shell, which will cause the data to be merged into your registry.

Example 6.1. Sample registration entries (.REG) file.

```
REGEDIT4
```

```
[HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Tigris.org\Subversion\Servers\DEFAULT]
"#http-proxy-host"=""
"#http-proxy-port"=""
"#http-proxy-username"=""
"#http-proxy-password"=""
"#http-proxy-timeout"="0"
"#http-compression"="yes"
```

```
[HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Tigris.org\Subversion\Config\auth]
"#store-password"="no"

[HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Tigris.org\Subversion\Config\helpers]
"#editor-cmd"="notepad"

[HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Tigris.org\Subversion\Config\miscellany]
"#global-ignores"="*.o *.lo *.la ##. *.rej *.rej .*~ *~ .#"
```

The previous example shows the contents of a `.REG` file which contains some of most commonly used configuration options and their default values. Note the presence of both system-wide (for network proxy-related options) and per-user settings (editor programs and password storage, among others). Also note that all the options are effectively commented out. You need only to remove the hash (`#`) character from the beginning of the option names, and set the values as you desire.

Configuration Options

In this section, we will discuss the specific run-time configuration options which are currently supported by Subversion.

Servers

The `servers` file contains Subversion configuration options related to the network layers. There are two special section names in this file—`groups` and `default`. The `groups` section is essentially a cross-reference table. The keys in this section are the names of other sections in the file; their values are *globs*—textual tokens which possibly contain wildcard characters—which are compared against the hostnames of the machine to which Subversion requests are sent.

```
[groups]
beanie-babies = *.red-bean.com
collabnet = svn.collab.net

[beanie-babies]
...

[collabnet]
...
```

When Subversion is used over a network, it attempts to match the name of the server it is trying to reach with a group name under the `groups` section. If a match is made, Subversion then looks for a section in the `servers` file whose name is the matched group's name. From that section it reads the actual network configuration settings.

The `default` section contains the settings which are meant for all of the servers not matched by one of the `globs` under the `groups` section. The options available in this section are exactly the same as those valid for the other server sections in the file (except, of course, the special `groups` section), and are as follows:

<code>http-proxy-host</code>	This specifies the hostname of the proxy computer through which your HTTP-based Subversion requests must pass. It defaults to an empty value, which means that Subversion will not attempt to route HTTP requests through a proxy computer, and will instead attempt to contact the destination machine directly.
<code>http-proxy-port</code>	This specifies the port number on the proxy host to use. It defaults to an empty value.
<code>http-proxy-username</code>	This specifies the username to supply to the proxy machine. It defaults to an empty value.
<code>http-proxy-password</code>	This specifies the password to supply to the proxy machine. It defaults to an empty

	value.
<code>http-timeout</code>	This specifies the amount of time, in seconds, to wait for a server response. If you experience problems with a slow network connection causing Subversion operations to timeout, you should increase the value of this option. The default value is 0, which instructs the underlying HTTP library, Neon, to use its default timeout setting.
<code>http-compression</code>	This specifies whether or not Subversion should attempt to compress network requests made to DAV-ready servers. The default value is <code>yes</code> (though compression will only occur if that capability is compiled into the network layer). Set this to <code>no</code> to disable compression, such as when debugging network transmissions.
<code>neon-debug-mask</code>	This is an integer mask which the underlying HTTP library, Neon, uses for choosing what type of debugging output to yield. The default value is 0, which will silence all debugging output. For more information about how Subversion makes use of Neon, see Chapter 7, <i>Developer Information</i> .

Config

The `config` file contains the rest of the currently available Subversion run-time options, those not related to networking. There are only a few options in use at this time, but they are again grouped into sections in expectation of future additions.

The `auth` section contains settings related to Subversion's authentication and authorization against the repository. It contains:

<code>store-password</code>	This instructs Subversion to cache, or not to cache, passwords that are supplied by the user in response to server authentication challenges. The default value is <code>yes</code> . Set this to <code>no</code> to disable this on-disk password caching. You can override this option for a single instance of the <code>svn</code> command using the <code>--no-auth-cache</code> command-line parameter (for those subcommands that support it).
-----------------------------	---

The `helpers` section controls which external applications Subversion uses to accomplish its tasks. Valid options in this section are:

<code>editor-cmd</code>	This specifies the program Subversion will use to query the user for a log message during a commit operation, such as when using <code>svn commit</code> without either the <code>-message (-m)</code> or <code>--file (-F)</code> options. This program is also used with the <code>svn propedit</code> command—a temporary file is populated with the current value of the property the user wishes to edit, and the edits take places right in the editor program (see Section , “Properties”). This option's default value is empty. If the option is not set, Subversion will fall back to checking the environment variables <code>SVN_EDITOR</code> , <code>VISUAL</code> , and <code>EDITOR</code> (in that order) for an editor command.
<code>diff-cmd</code>	This specifies the absolute path of a differencing program, used when Subversion generates “diff” output (such as when using the <code>svn diff</code> command). The default value is the path of the GNU diff utility, as determined by the Subversion source code build system.
<code>diff3-cmd</code>	This specifies the absolute path of a three-way differencing program. Subversion uses this program merge changes made by the user with those received from the repository. The default value is the path of the GNU diff3 utility, as determined by the Subversion source code build system.

`diff3-has-program-arg` This flag should be set to `true` if the program specified by the `diff3-cmd` option accepts a `--diff-program` command-line parameter. Since the `diff3-cmd` option's default value is determined at compilation time, the default value for the `diff3-has-program-arg` is, too.

The `miscellany` section is where everything that doesn't belong elsewhere winds up.¹¹ In this section, you can find:

`global-ignores` When running the **svn status** command, Subversion lists unversioned files and directories along with the versioned ones, annotating them with a `?` character (see Section , “svn status”). Sometimes, it can be annoying to see uninteresting, unversioned items—for example, object files that result from a program's compilation—in this display. The `global-ignores` option is a list of whitespace-delimited globs which describe the names of files and directories that Subversion should not display unless they are versioned. The default value is `*.o *.lo *.la ##* *.rej *.rej .*~ *~.*#*`.

You can override this option for a single instance of the **svn status** command by using the `--no-ignore` command-line flag. For information on more fine-grained control of ignored items, see Section , “svn:ignore”.

Properties

We've already covered in detail how Subversion stores and retrieves various versions of files and directories in its repository. Whole chapters have been devoted to this most fundamental piece of functionality provided by the tool. And if the versioning support stopped there, Subversion would still be complete from a version control perspective. But it doesn't stop there.

In addition to versioning your directories and files, Subversion provides interfaces for adding, modifying, and removing versioned metadata on each of your versioned directories and files. We refer to this metadata as *properties*, and they can be thought of as two-column tables that map property names to arbitrary values attached to each item in your working copy. Generally speaking, the names and values of the properties can be whatever you want them to be, with the constraint that the names must be human-readable text. And the best part about these properties is that they, too, are versioned, just like the textual contents of your files. You can modify, commit, and revert property changes as easily as committing textual changes. And you receive other people's property changes as you update your working copy.

Other Properties in Subversion

Properties show up elsewhere in Subversion, too. Just as files and directories may have arbitrary property names and values attached to them, each revision as a whole may have arbitrary properties attached to it. The same constraints apply—human-readable, text names and anything-you-want, binary values—except that revision properties are not versioned. See Section , “Unversioned Properties” for more information on these unversioned properties.

In this section, we will examine the utility—both to users of Subversion, and to Subversion itself—of property support. You'll learn about the property-related **svn** subcommands, and how property modifications affect your normal Subversion workflow. Hopefully, you'll be convinced that Subversion properties can enhance your version control experience.

Why Properties?

¹¹Anyone for potluck dinner?

Properties can be very useful additions to your working copy. In fact, Subversion itself uses properties to house special information, and as a way to denote that certain special processing might be needed. Likewise, you can use properties for your own purposes. Of course, anything you can do with properties you could also do using regular versioned files, but consider the following example of Subversion property use.

Say you wish to design a website that houses many digital photos, and displays them with captions and a datestamp. Now, your set of photos is constantly changing, so you'd like to have as much of this site automated as possible. These photos can be quite large, so as is common with sites of this nature, you want to provide smaller thumbnail images to your site visitors. You can do this with traditional files. That is, you can have your `image123.jpg` and an `image123-thumbnail.jpg` side-by-side in a directory. Or if you want to keep the filenames the same, you might have your thumbnails in a different directory, like `thumbnails/image123.jpg`. You can also store your captions and datestamps in a similar fashion, again separated from the original image file. Soon, your tree of files is a mess, and grows in multiples with each new photo added to the site.

Now consider the same setup using Subversion's file properties. Imagine having a single image file, `image123.jpg`, and then properties set on that file named `caption`, `datestamp`, and even `thumbnail`. Now your working copy directory looks much more manageable—in fact, it looks like there are nothing but image files in it. But your automation scripts know better. They know that they can use `svn` (or better yet, they can use the Subversion language bindings—see Section , “Using Languages Other than C and C++”) to dig out the extra information that your site needs to display without having to read an index file or play path manipulation games.

How (and if) you use Subversion properties is up to you. As we mentioned, Subversion has its own uses for properties, which we'll discuss a little later in this chapter. But first, let's discuss how to manipulate options using the `svn` program.

Manipulating Properties

The `svn` command affords a few ways to add or modify file and directory properties. For properties with short, human-readable values, perhaps the simplest way to add a new property is to specify the property name and value on the command-line of `propset` subcommand.

```
$ svn propset copyright '(c) 2003 Red-Bean Software' calc/button.c
property `copyright' set on 'calc/button.c'
$
```

But we've been touting the flexibility that Subversion offers for your property values. And if you are planning to have a multi-line textual, or even binary, property value, you probably do not want to supply that value on the command-line. So the `propset` subcommand takes a `--file (-F)` option for specifying the name of a file which contains the new property value.

```
$ svn propset license -F /path/to/LICENSE calc/button.c
property `license' set on 'calc/button.c'
$
```

In addition to the `propset` command, the `svn` program supplies the `propedit` command. This command uses the configured editor program (see Section , “Config”) to add or modify properties. When you run the command, `svn` invokes your editor program on a temporary file that contains the current value of the property (or which is empty, if you are adding a new property). Then, you just modify that value in your editor program until it represents the new value you wish to store for the property, save the temporary file, and then exit the editor program. If Subversion detects that you've actually changed the existing value of the property, it will accept that as the new property value. If you exit your editor without making any changes, no property modification will occur.

```
$ svn propedit copyright calc/button.c ### exit the editor without changes
No changes to property `copyright' on `calc/button.c'
$
```

We should note that, as with other **svn** subcommands, those related to properties can act on multiple paths at once. This enables you to modify properties on whole sets of files with a single command. For example, we could have done:

```
$ svn propset copyright '(c) 2002 Red-Bean Software' calc/*
property `copyright' set on 'calc/Makefile'
property `copyright' set on 'calc/button.c'
property `copyright' set on 'calc/integer.c'
...
$
```

All of this property adding and editing isn't really very useful if you can't easily get the stored property value. So the **svn** program supplies two subcommands for displaying the names and values of properties stored on files and directories. The **svn proplist** command will list the names of properties which exist on a path. Once you know the names of the properties on the node, you can request their values individually using **svn propget**. This command will, given a path (or set of paths) and a property name, print the value of the property to the standard output stream.

```
$ svn proplist calc/button.c
Properties on 'calc/button.c':
  copyright
  license
$ svn propget copyright calc/button.c
(c) 2003 Red-Bean Software
```

There's even a variation of the **proplist** command which will list both the name and value of all of the properties. Simply supply the **--verbose (-v)** option.

```
$ svn proplist --verbose calc/button.c
Properties on 'calc/button.c':
  copyright : (c) 2003 Red-Bean Software
  license   : =====
Copyright (c) 2003 Red-Bean Software. All rights reserved.
```

Redistribution and use in source and binary forms, with or without modification, are permitted provided that the following conditions are met:

1. Redistributions of source code must retain the above copyright notice, this list of conditions, and the recipe for Fitz's famous red-beans-and-rice.

...

The last property-related subcommand is **propdel**. Since Subversion allows you to store properties with empty values, you can't remove a property altogether using **propedit** or **propset**. For example, this command will *not* work:

```
$ svn propset license '' calc/button.c
property `license' set on 'calc/button.c'
$ svn proplist --verbose calc/button.c
Properties on 'calc/button.c':
  copyright : (c) 2003 Red-Bean Software
  license   :
$
```

You need to use the **propdel** command to delete properties altogether. The syntax is similar to the other property commands:

```
$ svn propdel license calc/button.c
property `foo' deleted from ''.
```

```
$ svn proplist --verbose calc/button.c
Properties on 'calc/button.c':
  copyright : (c) 2003 Red-Bean Software
$
```

Now that you are now familiar with all of the property-related **svn** subcommands, let's see how property modifications affect the usual Subversion workflow. As we mentioned earlier, file and directory properties are versioned, just like your file contents. As a result, Subversion provides the same opportunities for merging—in cleanly or conflicting fashions—someone else's modifications into your own.

Modifying Revision Properties

Remember those unversioned revision properties? You can modify those, too, with the **svn** program. Simply add the `--revprop` command-line parameter, and specify the revision whose property you wish to modify. Since revisions are global, you don't need to specify a path in this case as long as you are positioned in the working copy of the repository whose revision property you wish to modify. For example, you might want to replace the commit log message of an existing revision. ¹²

```
$ svn pset svn:log '* button.c: Fix a compiler warning.' -r11 --revprop
property `status' set on repository revision '11'
$
```

Note that the ability to modify these unversioned properties must be explicitly added by the repository administrator (see Section , “Hook scripts”). Since the properties aren't versioned, you run the risk of losing information if you aren't careful with your edits. The repository administrator can setup methods to protect against this lossage, but by default, modification of unversioned properties is disabled.

And as with file contents, your property changes are local modifications, only made permanent when you commit them to the repository with **svn commit**. Your property changes can be easily undone, too—the **svn revert** command will restore your files and directories to their un-edited states, contents, properties, and all. Also, you can receive interesting information about the state of your file and directory properties by using the **svn status** and **svn diff** commands.

```
$ svn status calc/button.c
M   calc/button.c
$ svn diff calc/button.c
Property changes on: calc/button.c
-----
Name: copyright
+ (c) 2003 Red-Bean Software
$
```

Notice how the **status** subcommand displays **M** in the second column instead of the first. That is because we have modified the properties on `calc/button.c`, but not modified its textual contents. Had we changed both, we would have seen **M** in the first column, too (see Section , “svn status”).

Property Conflicts

As with file contents, local property modifications can conflict with changes committed by someone else. If you update your working copy directory and receive property changes on a versioned resource that clash with your own, Subversion will report that the resource is in a conflicted state.

¹²Fixing spelling errors, grammatical gotchas, and “just-plain-wrongness” in commit log messages is perhaps the most common use-case for the `--revprop` option.

```
% svn up calc
M calc/Makefile.in
C calc/button.c
Updated to revision 143.
$
```

Subversion will also create, in the same directory as the conflicted resource, a file with a `.prej` extension which contains the details of the conflict. You should examine the contents of this file so you can decide how to resolve the conflict. Until the conflict is resolved, you will see a `C` in the second column of `svn status` output for that resource, and attempts to commit your local modifications will fail.

```
$ svn st calc
C      calc/button.c
?      calc/button.c.prej
$ cat calc/button.c.prej
prop `linecount': user set to '1256', but update set to '1301'.
$
```

To resolve property conflicts, simply ensure that the conflicting properties contain the values that they should, and then use the `svn resolve` command to alert Subversion that you have manually resolved the problem.

You might also have noticed the non-standard way that Subversion currently displays property differences. You can still run `svn diff` and redirect the output to create a usable patch file. The `patch` program will ignore property patches—as a rule, it ignores any noise it can't understand. This does unfortunately mean that to fully apply a patch generated by `svn diff`, any property modifications will need to be applied by hand.

As you can see, the presence of property modifications has no outstanding effect on the typical Subversion workflow. Your general patterns of updating your working copy, checking the status of your files and directories, reporting on the modifications you have made, and committing those modifications to the repository are completely immune to the presence or absence of properties. The `svn` program has some additional subcommands for actually making property changes, but that is the only noticeable asymmetry.

Special properties

Subversion has no particular policy regarding properties—you can use them for any purpose. Subversion asks only that you not use property names that begin with the prefix `svn:`. That's the namespace that it sets aside for its own use. In fact, Subversion defines certain properties that have magical effects on the files and directories to which they are attached. In this section, we'll untangle the mystery, and describe how these special properties make your life just a little easier.

`svn:executable`

The `svn:executable` property is used to control a versioned file's filesystem-level execute permission bit in a semi-automated way. This property has no defined values—its mere presence indicates a desire the execute permission bit to be kept enabled by Subversion. Removing this property will restore full control of the execute bit back to the operating system.

On many operating systems, the ability to execute a file as a command is governed by the presence of an execute permission bit. This bit usually defaults to being disabled, and must be explicitly enabled by the user for each file that needs it. In a working copy, new files are being created all the time as new versions of existing files are received during an update. This means that you might enable the execute bit on a file, then update your working copy, and if that file was changed as part of the update, its execute bit might get disabled. So, Subversion provides the `svn:executable` property as a way to keep the execute bit enabled.

This property has no effect on filesystems that have no concept of an executable permission bit, such as FAT32 and

NTFS. 13 Also, while it has no defined values, some people choose as a convention a value (such as `on`) to use when setting this property. Subversion doesn't care—it won't even read the property value. But be careful when choosing such conventions—inexperienced users might mistakenly believe that the way to disable this functionality is to change the property value to its idiomatic opposite (in this case, `off`). Finally, this property is valid only on files, not on directories.

svn:mime-type

The `svn:mime-type` property serves many purposes in Subversion. Besides being a general-purpose storage location for a file's Multipurpose Internet Mail Extensions (MIME) classification, the value of this property determines several behavioral characteristics of Subversion itself.

For example, if a file's `svn:mime-type` property is set to a non-text MIME type (generally, something that doesn't begin with `text/`, though there are exceptions), Subversion will assume that the file contains binary—that is, not human-readable—data. One of the benefits that Subversion typically provides is contextual, line-based merging of changes received from the server during an update into your working file. But for files believed to contain binary data, there is no concept of a “line”. So, for those files, Subversion does not attempt to perform contextual merges during updates. Instead, any time you have locally modified a binary working copy file that is also being updated, your file is renamed with a `.orig` extension, and then Subversion stores a new working copy file that contains the changes received during the update, but not your own local modifications, at the original filename. This behavior is really for the protection of the user against failed attempts at performing contextual merges on files that simply cannot be contextually merged.

Subversion assists users by running a binary-detection algorithm in the **svn import** and **svn add** subcommands. These subcommands use a heuristic to guess at a file's “binary-ness”, and then set the `svn:mime-type` property to `application/octet-stream` (the generic “this is a collection of bytes” MIME type) on any files that are deemed binary. If Subversion guesses wrong, or if you wish to set the `svn:mime-type` property to something more accurate—perhaps `image/png` or `application/x-shockwave-flash`—you can always remove or hand-edit the property.

Finally, if the `svn:mime-type` property is set, then the Subversion Apache module will use its value to populate the `Content-type: HTTP` header when responding to GET request. This gives a crucial clue to about how to display a file when perusing your repository with a web browser.

svn:ignore

The `svn:ignore` property contains a list of file patterns which certain Subversion operations will ignore. Perhaps the most commonly used special property, it works in conjunction with the `global-ignores` run-time configuration option (see Section , “Config”) to filter unversioned files and directories out of commands like **svn status**.

The rationale behind the `svn:ignore` property is easily explained. Subversion does not assume that every file or subdirectory in a working copy directory is intended for version control. Resources must be explicitly placed under Subversion's management using the **svn add** command. As a result, there are often many resources in a working copy that are not versioned.

Now, the **svn status** command displays as part of its output every unversioned file or subdirectory in a working copy that is not already filtered out by the `global-ignores` option (or its built-in default value). This is done so that users can see if perhaps they've forgotten to add a resource to version control.

But Subversion cannot possibly guess the names of every resource that should be ignored. Also, quite often there are things that should be ignored in *every* working copy of a particular repository. To force every user of that repository to add patterns for those resources to their run-time configuration areas would be not just a burden, but has the potential to clash with the configuration needs of other working copies that the user has checked out.

The solution is to store ignore patterns that are unique to the resources likely to appear in a given directory with the directory itself. Common examples of unversioned resources that are basically unique to a directory, yet likely to appear there, include output from program compilations. Or—to use an example more appropriate to this book—the HTML, PDF, or PostScript files generated as the result of a conversion of some source DocBook XML files to a

¹³The Windows filesystems use file extensions (such as `.EXE`, `.BAT`, and `.COM`) to denote executable files.

more legible output format.

Ignore Patterns for CVS Users

The Subversion `svn:ignore` property is very similar in syntax and function to the CVS `.cvsignore` file. In fact, if you are migrating a CVS working copy to Subversion, you can directly migrate the ignore patterns by the `.cvsignore` file as input file to the **svn propset** command:

```
$ svn propset svn:ignore -F .cvsignore .
property `svn:ignore' set on '.'
$
```

There are, however, some differences in the ways that CVS and Subversion handle ignore patterns. The two systems use the ignore patterns at some different times, and there are slight discrepancies in what the ignore patterns apply to. Also, Subversion does not recognize the use of the `!` pattern as a reset back to having no ignore patterns at all. Finally, while the `.cvsignore` patterns apply recursively from the directory in which they reside, Subversion's `svn:ignore` property applies only to the directory on which it is set.

For this purpose, the `svn:ignore` property is the solution. Its value is a multi-line collection of file patterns, one pattern per line. The property is set on the directory in which you wish the patterns to be applied. ¹⁴ For example, say you have the following output from **svn status**:

```
$ svn status calc
M    calc/button.c
?    calc/calculator
?    calc/data.c
?    calc/debug_log
?    calc/debug_log.1
?    calc/debug_log.2.gz
?    calc/debug_log.3.gz
```

In this example, you have made some property modifications to `button.c`, but in your working copy you also have some unversioned files, in this case, the latest `calculator` program that you've compiled from your source code, a source file named `data.c`, and a set of debugging output logfiles. Now, you know that your build system always results in the `calculator` program being generated. ¹⁵ And you know that your test suite always leaves those debugging log files lying around. These facts are true for all working copies, not just your own. And you know that you aren't interested in seeing those things every time you run **svn status**. So you use **svn propedit svn:ignore calc** to add some ignore patterns to the `calc` directory. For example, you might add this as the new value of the `svn:ignore` property:

```
calculator
debug_log*
```

After you've added this property, you will now have a local property modification on the `calc` directory. But notice what else is different about your **svn status** output:

```
$ svn status
M    calc
M    calc/button.c
?    calc/data.c
```

Now, all the cruft is missing from the output! Of course, those files are still in your working copy. Subversion is simply not reminding you that they are present and unversioned. And now with all the trivial noise removed from

¹⁴The patterns are strictly for that directory—they do not carry recursively into subdirectories.

¹⁵Isn't that the whole point of a build system?

the display, you are left with more interesting items— such as that source code file that you probably forgot to add to version control.

svn:keywords

Subversion has the ability to substitute *keywords*—pieces of useful, dynamic information about a versioned file—into the contents of the file itself. Keywords generally describe information about the last time the file was known to be modified. Because this information changes each time the file changes, and more importantly, just *after* the file changes, it is a hassle for any process except the version control system to keep the data completely up-to-date. Left to human authors, the information would inevitably grow stale.

For example, say you have a document in which you would like to display the last date on which it was modified. You could burden every author of that document to, just before committing their changes, also tweak the part of the document that describes when it was last changed. But sooner or later, someone would forget to do that. Instead simply ask Subversion to perform keyword substitution on the `LastChangedDate` keyword. You control where the keyword is inserted into your document by placing a *keyword anchor* at the desired location in the file. This anchor is just a string of text formatted as `$KeywordName$`

Subversion defines the list of keywords available for substitution. That list contains the following five keywords, some of which have shorter aliases that you can also use:

<code>LastChangedDate</code>	This keyword describes the last time the file was known to have been changed in the repository, and looks something like <code>\$LastChangedDate: 2002-07-22 21:42:37 -0700 (Mon, 22 Jul 2002) \$</code> . It may be abbreviated as <code>Date</code> .
<code>LastChangedRevision</code>	This keyword describes the last known revision in which this file changed in the repository, and looks something like <code>\$LastChangedRevision: 144 \$</code> . It may be abbreviated as <code>Rev</code> .
<code>LastChangedBy</code>	This keyword describes the last known user to change this file in the repository, and looks something like <code>\$LastChangedBy: joe \$</code> . It may be abbreviated as <code>Author</code>
<code>HeadURL</code>	This keyword describes the full URL to the latest version of the file in the repository, and looks something like <code>\$HeadURL: http://svn.collab.net/repos/trunk/README \$</code> . It may be abbreviated as <code>URL</code> .
<code>Id</code>	This keyword is compressed combination of the other keywords. Its substitution looks something like <code>\$Id: calc.c 148 2002-07-28 21:30:43 sally \$</code> , and is interpreted to mean that the file <code>calc.c</code> was last changed in revision 148 on the evening of July 28, 2002 by the user <code>sally</code> .

Simply adding keyword anchor text to your file does nothing special. Subversion will never attempt to perform textual substitutions on your file contents unless explicitly asked to do so. After all, you might be writing a document about how to use keywords, and you don't want Subversion to substitute your beautiful examples of un-substituted keyword anchors!

To tell Subversion whether or not to substitute keywords on a particular file, we again turn to the property-related subcommands. The `svn:keywords` property, when set on a versioned file, controls which keywords will be substituted on that file. The value is a space-delimited list of the keyword names or aliases found in the previous table.

For example, say you have a versioned file named `weather.txt` that looks like this:

```
Here is the latest report from the front lines.  
$LastChangedDate$  
$Rev$
```

16... or maybe even a section of a book ...

Cumulus clouds are appearing more frequently as summer approaches.

With no `svn:keywords` property set on that file, Subversion will do nothing special. Now, let's enable substitution of the `LastChangedDate` keyword.

```
$ svn propset svn:keywords "LastChangedDate Author" weather.txt
property `svn:keywords' set on 'weather.txt'
$
```

Now you have made a local property modification on the `weather.txt` file. You will see no changes to the file's contents (unless you made some of your own prior to setting the property). Notice that the file contained a keyword anchor for the `Rev` keyword, yet we did not include that keyword in the property value we set. Subversion will happily ignore requests to substitute keywords that are not present in the file, and will not substitute keywords that are not present in the `svn:keywords` property value.

Keywords and Spurious Differences

The user-visible result of keyword substitution might lead you to think that every version of a file with that feature in use differs from the previous version in at least the area where the keyword anchor was placed. However, this is actually not the case. While checking for local modifications during **svn diff**, and before transmitting those local modifications during **svn commit**, Subversion “un-substitutes” any keywords that it previously substituted. The result is that the versions of the file that are stored in the repository contain only the real modifications that users make to the file.

Immediately after you commit this property change, Subversion will update your working file with the new substitute text. Instead of seeing your keyword anchor `$LastChangedDate$`, you'll see its substituted result. That result also contains the name of the keyword, and continues to be bounded by the dollar sign (\$) characters. And as we predicted, the `Rev` keyword was not substituted because we didn't ask for it to be.

```
Here is the latest report from the front lines.
$LastChangedDate: 2002-07-22 21:42:37 -0700 (Mon, 22 Jul 2002) $
$Rev$
Cumulus clouds are appearing more frequently as summer approaches.
```

If someone else now commits a change to `weather.txt`, your copy of that file will continue to display the same substituted keyword value as before—until you update your working copy. At that time the keywords in your `weather.txt` file will be re-substituted again with information that reflects the most recent known commit to that file.

svn:eol-style

Unless otherwise noted using a versioned file's `svn:mime-type` property, Subversion assumes that file contains human-readable data. Generally speaking, Subversion only uses this knowledge to determine if contextual differences reports for that file are possible. Otherwise, to Subversion, bytes are bytes.

This means that by default, Subversion doesn't pay any attention to the type of *end-of-line (EOL) markers* used in your files. Unfortunately, different operating systems use different tokens to represent the end of a line of text in a file. For example, the usual line ending token used by software on the Windows platform is a pair of ASCII control characters—carriage return (CR) and line feed (LF). Unix software, however, just uses the LF character to denote the end of a line.

Not all of the various tools on these operating systems are prepared to understand files that contain line endings in a format that differs from the *native line ending style* of the operating system on which they are running. Common results are that Unix programs treat the CR character present in Windows files as a regular character (usually rendered

as `^M`), and that Windows programs combine all of the lines of a Unix file into one giant line because no carriage return-linefeed (or `CRLF`) character combination was found to denote the end of line.

This sensitivity to foreign EOL markers can become frustrating for folks who share a file across different operating systems. For example, consider a source code file, and developers that edit this file on both Windows and Unix systems. If all the developers always use tools which preserve the line ending style of the file, no problems occur.

But in practice, many common tools either fail to properly read a file with foreign EOL markers, or they convert the file's line endings to the native style when the file is saved. If the former is true for a developer, he has to use an external conversion utility (such as **dos2unix** or its companion, **unix2dos**) to prepare the file for editing. The latter case requires no extra preparation. But both cases result in a file that differs from the original quite literally on every line! Prior to committing his changes, the user has two choices. Either he can use a conversion utility to restore the modified file to the same line ending style that it was in before his edits were made. Or, he can simply commit the file—new EOL markers and all.

The result of scenarios like these include wasted time and unnecessary modifications to committed files. Wasted time is painful enough. But when commits change every line in a file, this complicates the job of determining which of those lines were changed in a non-trivial way. Where was that bug really fixed? On what line was a syntax error introduced?

The solution to this problem is the `svn:eol-style` property. When this property is set to a valid value, Subversion uses it to determine what special processing to perform on the file so that the file's line ending style isn't flipping with every commit that comes from a different operating system. The valid values are:

<code>native</code>	This causes the file to contain the EOL markers that are native to the operating system on which Subversion was run. In other words, if a user on a Windows machine checks out a working copy that contains a file with a <code>svn:eol-style</code> property set to <code>native</code> , that file will contain <code>CRLF</code> EOL markers. A Unix user checking out a working copy which contains the same file will see <code>LF</code> EOL markers in his copy of the file. Note that Subversion will actually store the file in the repository using normalized <code>LF</code> EOL markers regardless of the operating system. This is basically transparent to the user, though.
<code>CRLF</code>	This causes the file to contain <code>CRLF</code> sequences for EOL markers, regardless of the operating system in use.
<code>LF</code>	This causes the file to contain <code>LF</code> characters for EOL markers, regardless of the operating system in use.
<code>CR</code>	This causes the file to contain <code>CR</code> characters for EOL markers, regardless of the operating system in use. This line ending style is not very common. It was used on older Macintosh platforms (on which Subversion doesn't even run).

`svn:externals`

The `svn:externals` property contains instructions for Subversion to populate a versioned directory with one or more other checked-out Subversion working copies. For more information on this keyword and its use, see Section , “Externals Definitions”.

Externals Definitions

Sometimes it is useful to construct a working copy that is made out of a number of different checkouts. For example, you may want different subdirectories to come from different locations in a repository, or perhaps from different repositories altogether. You could certainly setup such a scenario by hand—using **svn checkout** to create the sort of nested working copy structure you are trying to achieve. But if this layout is important for everyone who uses your repository, every other user will need to perform the same checkout operations that you did.

Fortunately, Subversion provides support for *externals definitions*. An externals definition is a mapping of a local directory to the URL of a versioned resource. In Subversion, you declare externals definitions in groups using the `svn:externals` property. This property is set on a versioned directory, and its value is a multi-line table of subdirectories (relative to the versioned directory on which the property is set) and Subversion repository URLs.

```
$ svn propset svn:externals calc
third-party/sounds      http://sounds.red-bean.com/repos
third-party/skins       http://skins.red-bean.com/repositories/skinproj
third-party/skins/toolkit http://svn.red-bean.com/repos/skin-maker
```

The convenience of the `svn:externals` property is that once it is set on a versioned directory, everyone who checks out a working copy with that directory also gets the benefit of the externals definition. In other words, once one person has made the effort to define those nested working copy checkouts, no one else has to. Subversion will, upon checkout of the original working copy, also checkout the external working copies.

Note the previous externals definition example. When someone checks out a working copy of the `calc` directory, Subversion also continues to checkout the items found in its externals definition.

```
$ svn checkout http://svn.example.com/repos/calc
A calc
A calc/Makefile
A calc/integer.c
A calc/button.c
Checked out revision 148.

Fetching external item into calc/third-party/sounds
A calc/third-party/sounds/ding.ogg
A calc/third-party/sounds/dong.ogg
A calc/third-party/sounds/clang.ogg
...
A calc/third-party/sounds/bang.ogg
A calc/third-party/sounds/twang.ogg
Checked out revision 14.

Fetching external item into calc/third-party/skins
...
```

If you need to change the externals definition, you can do so using the regular property modification subcommands. When you commit a change to the `svn:externals` property, Subversion will synchronize the checked-out items against the changed externals definition when you next run **svn update**. The same thing will happen when others update their working copies and receive your changes to the externals definition.

Vendor branches

As is especially the case when developing software, the data that you maintain under version control is often closely related to, or perhaps dependent upon, someone else's data. Generally, the needs of your project will dictate that you stay as up-to-date as possible with the data provided by that external entity without sacrificing the stability of your own project. This scenario plays itself out all the time—anywhere that the information generated by one group of people has a direct effect on that which is generated by another group.

For example, software developers might be working on an application which makes use of a third-party library. Subversion has just such a relationship with the Apache Portable Runtime library (see Section , “The Apache Portable Runtime Library”). The Subversion source code depends on the APR library for all its portability needs. In earlier stages of Subversion's development, the project closely tracked APR's changing API, always sticking to the bleed-“ing edge” of the library's code churn. Now that both APR and Subversion have matured, Subversion attempts to synchronize with APR's library API only at well-tested, stable release points.

Now, if your project depends on someone else's information, there are several ways that you could attempt to syn-

cronize that information with your own. Most painfully, you could issue oral or written instructions to all the contributors of your project, telling them to make sure that they have the specific versions of that third-party information that your project needs. If the third-party information is maintained in a Subversion repository, you could also use Subversion's externals definitions to effectively “pin down” specific versions of that information to some location in your own working copy directory.

But sometimes you want to maintain custom modifications to third-party data in your own version control system. Returning to the software development example, programmers might need to make modifications to that third-party library for their own purposes.¹⁷ These modifications might include new functionality or bug fixes, maintained internally only until they become part of an official release of the third-party library. Or the changes might never be relayed back to the library maintainers, existing solely as custom tweaks to make the library further suit the needs of the software developers.

Now you face an interesting situation. Your project could house its custom modifications to the third-party data in some disjointed fashion, such as using patch files or full-fledged alternate versions of files and directories. But these quickly become maintenance headaches, requiring some mechanism by which to apply your custom changes to the third-party data, and requiring you to regenerate your customizations with each incremental version of the third-party data that you track.

The solution to this problem is to use *vendor branches*. A vendor branch is a directory tree in your own version control system which contains information provided by a third-party entity, or vendor. Each version of the vendor's data that you decide to absorb into your project is called a *vendor drop*.

Vendor branches provide two key benefits. First, by storing the currently supported vendor drop in your own version control system, the members of your project never need to question whether they have the right version of the vendor's data. They simply receive that correct version as part of their regular working copy updates. Secondly, because the data lives in your own Subversion repository, you can store your custom changes to it in-place—you have no more need of an automated (or worse, manual) method for swapping in your customizations.

To use a vendor branch, create a new directory in your repository, but outside your normal development area, which will house the latest pristine vendor drop. This is your vendor branch. Import the first vendor drop into your vendor branch, then copy the vendor branch into the appropriate location of your normal development area. Make your custom changes to the vendor data in the copy of the vendor branch that is now in your normal development area.

Then, for each new vendor drop, do the following:

1. Import the latest vendor drop into the vendor branch.
2. Merge the differences between the latest and the previous vendor branch into the development copy.
3. Finally, resolve any conflicts that might have occurred in your development area as part of the merge operation.

Let's try and make this a bit clearer with an example.

First, the initial import.

```
$ svn mkdir http://svnhost/repos/vendor/foobar
$ svn import http://svnhost/repos/vendor/foobar ~/foobar-1.0 current
```

Now we've got the current version of the foobar project in `/vendor/foobar/current`. We make another copy of it so we can always refer to that version, and then copy it into the trunk so you can work on it.

```
$ svn copy http://svnhost/repos/vendor/foobar/current \
           http://svnhost/repos/vendor/foobar/foobar-1.0 \
```

¹⁷Is the concept of modifying someone else's source code foreign—perhaps even shocking—to you? Visit the Free Software Foundation online (at <http://www.fsf.org/>).

```
-m `tagging foobar-1.0`
$ svn copy http://svnhost/repos/vendor/foobar/foobar-1.0 \
           http://svnhost/repos/trunk/foobar \
           -m `bringing foobar-1.0 into trunk`
```

Now you just check out a copy of `/trunk/foobar` and get to work!

Later on, the developers at FooBar Widgets, Inc release a new version of their code, so you want to update the version of the code you're using. First, you check out the `/vendor/foobar/current` directory, then copy the new release over that working copy, handle any renames, additions or removals manually, and then commit.

```
$ svn checkout http://svnhost/repos/vendor/foobar/current ~/current
$ cd ~/foobar-1.1
$ tar -cf - . | (cd ~/current ; tar -xf -)
$ cd ~/current
$ mv foobar.c main.c
$ svn move main.c foobar.c
$ svn delete dead.c
$ svn add doc
$ svn add doc/*
$ svn commit -m `importing foobar 1.1 on vendor branch`
```

Whoa, that was complicated. Don't worry, most cases are far simpler.

What happened? foobar 1.0 had a file called `main.c`. This file was renamed to `foobar.c` in 1.1. So your working-copy had the old `main.c` which Subversion knew about, and the new `foobar.c` which Subversion did not know about. You rename `foobar.c` to `main.c` and **svn mv** it back to the new name. This way, Subversion will know that `foobar.c` is a descendant of `main.c`. `dead.c` has been removed in 1.1, and they have finally written some documentation, so you add that.

Next you copy `/vendor/foobar/current` to `/vendor/foobar/foobar-1.1` so you can always refer back to version 1.1, like this.

```
$ svn copy http://svnhost/repos/vendor/foobar/current \
           http://svnhost/repos/vendor/foobar/foobar-1.1 \
           -m `tagging foobar-1.1`
```

Now that you have a pristine copy of foobar 1.1 in `/vendor`, you just have to merge their changes into `/trunk` and you're done. That looks like this.

```
$ svn checkout http://svnhost/repos/trunk/foobar ~/foobar
$ cd ~/foobar
$ svn merge http://svnhost/repos/vendor/foobar/foobar-1.0 \
           http://svnhost/repos/vendor/foobar/foobar-1.1
$
... # resolve all the conflicts between their changes and your changes
$ svn commit -m `merging foobar 1.1 into trunk`
```

There, you're done. You now have a copy of foobar 1.1 with all your local changes merged into it in your tree.

Vendor branches that have more than several deletes, additions and moves can use the **svn_load_dirs.pl** script that comes with the Subversion distribution. This script automates the above importing steps to make sure that mistakes are minimized. You still need to use the merge commands to merge the new versions of foobar into your own local copy containing your local modifications.

This script has the following enhancements over **svn import**:

- Can be run at any point in time to bring an existing directory in the repository to exactly match an external directory. This script runs all the **svn add**, **svn rm** and optionally any **svn mv** commands as necessary.
- Optionally tag the newly imported directory.
- Optionally add arbitrary properties to files and directories that match a regular expression.

This script takes care of complications where Subversion requires a commit before renaming a file or directory twice, such as if you had a vendor branch that renamed `foobar-1.1/docs/doc.ps` to `foobar-1.2/documents/doc-1.2.ps`. Here, you would rename `docs` to `documents`, perform a commit, then rename `doc.ps` to `doc-1.2.ps`. You could not do the two renames without the commit, because `doc.ps` was already moved once from `docs/doc.ps` to `documents/doc.ps`.

This script always compares the directory being imported to what currently exists in the Subversion repository and takes the necessary steps to add, delete and rename files and directories to make the subversion repository match the imported directory. As such, it can be used on an empty subversion directory for the first import or for any following imports to upgrade a vendor branch.

For the first foobar-1.0 release located in `~/foobar-1.0`:

```
$ svn_load_dirs.pl -t foobar-1.0          \  
    http://svnhost/repos/vendor/foobar \  
    current                             \  
    ~/foobar-1.0
```

svn_load_dirs.pl takes three mandatory arguments. The first argument, `http://svnhost/repos/vendor/foobar`, is the URL to the base Subversion directory to work in. In this case, we're working in the `vendor/foobar` part of the Subversion repository. The next argument, `current`, is relative to the first and is the directory where the current import will take place, in this case `http://svnhost/repos/vendor/foobar/current`. The last argument, `~/foobar-1.0`, is the directory to import. Finally, the optional `-t` command line option is also relative to `http://svnhost/repos/vendor/foobar` and tells **svn_load_dirs.pl** to create a tag of the imported directory in `http://svnhost/repos/vendor/foobar/foobar-1.0`.

The import of foobar-1.1 would be taken care of in the same way:

```
$ svn_load_dirs.pl -t foobar-1.1        \  
    http://svnhost/repos/vendor/foobar \  
    current                             \  
    ~/foobar-1.1
```

The script looks in your current `http://svnhost/repos/vendor/foobar/current` directory and sees what changes need to take place for it to match `~/foobar-1.1`. The script is kind enough to notice that there are files and directories that exist in 1.0 and not in 1.1 and asks if you want to perform any renames. At this point, you can indicate that `main.c` was renamed to `foobar.c` and then indicate that no further renames have taken place.

The script will then delete `dead.c` and add `doc` and `doc/*` to the Subversion repository and finally create a tag foobar-1.1 in `http://svnhost/repos/vendor/foobar/foobar-1.1`.

The script also accepts a separate configuration file for applying properties to specific files and directories matching a regular expression that are *added* to the repository. This script will not modify properties of already existing files or directories in the repository. This configuration file is specified to **svn_load_dirs.pl** using the `-p` command line

option. The format of the file is either two or four columns.

```
regular_expression control property_name property_value
```

The `regular_expression` is a Perl style regular expression. The `control` column must either be set to `break` or `cont`. It is used to tell `svn_load_dirs.pl` if the following lines in the configuration file should be examined for a match or if all matching should stop. If `control` is set to `break`, then no more lines from the configuration file will be matched. If `control` is set to `cont`, which is short for continue, then more comparisons will be made. Multiple properties can be set for one file or directory this way. The last two columns, `property_name` and `property_value` are optional and are applied to matching files and directories.

If you have whitespace in any of the `regular_expression`, `property_name` or `property_value` columns, you must surround the value with either a single or double quote. You can protect single or double quotes with a `\` character. The `\` character is removed by this script *only* for whitespace or quote characters, so you do not need to protect any other characters, beyond what you would normally protect for the regular expression.

This sample configuration file was used to load on a Unix box a number of Zip files containing Windows files with CRLF end of lines.

```

\ .doc$           break  svn:mime-type  application/msword
\ .ds(p|w)$      break  svn:eol-style  CRLF
\ .ilk$          break  svn:eol-style  CRLF
\ .ncb$          break  svn:eol-style  CRLF
\ .opt$          break  svn:eol-style  CRLF
\ .exe$          break  svn:mime-type  application/octet-stream
dos2unix-eol\ .sh$ break
.*               break  svn:eol-style  native

```

In this example, all the files should be converted to the native end of line style, which the last line of the configuration handles. The exception is `dos2unix-eol.sh`, which contains embedded CR's used to find and replace Windows CRLF end of line characters with Unix's LF characters. Since `svn` and `svn_load_dirs.pl` convert all CR, CRLF and LF `svn:eol-style` is set to `native`, this file should be left untouched. Hence, the `break` with no property settings.

The Windows Visual C++ and Visual Studio files (`*.dsp`, `*.dsw`, etc.) should retain their CRLF line endings on any operating system and any `*.doc` files are always treated as binary files, hence the `svn:mime-type` setting of `application/msword`.

Chapter 7. Developer Information

Subversion is an open-source software project developed under an Apache-style software license. The project is financially backed by CollabNet, Inc., a California-based software development company. The community that has formed around the development of Subversion always welcomes new members who can donate their time and attention to the project. Volunteers are encouraged to assist in any way they can, whether that means finding and diagnosing bugs, refining existing source code, or fleshing out whole new features.

This chapter is for those who wish to assist in the continued evolution of Subversion by actually getting their hands dirty with the source code. We will cover some of the software's more intimate details, the kind of technical nitty-gritty that those developing Subversion itself—or writing entirely new tools based on the Subversion libraries—should be aware of. If you don't foresee yourself participating with the software at such a level, feel free to skip this chapter with confidence that your experience as a Subversion user will not be affected.

Layered Library Design

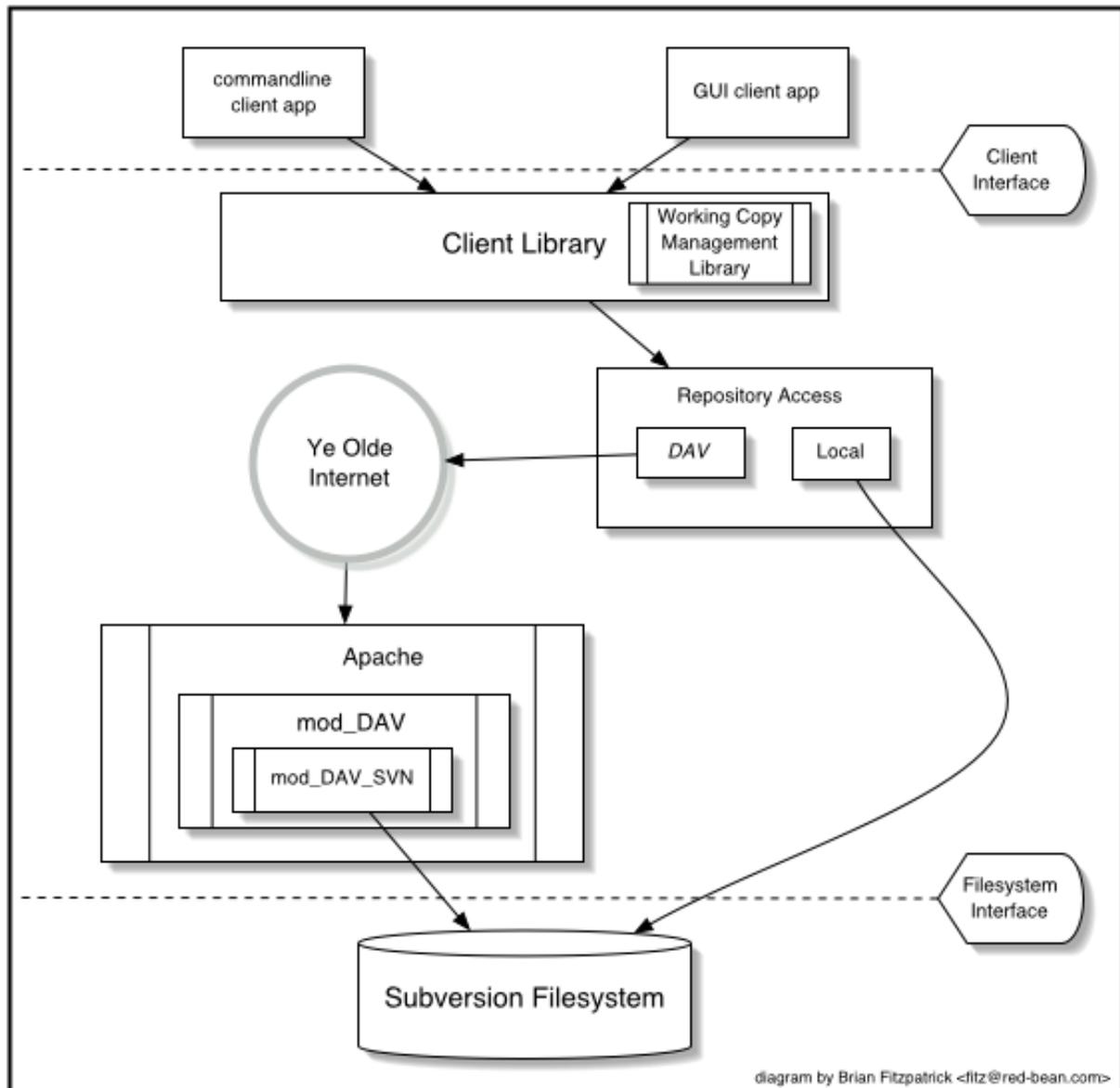
Subversion has a modular design, implemented as a collection of C libraries. Each library has a well-defined purpose and interface, and most modules are said to exist in one of three main layers—the Repository Layer, the Repository Access (RA) Layer, or the Client Layer. We will examine these layers shortly, but first, see our brief inventory of Subversion's libraries in Table 7-1. For the sake of consistency, we will refer to the libraries by their extensionless Unix library names (e.g.: `libsvn_fs`, `libsvn_wc`, `mod_dav_svn`).

Table 7.1. A brief inventory of the Subversion libraries

Library	Description
<code>libsvn_auth</code>	Authentication and authorization functionality
<code>libsvn_client</code>	Primary interface for client programs
<code>libsvn_delta</code>	Tree and text differencing routines
<code>libsvn_fs</code>	The Subversion filesystem library
<code>libsvn_ra</code>	Repository Access commons and module loader
<code>libsvn_ra_dav</code>	The WebDAV Repository Access module
<code>libsvn_ra_local</code>	The local Repository Access module
<code>libsvn_ra_svn</code>	A proprietary protocol Repository Access module
<code>libsvn_repos</code>	Repository interface
<code>libsvn_subr</code>	Miscellaneous helpful subroutines
<code>libsvn_wc</code>	The working copy management library
<code>mod_dav_svn</code>	Apache module for mapping WebDAV operations to Subversion ones

The fact that the word "miscellaneous" only appears once in Table 7-1 is a good sign. The Subversion development team is serious about making sure that functionality lives in the right layer and libraries. Perhaps the greatest advantage of the modular design is its lack of complexity from a developer's point of view. As a developer, you can quickly formulate that kind of "big picture" that allows you to pinpoint the location of certain pieces of functionality with relative ease.

And what could better help a developer gain a "big picture" perspective than a big picture? To help you understand how the Subversion libraries fit together, see Figure 7-1, a diagram of Subversion's layers. Program flow begins at the top of the diagram (initiated by the user) and flows "downward".

Figure 7.1. Subversion's "Big Picture"

Another benefit of modularity is the ability to replace a given module with a whole new library that implements the same API without affecting the rest of the code base. In some sense, this happens within Subversion already. The `libsvn_ra_dav`, `libsvn_ra_local`, and `libsvn_ra_svn` all implement the same interface. And all three communicate with the Repository Layer— `libsvn_ra_dav` and `libsvn_ra_svn` do so across a network, and `libsvn_ra_local` connects to it directly.

The client itself also highlights modularity in the Subversion design. While Subversion currently comes with only a command-line client program, there are already a few other programs being developed by third parties to act as GUIs for Subversion. Again, these GUIs use the same APIs that the stock command-line client does. Subversion's `libsvn_client` library is the one-stop shop for most of the functionality necessary for designing a working Subversion client (see Section , “Client Layer”).

Repository Layer

When referring to Subversion's Repository Layer, we're generally talking about two libraries—the repository library, and the filesystem library. These libraries provide the storage and reporting mechanisms for the various revisions of your version-controlled data. This layer is connected to the Client Layer via the Repository Access Layer, and is, from the perspective of the Subversion user, the stuff at the "other end of the line."

The Subversion Filesystem is accessed via the `libsvn_fs` API, and is not a kernel-level filesystem that one would install in an operating system (like the Linux `ext2` or `NTFS`), but a virtual filesystem. Rather than storing "files" and "directories" as real files and directories (as in, the kind you can navigate through using your favorite shell program), it uses a database system for its back-end storage mechanism. Currently, the database system in use is Berkeley DB.¹⁸ However, there has been considerable interest by the development community in giving future releases of Subversion the ability to use other back-end database systems, perhaps through a mechanism such as Open Database Connectivity (ODBC).

The filesystem API exported by `libsvn_fs` contains the kinds of functionality you would expect from any other filesystem API: you can create and remove files and directories, copy and move them around, modify file contents, and so on. It also has features that are not quite as common, such as the ability to add, modify, and remove metadata ("properties") on each file or directory. Furthermore, the Subversion Filesystem is a versioning filesystem, which means that as you make changes to your directory tree, Subversion remembers what your tree looked like before those changes. And before the previous changes. And the previous ones. And so on, all the way back through versioning time to (and just beyond) the moment you first started adding things to the filesystem.

All the modifications you make to your tree are done within the context of a Subversion transaction. The following is a simplified general routine for modifying your filesystem:

1. Begin a Subversion transaction.
2. Make your changes (adds, deletes, property modifications, etc.).
3. Commit your transaction.

Once you have committed your transaction, your filesystem modifications are permanently stored as historical artifacts. Each of these cycles generates a single new revision of your tree, and each revision is forever accessible as an immutable snapshot of "the way things were."

The Transaction Distraction

The notion of a Subversion transaction, especially given its close proximity the database code in `libsvn_fs`, can become easily confused with the transaction support provided by the underlying database itself. Both types of transaction exist to provide atomicity and isolation. In other words, transactions give you the ability to perform a set of actions in an "all or nothing" fashion—either all the actions in the set complete with success, or they all get treated as if *none* of them ever happened—and in a way that does not interfere with other processes acting on the data.

Database transactions generally encompass small operations related specifically to the modification of data in the database itself (such as changing the contents of a table row). Subversion transactions are larger in scope, encompassing higher-level operations like making modifications to a set of files and directories which are intended to be stored as the next revision of the filesystem tree. If that isn't confusing enough, consider this: Subversion uses a database transaction during the creation of a Subversion transaction (so that if the creation of Subversion transaction fails, the database will look as if we had never attempted that creation in the first place)!

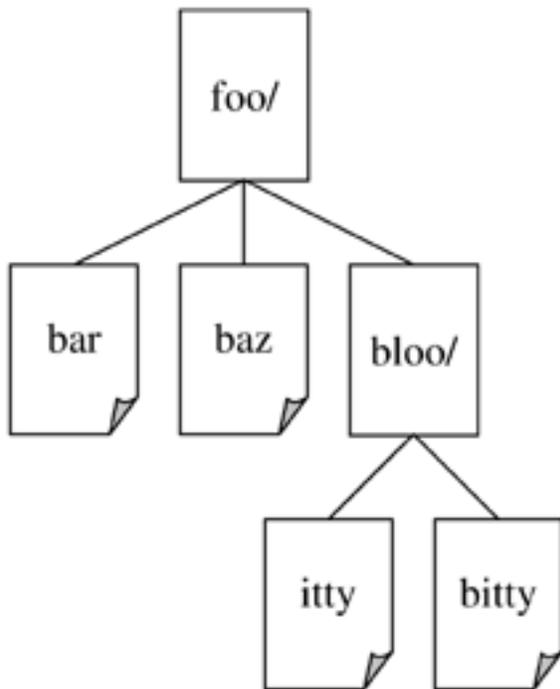
Fortunately for users of the filesystem API, the transaction support provided by the database system itself is hidden almost entirely from view (as should be expected from a properly modularized library scheme). It is only when you start digging into the implementation of the filesystem itself that such things become visible (or interesting).

¹⁸The choice of Berkeley DB brought several automatic features that Subversion needed, such as data integrity, atomic writes, recoverability, and hot backups.

Most of the functionality provided by the filesystem interface comes as an action that occurs on a filesystem path. That is, from outside of the filesystem, the primary mechanism for describing and accessing the individual revisions of files and directories comes through the use of path strings like `/foo/bar`, just as if you were addressing files and directories through your favorite shell program. You add new files and directories by passing their paths-to-be to the right API functions. You query for information about them by the same mechanism.

Unlike most filesystems, though, a path alone is not enough information to identify a file or directory in Subversion. Think of a directory tree as a two-dimensional system, where a node's siblings represent a sort of left-and-right motion, and descending into subdirectories a downward motion. Figure 7-2 shows a typical representation of a tree as exactly that.

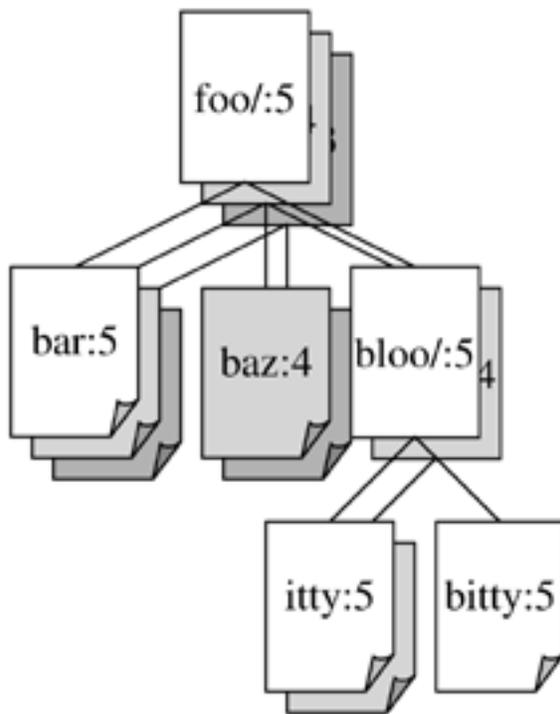
Figure 7.2. Files and directories in two dimensions



Of course, the Subversion filesystem has a nifty third dimension that most filesystems do not have—Time! ¹⁹ In the filesystem interface, nearly every function that has a *path* argument also expects a *root* argument. This `svn_fs_root_t` argument describes either a revision or a Subversion transaction (which is usually just a revision-to-be), and provides that third-dimensional context needed to understand the difference between `/foo/bar` in revision 32, and the same path as it exists in revision 98. Figure 7-3 shows revision history as an added dimension to the Subversion filesystem universe.

Figure 7.3. Revisioning Time—the third dimension!

¹⁹We understand that this may come as a shock to sci-fi fans who have long been under the impression that Time was actually the *fourth* dimension, and we apologize for any emotional trauma induced by our assertion of a different theory.



As we mentioned earlier, the `libsvn_fs` API looks and feels like any other filesystem, except that it has this wonderful versioning capability. It was designed to be usable by any program interested in a versioning filesystem. Not coincidentally, Subversion itself is interested in that functionality. But while the filesystem API should be sufficient for basic file and directory versioning support, Subversion wants more—and that is where `libsvn_repos` comes in.

The Subversion repository library (`libsvn_repos`) is basically a wrapper library around the filesystem functionality. This library is responsible for creating the repository layout, making sure that the underlying filesystem is initialized, and so on. `libsvn_repos` also implements a set of hooks—scripts that are executed by the repository code when certain actions take place. These scripts are useful for notification, authorization, or whatever purposes the repository administrator desires. This type of functionality, and other utility provided by the repository library, is not strictly related to implementing a versioning filesystem, which is why it was placed into its own library.

Developers who wish to use the `libsvn_repos` API will find that it is not a complete wrapper around the filesystem interface. That is, only certain major events in the general cycle of filesystem activity are wrapped by the repository interface. Some of these include the creation and commit of Subversion transactions, and the modification of revision properties. These particular events are wrapped by the repository layer because they have hooks associated with them. In the future, other events may be wrapped by the repository API. All of the remaining filesystem interaction will continue to occur directly with `libsvn_fs` API, though.

For example, here is a code segment that illustrates the use of both the repository and filesystem interfaces to create a new revision of the filesystem in which a directory is added. Note that in this example (and all others throughout this book), the `SVN_ERR` macro simply checks for a non-successful error return from the function it wraps, and returns that error if it exists.

Example 7.1. Using the Repository Layer

```

/* Create a new directory at the path NEW_DIRECTORY in the Subversion
   repository located at REPOS_PATH. Perform all memory allocation in

```

```
POOL. This function will create a new revision for the addition of
NEW_DIRECTORY. */
static svn_error_t *
make_new_directory (const char *repos_path,
                   const char *new_directory,
                   apr_pool_t *pool)
{
    svn_error_t *err;
    svn_repos_t *repos;
    svn_fs_t *fs;
    svn_revnum_t youngest_rev;
    svn_fs_txn_t *txn;
    svn_fs_root_t *txn_root;
    const char *conflict_str;

    /* Open the repository located at REPOS_PATH. */
    SVN_ERR (svn_repos_open (&repos, repos_path, pool));

    /* Get a pointer to the filesystem object that is stored in
    REPOS. */
    fs = svn_repos_fs (repos);

    /* Ask the filesystem to tell us the youngest revision that
    currently exists. */
    SVN_ERR (svn_fs_youngest_rev (&youngest_rev, fs, pool));

    /* Begin a new transaction that is based on YOUNGEST_REV. We are
    less likely to have our later commit rejected as conflicting if we
    always try to make our changes against a copy of the latest snapshot
    of the filesystem tree. */
    SVN_ERR (svn_fs_begin_txn (&txn, fs, youngest_rev, pool));

    /* Now that we have started a new Subversion transaction, get a root
    object that represents that transaction. */
    SVN_ERR (svn_fs_txn_root (&txn_root, txn, pool));

    /* Create our new directory under the transaction root, at the path
    NEW_DIRECTORY. */
    SVN_ERR (svn_fs_make_dir (txn_root, new_directory, pool));

    /* Commit the transaction, creating a new revision of the filesystem
    which includes our added directory path. */
    err = svn_repos_fs_commit_txn (&conflict_str, repos,
                                   &youngest_rev, txn);
    if (err == SVN_NO_ERROR)
    {
        /* No error? Excellent! Print a brief report of our success. */
        printf ("Directory '%s' was successfully added as new revision "
               "%s" SVN_REVNUM_T_FMT ".\n", new_directory, youngest_rev);
    }
    else if (err->apr_err == SVN_ERR_FS_CONFLICT)
    {
        /* Uh-oh. Our commit failed as the result of a conflict
        (someone else seems to have made changes to the same area
        of the filesystem that we tried to modify). Print an error
        message. */
        printf ("A conflict occured at path '%s' while attempting "
               "to add directory '%s' to the repository at '%s'.\n",
               conflict_str, new_directory, repos_path);
    }
    else
    {
        /* Some other error has occurred. Print an error message. */
        printf ("An error occured while attempting to add directory '%s' "
               "to the repository at '%s'.\n",
               new_directory, repos_path);
    }

    /* "Disconnect" from the repository. */
    (void) svn_repos_close (repos);

    /* Return the result of the attempted commit to our caller. */
}
```

```
    return err;
}
```

In the previous code segment, calls were made to both the repository and filesystem interfaces. We could just as easily have committed the transaction using `svn_fs_commit_txn`. But the filesystem API knows nothing about the repository library's hook mechanism. If you want your Subversion repository to automatically perform some set of non-Subversion tasks every time you commit a transaction (like, for example, sending an email that describes all the changes made in that transaction to your developer mailing list), you need to use the `libsvn_repos`-wrapped version of that function—`svn_repos_fs_commit_txn`. This function will actually first run the "pre-commit" hook script if one exists, then commit the transaction, and finally will run a "post-commit" hook script. The hooks provide a special kind of reporting mechanism that does not really belong in the core filesystem library itself. (For more information regarding Subversion's repository hooks, see Section , "Hook scripts".)

The hook mechanism requirement is but one of the reasons for the abstraction of a separate repository library from the rest of the filesystem code. The `libsvn_repos` API provides several other important utilities to Subversion. These include the abilities to:

1. create, open, destroy, and perform recovery steps on a Subversion repository and the filesystem included in that repository.
2. describe the differences between two filesystem trees.
3. query for the commit log messages associated with all (or some) of the revisions in which a set of files was modified in the filesystem.
4. generate a human-readable "dump" of the filesystem, a complete representation of the revisions in the filesystem.
5. parse that dump format, loading the dumped revisions into a different Subversion repository.

As Subversion continues to evolve, the repository library will grow with the filesystem library to offer increased functionality and configurable option support.

Repository Access Layer

If the Subversion Repository Layer is at "the other end of the line", the Repository Access Layer is the line itself. Charged with marshalling data between the client libraries and the repository, this layer includes the `libsvn_ra` module loader library, the RA modules themselves (which currently includes `libsvn_ra_dav`, `libsvn_ra_local`, and `libsvn_ra_svn`), and any additional libraries needed by one or more of those RA modules, such as the `mod_dav_svn` Apache module with which `libsvn_ra_dav` communicates or `libsvn_ra_svn`'s server, **svnserv**.

Since Subversion uses URLs to identify its repository resources, the protocol portion of the URL schema (usually `file:`, `http:`, `https:`, or `svn:`) is used to determine which RA module will handle the communications. Each module registers a list of the protocols it knows how to "speak" so that the RA loader can, at runtime, determine which module to use for the task at hand. You can determine which RA modules are available to the Subversion command-line client, and what protocols they claim to support, by running **svn --version**:

```
$ svn --version
svn, version 0.17.1 (dev build)
  compiled Feb 13 2003, 21:30:46
```

```
Copyright (C) 2000-2003 CollabNet.
Subversion is open source software, see http://subversion.tigris.org/
```

The following repository access (RA) modules are available:

```
* ra_dav : Module for accessing a repository via WebDAV (DeltaV) protocol.
```

- handles 'http' schema
- * ra_local : Module for accessing a repository on local disk.
 - handles 'file' schema
- * ra_svn : Module for accessing a repository using the svn network protocol.
 - handles 'svn' schema

RA-DAV (Repository Access Using HTTP/DAV)

The `libsvn_ra_dav` library is designed for use by clients that are being run on different machines than the servers with which they communicating, specifically machines reached using URLs that contain the `http:` or `https:` protocol portions. To understand how this module works, we should first mention a couple of other key components in this particular configuration of the Repository Access Layer—the powerful Apache HTTP Server, and the Neon HTTP/WebDAV client library.

Subversion's primary network server is the Apache HTTP Server. Apache is a time-tested, extensible open-source server process that is ready for serious use. It can sustain a high network load and runs on many platforms. The Apache server supports a number of different standard authentication protocols, and can be extended through the use of modules to support many others. It also supports optimizations like network pipelining and caching. By using Apache as a server, Subversion gets all of these features for free. And since most firewalls already allow HTTP traffic to pass through, sysadmins typically don't even have to change their firewall configurations to allow Subversion to work.

Subversion uses HTTP and WebDAV (with DeltaV) to communicate with an Apache server. You can read more about this in the WebDAV section of this chapter, but in short, WebDAV and DeltaV are extensions to the standard HTTP 1.1 protocol that enable sharing and versioning of files over the web. Apache 2.0 comes with `mod_dav`, an Apache module that understands the DAV extensions to HTTP. Subversion itself supplies `mod_dav_svn`, though, which is another Apache module that works in conjunction with (really, as a back-end to) `mod_dav` to provide Subversion's specific implementations of WebDAV and DeltaV.

When communicating with a repository over HTTP, the RA loader library chooses `libsvn_ra_dav` as the proper access module. The Subversion client makes calls into the generic RA interface, and `libsvn_ra_dav` maps those calls (which embody rather large-scale Subversion actions) to a set of HTTP/WebDAV requests. Using the Neon library, `libsvn_ra_dav` transmits those requests to the Apache server. Apache receives these requests (exactly as it does generic HTTP requests that your web browser might make), notices that the requests are directed at a URL that is configured as a DAV location (using the `Location` directive in `httpd.conf`), and hands the request off to its own `mod_dav` module. When properly configured, `mod_dav` knows to use Subversion's `mod_dav_svn` for any filesystem-related needs, as opposed to the generic `mod_dav_fs` that comes with Apache. So ultimately, the client is communicating with `mod_dav_svn`, which binds directly to the Subversion Repository Layer.

That was a simplified description of the actual exchanges taking place, though. For example, the Subversion repository might be protected by Apache's authorization directives. This could result in initial attempts to communicate with the repository being rejected by Apache on authorization grounds. At this point, `libsvn_ra_dav` gets back the notice from Apache that insufficient identification was supplied, and calls back into the Client Layer to get some updated authentication data. If the data is supplied correctly, and the user has the permissions that Apache seeks, `libsvn_ra_dav`'s next automatic attempt at performing the original operation will be granted, and all will be well. If sufficient authentication information cannot be supplied, the request will ultimately fail, and the client will report the failure to the user.

By using Neon and Apache, Subversion gets free functionality in several other complex areas, too. For example, if Neon finds the OpenSSL libraries, it allows the Subversion client to attempt to use SSL-encrypted communications with the Apache server (whose own `mod_ssl` can "speak the language"). Also, both Neon itself and Apache's `mod_deflate` can understand the "deflate" algorithm (the same used by the PKZIP and gzip programs), so requests can be sent in smaller, compressed chunks across the wire. Other complex features that Subversion hopes to support in the future include the ability to automatically handle server-specified redirects (for example, when a repository has been moved to a new canonical URL) and taking advantage of HTTP pipelining.

RA-SVN (Proprietary Protocol Repository Access)

In addition to the standard HTTP/WebDAV protocol, Subversion also provides an RA implementation that uses a proprietary protocol. The `libsvn_ra_svn` module implements its own network socket connectivity, and communicates with a stand-alone server—the `svnserve` program—on the machine that hosts the repository.

RA-Local (Direct Repository Access)

Not all communications with a Subversion repository require a powerhouse server process and a network layer. For users who simply wish to access the repositories on their local disk, they may do so using `file:` URLs and the functionality provided by `libsvn_ra_local`. This RA module binds directly with the repository and filesystem libraries, so no network communication is required at all.

Subversion requires the server name included as part of the `file:` URL be either `localhost` or empty, and that there be no port specification. In other words, your URLs should look like either `file://localhost/path/to/repos` or `file:///path/to/repos`.

Also, be aware that Subversion's `file:` URLs can not be used in a regular web browser the way typical `file:` URLs can. When you attempt to view a `file:` URL in a regular web browser, it reads and displays the contents of the file at that location by examining the filesystem directly. However, Subversion's resources exist in a virtual filesystem (see Section , “Repository Layer”), and your browser will not understand how to read that filesystem.

Your RA Library Here

For those who wish to access a Subversion repository using still another protocol, that is precisely why the Repository Access Layer is modularized! Developers can simply write a new library that implements the RA interface on one side and communicates with the repository on the other. Your new library can use existing network protocols, or you can invent your own. You could use inter-process communication (IPC) calls, or—let's get crazy, shall we?—you could even implement an email-based protocol. Subversion supplies the APIs; you supply the creativity.

Client Layer

On the client side, the Subversion working copy is where all the action takes place. The bulk of functionality implemented by the client-side libraries exists for the sole purpose of managing working copies—directories full of files and other subdirectories which serve as a sort of local, editable “reflection” of one or more repository locations—and propagating changes to and from the Repository Access layer.

Subversion's working copy library, `libsvn_wc`, is directly responsible for managing the data in the working copies. To accomplish this, the library stores administrative information about each working copy directory within a special subdirectory. This subdirectory, named `.svn` is present in each working copy directory and contains various other files and directories which record state and provide a private workspace for administrative action. For those familiar with CVS, this `.svn` subdirectory is similar in purpose to the CVS administrative directories found in CVS working copies. For more information about the `.svn` administrative area, see Section , “Inside the Working Copy Administration Area” in this chapter.

The Subversion client library, `libsvn_client`, has the broadest responsibility; its job is to mingle the functionality of the working copy library with that of the Repository Access Layer, and then to provide the highest-level API to any application that wishes to perform general revision control actions. For example, the function `svn_client_checkout` takes a URL as an argument. It passes this URL to the RA layer and opens an authenticated session with a particular repository. It then asks the repository for a certain tree, and sends this tree into the working copy library, which then writes a full working copy to disk (`.svn` directories and all).

The client library is designed to be used by any application. While the Subversion source code includes a standard command-line client, it should be very easy to write any number of GUI clients on top of the client library. New GUIs (or any new client, really) for Subversion need not be clunky wrappers around the included command-line client—they have full access via the `libsvn_client` API to same functionality, data, and callback mechanisms that the command-line client uses.

Binding Directly—A Word About Correctness

Why should your GUI program bind directly with a `libsvn_client` instead of acting as a wrapper around a command-line program? Besides simply being more efficient, this can address potential correctness issues as well. A command-line program (like the one supplied with Subversion) that binds to the client library needs to effectively translate feedback and requested data bits from C types to some form of human-readable output. This type of translation can be lossy. That is, the program may not display all of the information harvested from the API, or may combine bits of information for compact representation.

If you wrap such a command-line program with yet another program, the second program has access only to already-interpreted (and as we mentioned, likely incomplete) information, which it must *again* translate into *its* representation format. With each layer of wrapping, the integrity of the original data is potentially tainted more and more, much like the result of making a copy of a copy (of a copy ...) of a favorite audio or video cassette.

Using the APIs

Developing applications against the Subversion library APIs is fairly straightforward. All of the public header files live in the `subversion/include` directory of the source tree. These headers are copied into your system locations when you build and install Subversion itself from source. These headers represent the entirety of the functions and types meant to be accessible by users of the Subversion libraries.

The first thing you might notice is that Subversion's datatypes and functions are namespace protected. Every public Subversion symbol name begins with `"svn_"`, followed by a short code for the library in which the symbol is defined (such as `"wc"`, `"client"`, `"fs"`, etc.), followed by a single underscore (`"_"`) and then the rest of the symbol name. Semi-public functions (used among source files of a given library but not by code outside that library, and found inside the library directories themselves) differ from this naming scheme in that instead of a single underscore after the library code, they use a double underscore (`"__"`). Functions private a given source file have no special prefixing, and are declared `static`. Of course, a compiler isn't interested in these naming conventions, but they definitely help to clarify the scopy of a given function or datatype.

The Apache Portable Runtime Library

Along with Subversion's own datatype, you will see many references to datatypes that begin with `"apr_"`—symbols from the Apache Portable Runtime (APR) library. APR is Apache's portability library, originally carved out of its server code as an attempt to separate the OS-specific bits from the OS-independent portions of the code. The result was a library that provides a generic API for performing operations that differ mildly—or wildly—from OS to OS. While Apache HTTP Server was obviously the first user of the APR library, the Subversion developers immediately recognized the value of using APR as well. This means that there are practically no OS-specific code portions in Subversion itself. Also, it means that the Subversion client compiles and runs anywhere that the server does. Currently this list includes all flavors of Unix, Win32, BeOS, OS/2, and Mac OS X.

In addition to providing consistent implementations of system calls that differ across operating systems, 20 APR gives Subversion immediate access to many custom datatypes, such as dynamic arrays and hash tables. Subversion uses these types extensively throughout the codebase. But perhaps the most pervasive APR datatype, found in nearly every Subversion API prototype, is the `apr_pool_t`—the APR memory pool. Subversion uses pools internally for all its memory allocation needs, and while a person coding against the Subversion APIs is not required to do the same, they are required to provide pools to the API functions that need them. This means that users of the Subversion API must also link against APR, must call `apr_initialize()` to initialize the APR subsystem, and then must acquire a pool for use with Subversion API calls. See Section , “Programming with Memory Pools” for more information.

URL and Path Requirements

With remote version control operation as the whole point of Subversion's existence, it makes sense that some atten-
20Subversion uses ANSI system calls and datatypes as much as possible.

tion has been paid to internationalization (i18n) support. After all, while "remote" might mean "across the office", it could just as well mean "across the globe." To facilitate this, all of Subversion's public interfaces that accept path arguments expect those paths to be canonicalized, and encoded in UTF-8. This means, for example, that any new client binary that drives the `libsvn_client` interface needs to first convert paths from the locale-specific encoding to UTF-8 before passing those paths to the Subversion libraries, and then re-convert any resultant output paths from Subversion back into the locale's encoding before using those paths for non-Subversion purposes. Fortunately, Subversion provides a suite of functions (see `subversion/include/svn_utf.h`) that can be used by any program to do these conversions.

Also, Subversion APIs require all URL parameters to be properly URI-encoded. So, instead of passing `file:///home/username/My File.txt` as the URL of a file named `My File.txt`, you need to pass `file:///home/username/My%20File.txt`. Again, Subversion supplies helper functions that your application can use—`svn_path_uri_encode` and `svn_path_uri_decode`, for URI encoding and decoding, respectively.

Using Languages Other than C and C++

If you are interested in using the Subversion libraries in conjunction with something other than a C program—say a Python script or Java application—Subversion has some initial support for this via the Simplified Wrapper and Interface Generator (SWIG). The SWIG bindings for Subversion are located in `subversion/bindings/swig` and are slowly maturing into a usable state. These bindings allow you to call Subversion API functions indirectly, using wrappers that translate the datatypes native to your scripting language into the datatypes needed by Subversion's C libraries.

There is an obvious benefit to accessing the Subversion APIs via a language binding—simplicity. Generally speaking, languages such as Python and Perl are much more flexible and easy to use than C or C++. The sort of high-level datatypes and context-driven typechecking provided by these languages are often better at handling information that comes from users. As you know, only a human can botch up the input to a program as well as they do, and the scripting-type language simply handle that misinformation more gracefully. Of course, often that flexibility comes at the cost of performance. That is why using a tightly-optimized, C-based interface and library suite, combined with a powerful, flexible binding language is so appealing.

Let's look at an example that uses Subversion's Python SWIG bindings. Our example will do the same thing as our last example. Note the difference in size and complexity of the function this time!

Example 7.2. Using the Repository Layer with Python

```
from svn import fs
import os.path

def crawl_filesystem_dir (root, directory, pool):
    """Recursively crawl DIRECTORY under ROOT in the filesystem, and return
    a list of all the paths at or below DIRECTORY. Use POOL for all
    allocations."""

    # Get the directory entries for DIRECTORY.
    entries = fs.dir_entries(root, directory, pool)

    # Initialize our returned list with the directory path itself.
    paths = [directory]

    # Loop over the entries
    names = entries.keys()
    for name in names:
        # Calculate the entry's full path.
        full_path = os.path.join(basepath, name)

        # If the entry is a directory, recurse. The recursion will return
        # a list with the entry and all its children, which we will add to
        # our running list of paths.
        if fs.is_dir(fsroot, full_path, pool):
```

```
subpaths = crawl_filesystem_dir(root, full_path, pool)
paths.extend(subpaths)

# Else, it is a file, so add the entry's full path to the FILES list.
else:
    paths.append(full_path)

return paths
```

An implementation in C of the previous example would stretch on quite a bit longer. The same routine in C would need to pay close attention to memory usage, and need to use custom datatypes for representing the hash of entries and the list of paths. Python has hashes and lists (called "dictionaries" and "sequences", respectively) as built-in datatypes, and provides a wonderful selection of methods for operating on those types. And since Python uses reference counting and garbage collection, users of the language don't have to bother themselves with allocating and freeing memory.

In the previous section of this chapter, we mentioned the `libsvn_client` interface, and how it exists for the sole purpose of simplifying the process of writing a Subversion client. The following is a brief example of how that library can be accessed via the SWIG bindings. In just a few lines of Python, you can check out a fully functional Subversion working copy!

Example 7.3. A simple script to check out a working copy.

```
#!/usr/bin/env python
import sys
from svn import util, _util, _client

def usage():
    print "Usage: " + sys.argv[0] + " URL PATH\n"
    sys.exit(0)

def run(url, path):
    # Initialize APR and get a POOL.
    _util.apr_initialize()
    pool = util.svn_pool_create(None)

    # Checkout the HEAD of URL into PATH (silently)
    _client.svn_client_checkout(None, None, url, path, -1, 1, None, pool)

    # Cleanup our POOL, and shut down APR.
    util.svn_pool_destroy(pool)
    _util.apr_terminate()

if __name__ == '__main__':
    if len(sys.argv) != 3:
        usage()
    run(sys.argv[1], sys.argv[2])
```

Currently, it is Subversion's Python bindings that are the most complete. Some attention is also being given to the Java bindings. Once you have the SWIG interface files properly configured, generation of the specific wrappers for all the supported SWIG languages (which currently includes versions of Tcl, Python, Perl, Java, Ruby, Mzscheme, Guile, and PHP) should theoretically be trivial. Still, some extra programming is required to compensate for complex APIs that SWIG needs some help generalizing. For more information on SWIG itself, see the project's website at <http://www.swig.org>.

Inside the Working Copy Administration Area

As we mentioned earlier, each directory of a Subversion working copy contains a special subdirectory called `.svn`

which houses administrative data about that working copy directory. Subversion uses the information in `.svn` to keep track of things like:

- Which repository location(s) are represented by the files and subdirectories in the working copy directory.
- What revision of each of those files and directories are currently present in the working copy.
- Any user-defined properties that might be attached to those files and directories.
- Pristine (un-edited) copies of the working copy files.

While there are several other bits of data stored in the `.svn` directory, we will examine only a couple of the most important items.

The Entries File

Perhaps the single most important file in the `.svn` directory is the `entries` file. The `entries` file is an XML document which contains the bulk of the administrative information about a versioned resource in a working copy directory. It is this one file which tracks the repository URLs, pristine revision, file checksums, pristine text and property timestamps, scheduling and conflict state information, last-known commit information (author, revision, timestamp), local copy history—practically everything that a Subversion client is interested in knowing about a versioned (or to-be-versioned) resource!

Comparing the Administrative Areas of Subversion and CVS

A glance inside the typical `.svn` directory turns up a bit more than what CVS maintains in its `CVS` administrative directories. The `entries` file contains XML which describes the current state of the working copy directory, and basically serves the purposes of CVS's `Entries`, `Root`, and `Repository` files combined. Authentication data is also stored within `.svn`, rather than in a single `.cvspass`-like file.

The following is an example of an actual `entries` file:

Example 7.4. Contents of a typical `.svn/entries` file

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8"?>
<wc-entries
  xmlns="svn:" >
<entry
  committed-rev="1"
  name="svn:this_dir"
  committed-date="2002-09-24T17:12:44.064475Z"
  url="http://svn.red-bean.com/tests/.greek-repo/A/D"
  kind="dir"
  revision="1"/>
<entry
  committed-rev="1"
  name="gamma"
  text-time="2002-09-26T21:09:02.000000Z"
  committed-date="2002-09-24T17:12:44.064475Z"
  checksum="QSE4vWd9ZM0cMvr7/+YkXQ=="
  kind="file"
  prop-time="2002-09-26T21:09:02.000000Z"/>
<entry
  name="zeta"
  kind="file"
  schedule="add"
```

```
    revision="0" />
<entry
  url="http://svn.red-bean.com/tests/.greek-repo/A/B/delta"
  name="delta"
  kind="file"
  schedule="add"
  revision="0" />
<entry
  name="G"
  kind="dir" />
<entry
  name="H"
  kind="dir"
  schedule="delete" />
</wc-entries>
```

As you can see, the entries file is essentially a list of entries. Each entry tag represents one of three things: the working copy directory itself (noted by having its *name* attribute set to "svn:this-dir"), a file in that working copy directory (noted by having its *kind* attribute set to "file"), or a subdirectory in that working copy (*kind* here is set to "dir"). The files and subdirectories whose entries are stored in this file are either already under version control, or (as in the case of the file named zeta above) are scheduled to be added to version control when the user next commits this working copy directory's changes. Each entry has a unique name, and each entry has a node kind.

Developers should be aware of some special rules that Subversion uses when reading and writing its entries files. While each entry has a revision and URL associated with it, note that not every entry tag in the sample file has explicit *revision* or *url* attributes attached to it. Subversion allows entries to not explicitly store those two attributes when their values are the same as (in the *revision* case) or trivially calculable from 21 (in the *url* case) the data stored in the "svn:this-dir" entry. Note also that for subdirectory entries, Subversion stores only the crucial attributes—name, kind, url, revision, and schedule. In an effort to reduce duplicated information, Subversion dictates that the method for determining the full set of information about a subdirectory is to traverse down into that subdirectory, and read the "svn:this-dir" entry from its own `.svn/entries` file. However, a reference to the subdirectory is kept in its parent's entries file, with enough information to permit basic versioning operations in the event that the subdirectory itself is actually missing from disk.

Pristine Copies and Property Files

As mentioned before, the `.svn` directory also holds the pristine "text-base" versions of files. Those can be found in `.svn/text-base`. The benefits of these pristine copies are multiple—network-free checks for local modifications and "diff" reporting, network-free reversion of modified or missing files, smaller transmission of changes to the server—but comes at the cost of having each versioned file stored at least twice on disk. These days, this seems to be a negligible penalty for most files. However, the situation gets uglier as the size of your versioned files grows. Some attention is being given to making the presence of the "text-base" an option. Ironically though, it is as your versioned files' sizes get larger that the existence of the "text-base" becomes more crucial—who wants to transmit a huge file across a network just because they want to commit a tiny change to it?

Similar in purpose to the "text-base" files are the property files and their pristine "prop-base" copies, located in `.svn/props` and `.svn/prop-base` respectively. Since directories can have properties, too, there are also `.svn/dir-props` and `.svn/dir-prop-base` files. Each of these property files ("working" and "base" versions) uses a simple "hash-on-disk" file format for storing the property names and values.

The Authentication Area

We will wrap up our peek at the working copy internals by noting the `.svn/auth` directory. Here is where Subversion stores a cache of various data used when authenticating against a server that requires such. Subversion uses OS-level permissioning to secure the contents of these files, but also gives users the option of disabling this cache altogether (via a per-use command-line argument, or more conveniently via the user's configuration files).

21That is, the URL for the entry is the same as the concatenation of the parent directory's URL and the entry's name.

WebDAV

WebDAV ("Web-based Distributed Authoring and Versioning") is an extension of the standard HTTP protocol designed to make the web into a read/write medium, instead of the basically read-only medium that exists today. The theory is that directories and files can be shared—as both readable and writable objects—over the web. RFC 2518 describes the WebDAV extensions to HTTP, and is available (along with a lot of other useful information) at <http://www.webdav.org/>.

A number of operating system file browsers are already able to mount networked directories using WebDAV. On Win32, the Windows Explorer can browse what it calls "WebFolders" (which are just WebDAV-ready network locations) as if they were regular folders on the local machine. Mac OS X also has this capability, as do the Nautilus and Konqueror browsers (under GNOME and KDE, respectively).

Browsing WebDAV locations using a standard file browser

WebDAV-enabled servers publish their resources as collections and the files (and other collections) within them. Today's operation systems are becoming extremely Web-aware, and this concept maps so easily to the notion of directories and files that many operation systems have built-in support for viewing those locations as regular folders. And these folders can be browsed just like system folders—you can open and copy files from the WebDAV folders as if they were sitting on your local drive.

For example, on recent versions of Windows, one of the items that appears when you open My Computer is Web Folders. Opening that icon will show you list of registered WebDAV locations that you can browse further into, as well as an icon for adding a new Web Folder. In fact, if you'd like to see how this works, open the Add Web Folder icon, and register the URL <http://svn.collab.net/repos/svn/trunk>. When you've finished, you'll have an icon in your Web Folders window that, if opened, will connect you directly to the head of Subversion's own development tree. Imagine that—bleeding edge Subversion code that you can copy and paste right off the server and onto your local drive!

However, RFC 2518 doesn't fully implement the "versioning" aspect of WebDAV. A separate committee has created RFC 3253, known as the DeltaV extensions to WebDAV, available at <http://www.webdav.org/deltav/>. These extensions add version-control concepts to WebDAV, and ultimately to HTTP.

So how does all of this apply to Subversion? Subversion uses HTTP, extended by WebDAV and DeltaV, as its primary network protocol. Rather than implementing a new proprietary protocol, the original Subversion designers decided to simply map the versioning concepts and actions used by Subversion onto the concepts exposed by RFCs 2518 and 3253. ²²

It is important to understand that while `libsvn_ra_dav` uses DeltaV for communication, the Subversion client is *not* a general-purpose DeltaV client. In fact, it expects some custom features from the server. Further, `mod_dav_svn` is not a general-purpose DeltaV filesystem backend. It only implements a strict subset of the DeltaV specification. A WebDAV or DeltaV client may very well be able to interoperate with it, but only if that client operates within the narrow confines of those features that the server has implemented. The Subversion development team plans to address generic WebDAV interoperability in a future release of Subversion.

Programming with Memory Pools

Almost every developer who has used the C programming language has at some point sighed at the daunting task of managing memory usage. Allocating enough memory to use, keeping track of those allocations, freeing the memory when you no longer need it—these tasks can be quite complex. And of course, failure to do those things properly can result in a program that crashes itself, or worse, crashes the computer. Fortunately, the APR library that Subversion depends on for portability provides the `apr_pool_t` type, which represents a "pool" of memory.

²²As it turns out, Subversion has more recently evolved a propriety protocol anyway, implemented by the `libsvn_ra_svn` module.

A memory pool is an abstract representation of a chunk of memory allocated for use by a program. Rather than requesting memory directly from the OS using the standard `alloc()` and friends, programs that link against APR can simply request that a pool of memory be created (using the `apr_pool_create()` function). APR will allocate a moderately sized chunk of memory from the OS, and that memory will be instantly available for use by the program. Any time the program needs some of the pool memory, it uses one of the APR pool API functions, like `apr_palloc()`, which returns a generic memory location from the pool. The program can keep requesting bits and pieces of memory from the pool, and APR will keep granting the requests. Pools will automatically grow in size to accommodate programs that request more memory than the original pool contained, until of course there is no more memory available on the system.

Now, if this were the end of the pool story, it would hardly have merited special attention. Fortunately, that's not the case. Pools can not only be created; they can also be cleared and destroyed, using `apr_pool_clear()` and `apr_pool_destroy()` respectively. This gives developers the flexibility to allocate several—or several thousand—things from the pool, and then clean up all of that memory with a single function call! Further, pools have hierarchy. You can make "subpools" of any previously created pool. When you clear a pool, all of its subpools are destroyed; if you destroy a pool, it and its subpools are destroyed.

Before we go further, developers should be aware that they probably will not find many calls to the APR pool functions we just mentioned in the Subversion source code. APR pools offer some extensibility mechanisms, like the ability to have custom "user data" attached to the pool, and mechanisms for registering cleanup functions that get called when the pool is destroyed. Subversion makes use of these extensions in a somewhat non-trivial way. So, Subversion supplies (and most of its code uses) the wrapper functions `svn_pool_create()`, `svn_pool_clear()`, and `svn_pool_destroy()`.

While pools are helpful for basic memory management, the pool construct really shines in looping and recursive scenarios. Since loops are often unbounded in their iterations, and recursions in their depth, memory consumption in these areas of the code can become unpredictable. Fortunately, using nested memory pools can be a great way to easily manage these potentially hairy situations. The following example demonstrates the basic use of nested pools in a situation that is fairly common—recursively crawling a directory tree, doing some task to each thing in the tree.

Example 7.5. Effective pool usage

```
/* Recursively crawl over DIRECTORY, adding the paths of all its file
   children to the FILES array, and doing some task to each path
   encountered. Use POOL for the all temporary allocations, and store
   the hash paths in the same pool as the hash itself is allocated in. */
static apr_status_t
crawl_dir (apr_array_header_t *files,
          const char *directory,
          apr_pool_t *pool)
{
    apr_pool_t *hash_pool = files->pool; /* array pool */
    apr_pool_t *subpool = svn_pool_create (pool); /* iteration pool */
    apr_dir_t *dir;
    apr_finfo_t finfo;
    apr_status_t apr_err;
    apr_int32_t flags = APR_FINFO_TYPE | APR_FINFO_NAME;

    apr_err = apr_dir_open (&dir, directory, pool);
    if (apr_err)
        return apr_err;

    /* Loop over the directory entries, clearing the subpool at the top of
       each iteration. */
    for (apr_err = apr_dir_read (&finfo, flags, dir);
         apr_err == APR_SUCCESS;
         apr_err = apr_dir_read (&finfo, flags, dir))
    {
        const char *child_path;

        /* Skip entries for "this dir" ('.') and its parent ('..'). */
    }
```

```
if (finfo.filetype == APR_DIR)
{
    if (finfo.name[0] == '.'
        && (finfo.name[1] == '\\0'
            || (finfo.name[1] == '.' && finfo.name[2] == '\\0')))
        continue;
}

/* Build CHILD_PATH from DIRECTORY and FINFO.name. */
child_path = svn_path_join (directory, finfo.name, subpool);

/* Do some task to this encountered path. */
do_some_task (child_path, subpool);

/* Handle subdirectories by recursing into them, passing SUBPOOL
as the pool for temporary allocations. */
if (finfo.filetype == APR_DIR)
{
    apr_err = crawl_dir (files, child_path, subpool);
    if (apr_err)
        return apr_err;
}

/* Handle files by adding their paths to the FILES array. */
else if (finfo.filetype == APR_REG)
{
    /* Copy the file's path into the FILES array's pool. */
    child_path = apr_pstrdup (hash_pool, child_path);

    /* Add the path to the array. */
    (*(const char **) apr_array_push (files)) = child_path;
}

/* Clear the per-iteration SUBPOOL. */
svn_pool_clear (subpool);
}

/* Check that the loop exited cleanly. */
if (apr_err)
    return apr_err;

/* Yes, it exited cleanly, so close the dir. */
apr_err = apr_dir_close (dir);
if (apr_err)
    return apr_err;

/* Destroy SUBPOOL. */
svn_pool_destroy (subpool);

return APR_SUCCESS;
}
```

The previous example demonstrates effective pool usage in *both* looping and recursive situations. Each recursion begins by making a subpool of the pool passed to the function. This subpool is used for the looping region, and cleared with each iteration. The result is memory usage is roughly proportional to the depth of the recursion, not to total number of file and directories present as children of the top-level directory. When the first call to this recursive function finally finishes, there is actually very little data stored in the pool that was passed to it. Now imagine the extra complexity that would be present if this function had to `alloc()` and `free()` every single piece of data used!

Pools might not be ideal for every application, but they are extremely useful in Subversion. As a Subversion developer, you'll need to grow comfortable with pools and how to wield them correctly. Memory usage bugs and bloating can be difficult to diagnose and fix regardless of the API, but the pool construct provided by APR has proven a tremendously convenient, time-saving bit of functionality.

Contributing to Subversion

The official source of information about the Subversion project is, of course, the project's website at <http://subversion.tigris.org>. There you can find information about getting access to the source code and participating on the discussion lists. The Subversion community always welcomes new members. If you are interested in participating in this community by contributing changes to the source code, here are some hints on how to get started.

Join the Community

The first step in community participation is to find a way to stay on top of the latest happenings. To do this most effectively, you will want to subscribe to the main developer discussion list ([<dev@subversion.tigris.org>](mailto:dev@subversion.tigris.org)) and commit mail list ([<svn@subversion.tigris.org>](mailto:svn@subversion.tigris.org)). By following these lists even loosely, you will have access to important design discussions, be able to see actual changes to Subversion source code as they occur, and be able to witness peer reviews of those changes and proposed changes. These e-mail based discussion lists are the primary communication media for Subversion development. See the Mailing Lists section of the website for other Subversion-related lists you might be interested in.

But how do you know what needs to be done? It is quite common for a programmer to have the greatest intentions of helping out with the development, yet be unable to find a good starting point. After all, not many folks come to the community having already decided on a particular itch they would like to scratch. But by watching the developer discussion lists, you might see mentions of existing bugs or feature requests fly by that particularly interest you. Also, a great place to look for outstanding, unclaimed tasks is the Issue Tracking database on the Subversion website. There you will find the current list of known bugs and feature requests. If you want to start with something small, look for issues marked as "bite-sized".

Get the Source Code

To edit the code, you need to have the code. This means you need to check out a working copy from the public Subversion source repository. As straightforward as that might sound, the task can be slightly tricky. Because Subversion's source code is versioned using Subversion itself, you actually need to "bootstrap" by getting a working Subversion client via some other method. The most common methods include downloading the latest binary distribution (if such is available for your platform), or downloading the latest source tarball and building your own Subversion client. If you build from source, make sure read the INSTALL file in the top level of the source tree for instructions.

After you have a working Subversion client, you are now poised to checkout a working copy of the Subversion source repository from <http://svn.collab.net/repos/svn/trunk>:²³

```
$ svn checkout http://svn.collab.net/repos/svn/trunk subversion
A HACKING
A INSTALL
A README
A autogen.sh
A build.conf
...
```

The above command will checkout the bleeding-edge, latest version of the Subversion source code into a subdirectory named `subversion` in your current working directory. Obviously, you can adjust that last argument as you see fit. Regardless of what you call the new working copy directory, though, after this operation completes, you will now have the Subversion source code. Of course, you will still need to fetch a few helper libraries (`apr`, `apr-util`, etc.)—see the INSTALL file in the top level of the working copy for details.

Become Familiar with Community Policies

Now that you have a working copy containing the latest Subversion source code, you will most certainly want to take a cruise through the HACKING file in that working copy's top-level directory. The HACKING file contains

²³Note that the URL checked out in the example above ends not with `svn`, but with a subdirectory thereof called `trunk`. See our discussion of Subversion's branching and tagging model for the reasoning behind this.

general instructions for contributing to Subversion, including how to properly format your source code for consistency with the rest of the codebase, how to describe your proposed changes with an effective change log message, how to test your changes, and so on. Commit privileges on the Subversion source repository are earned—a government by meritocracy. ²⁴ The HACKING file is an invaluable resource when it comes to making sure that your proposed changes earn the praises they deserve without being rejected on technicalities.

Make and Test Your Changes

With the code and community policy understanding in hand, you are ready to make your changes. It is best to try to make smaller but related sets of changes, even tackling larger tasks in stages, instead of making huge, sweeping modifications. Your proposed changes will be easier to understand (and therefore easier to review) if you disturb the fewest lines of code possible to accomplish your task properly. After making each set of proposed changes, your Subversion tree should be in a state in which the software compiles with no warnings.

Subversion has a fairly thorough ²⁵ regression test suite, and your proposed changes are expected to not cause any of those tests to fail. By running **make check** (in Unix) from the top of the source tree, you can sanity-check your changes. The fastest way to get your code contributions rejected (other than failing to supply a good log message) is to submit changes that cause failure in the test suite.

In the best-case scenario, you will have actually added appropriate tests to that test suite which verify that your proposed changes actually work as expected. In fact, sometimes the best contribution a person can make is solely the addition of new tests. You can write regression tests for functionality that currently works in Subversion as a way to protect against future changes that might trigger failure in those areas. Also, you can write new tests that demonstrate known failures. For this purpose, the Subversion test suite allows you to specify that a given test is expected to fail (called an XFAIL), and so long as Subversion fails in the way that was expected, a test result of XFAIL itself is considered a success. Ultimately, the better the test suite, the less time wasted on diagnosing potentially obscure regression bugs.

Donate Your Changes

After making your modifications to the source code, compose a clear and concise log message to describe those changes and the reasons for them. Then, send an email to the developers list containing your log message and the output of **svn diff** (from the top of your Subversion working copy). If the community members consider your changes acceptable, someone who has commit privileges (permission to make new revisions in the Subversion source repository) will add your changes to the public source code tree. Recall that permission to directly commit changes to the repository is granted on merit—if you demonstrate comprehension of Subversion, programming competency, and a "team spirit", you will likely be awarded that permission.

²⁴While this may superficially appear as some sort of elitism, this "earn your commit privileges" notion is about efficiency—whether it costs more in time and effort to review and apply someone else's changes that are likely to be safe and useful, versus the potential costs of undoing changes that are dangerous.

²⁵You might want to grab some popcorn. "Thorough", in this instance, translates to somewhere around thirty minutes of non-interactive machine churn.

Chapter 8. Subversion Complete Reference

This chapter is intended to be a complete reference to using Subversion. This includes the command line client (**svn**) and all its commands, as well as the repository administration programs (**svnadmin** and **svnlook**) and their respective commands.

The Subversion Command Line Client: **svn**

To use the command line client, you type **svn**, the subcommand you wish to use, `26` and any switches or targets that you wish to operate on. You should note that there is no specific order that the subcommand and the switches must appear in. For example, all of the following are valid ways to use **svn status**:

```
$ svn -v status
$ svn status -v
$ svn status -v myfile
```

You can find many more examples of how to use most client commands in Chapter 3, *Guided Tour*, commands for managing properties in Section , “Properties”

Switches

While Subversion has different switches for its subcommands, all switches are global—that is, each switch is guaranteed to mean the same thing regardless of the subcommand you use it with. For example, `--verbose (-v)` always means “verbose output”, regardless of the subcommand you use it with.

<code>--dry-run</code>	Go through all the motions of running a command, but make no actual e-changes—ther on disk or in the repository.
<code>--file FILENAME (-F)</code>	Use the contents of the file passed as an argument to this switch for the subcommand that you're running.
<code>--encoding ENC</code>	Tells Subversion that your commit message is encoded in the charset provided. The default is your operating system's native locale, and you should specify the encoding if your commit message is in any other encoding.
<code>--extensions" ARGS"</code>	Specifies an argument or arguments that Subversion should pass to GNU diff when providing diffs. Note that if you wish to pass multiple arguments, you must enclose all of them in quotes. For example, svn diff -x "-b -E" . Note also that Subversion will display unified diffs by default, so if you want default diff output, you can pass the <code>--normal</code> switch to diff (e.g. svn diff -x "--normal").
<code>--force</code>	Forces a particular command or operation to run. There are some operations that Subversion will prevent you from doing in normal usage, but you can pass the force switch to tell Subversion “I know what I'm doing as well as the possible repercussions of doing it, so let me at 'em.”. This switch is the programmatic equivalent of doing your own electrical work with the power on—if you don't know what you're doing, you're likely to get a shock.
<code>--help (-h or -?)</code>	If used with one or more subcommands, shows the built-in help text for each subcommand. If used alone, it displays the general client help text.
<code>--incremental</code>	Prints output in a format suitable for concatenation. For example, svn log normally <code>26</code> Yes, yes, you don't need a subcommand to use the <code>--version</code> switch, but we'll get to that in just a minute.

prints out a dashed line at the beginning of a log message, after each subsequent log message, and following the final log message. If you ran `svn log` on a range of two revisions, you would get this:

```
$ svn log -r 14:15
```

```
-----  
rev 14: ...
```

```
-----  
rev 15: ...  
-----
```

However, if you wanted to gather 2 non-sequential log messages into a file, you might do something like this:

```
$ svn log -r 14 > mylog  
$ svn log -r 19 >> mylog  
$ svn log -r 27 >> mylog  
$ cat mylog
```

```
-----  
rev 14: ...
```

```
-----  
rev 19: ...
```

```
-----  
rev 27: ...  
-----
```

Note the double dashed lines that you get in your output. You can avoid this clutter by using the incremental switch:

```
$ svn log --incremental -r 14 > mylog  
$ svn log --incremental -r 19 >> mylog  
$ svn log --incremental -r 27 >> mylog  
$ cat mylog
```

```
-----  
rev 14: ...
```

```
-----  
rev 19: ...
```

```
-----  
rev 27: ...  
-----
```

Note that the incremental switch does provides similar output control when using the `-xml` switch.

`--message MESSAGE (-m)` Indicates that you will specify a commit message on the command line, following this switch. For example:

```
$ svn commit -m "Initial import."
```

`--no-auth-cache` Prevents caching of authentication information (e.g. username and password) in the

	Subversion administrative directories.
<code>--no-diff-deleted</code>	Prevents Subversion from printing differences for deleted files. The default behavior when you remove a file is for svn diff to print the same differences that you would see if you had left the file but removed all the content.
<code>--no-ignore</code>	Shows files in the status listing that would normally be omitted since they match a pattern in the <code>svn:ignore</code> property. See Section , “Config” for more information.
<code>--non-interactive</code>	In the case of an authentication failure, or insufficient credentials, prevents prompting for credentials (e.g. username or password). This is useful if you're running Subversion inside of an automated script and it's more appropriate to have Subversion fail then to prompt for more information.
<code>--non-recursive (-N)</code>	Stops a subcommand from recursing into subdirectories. Note that some subcommands do not recurse by default, while others do.
<code>--passwordPASS</code>	Indicates that you are providing your password for authentication on the command line—otherwise, if it is needed, Subversion will prompt you for it.
<code>--quiet (-q)</code>	Requests that the client print only essential information while performing an operation.
<code>--recursive (-R)</code>	Makes a subcommand recurse into subdirectories. Most subcommands recurse by default.
<code>--revision REV (-r)</code>	The revision flag indicates that you're going to supply a revision (or range of revisions) for a particular operation. You can provide revision numbers, revision keywords or dates (in curly braces), as arguments to the revision switch. If you wish to provide a range of revisions, you can provide two revisions separated by a colon. For example: <pre>\$ svn log -r 1729 \$ svn log -r 1729:HEAD \$ svn log -r 1729:1744 \$ svn log -r {12/04/01}:{2/17/02} \$ svn log -r 1729:{2/17/02}</pre>
	See Section , “Revision Keywords” for more information.
<code>--revprop</code>	Operates on a revision property instead of a Subversion property specific to a file or directory. This switch requires that you also pass a revision with the <code>--revision (-r)</code> switch. See Section , “Unversioned Properties” for more details on unversioned properties.
<code>--show-updates (-u)</code>	Causes the client to display information about which files in your working copy are out-of-date. This doesn't actually update any of your files—it just shows you which files will be updated if you run svn update .
<code>--strict</code>	Causes Subversion to use strict semantics. See Chapter 8, <i>Subversion Complete Reference</i> for more details
<code>--targets FILENAME</code>	Tells Subversion to get the list of files that you wish to operate on from the filename you provide instead of listing all the files on the command line.
<code>--usernameNAME</code>	Indicates that you are providing your username for authentication on the command line—otherwise, if it is needed, Subversion will prompt you for it.

<code>--verbose</code>	Requests that the client print out as much information as it can while running any subcommand. This may result in Subversion printing out additional fields, detailed information about every file, or additional information regarding its actions.
<code>--version</code>	Prints the client version info. This information not only includes the version number of the client, but als a listing of all repository access modules that the client can use to access a Subversion repository.
<code>--xml</code>	Prints output in xml format.

svn subcommands

Name

svn add -- Adds files and directories

svn add

Synopsis

```
svn add PATH [PATH [PATH ... ]]
```

Description

Adds files and directories to your working copy and schedules them for addition to the repository. They will be uploaded and added to the repository on your next commit. If you add something and change your mind before committing, you can unschedule the addition using **svn revert**.

Alternate names

None

Changes

Working Copy

Switches

```
--targets FILENAME  
--non-recursive (-N)  
--quiet (-q)
```

Examples

To add a file to your working copy:

```
$ svn add foo.c  
A      foo.c
```

When adding a directory, the default behavior of svn add is to recurse:

```
$ svn add testdir  
A      testdir  
A      testdir/a  
A      testdir/b  
A      testdir/c  
A      testdir/d
```

You can add a directory without adding its contents:

```
$ svn add --non-recursive otherdir  
A      otherdir
```

Name

svn cat -- Outputs the contents of the specified files or URLs.

svn cat

Synopsis

```
svn cat TARGET [TARGET [TARGET ... ]]
```

Description

Outputs the contents of the specified files or URLs. For listing the contents of directories, see `svn ls`.

Alternate names

None

Changes

Nothing

Accesses Repository

Yes

Switches

```
--revision (-r) REV  
--username USER  
--password PASS
```

Examples

If you want to view `readme.txt` in your repository without checking it out:

```
$ svn cat http://svn.red-bean.com/repos/test/readme.txt  
This is a README file.  
You should read this.
```

Tip

If your working copy is out of date (or you have local modifications) and you want to see the HEAD revision of a file in your working copy, `svn cat` will automatically fetch the HEAD revision when you give it a path:

```
$ cat foo.c
```

This file is in my local working copy
and has changes that I've made.

```
$ svn cat foo.c  
Latest revision fresh from the repository!
```

Name

svn checkout -- Checks out a working copy from a repository.

svn checkout

Synopsis

```
svn checkout URL [URL [URL ... ]] [PATH]
```

Description

Checks out a working copy from a repository. If *PATH* is omitted, the basename of the URL will be used as the destination. If multiple URLs are given each will be checked out into a sub-directory of *PATH*, with the name of the sub-directory being the basename of the URL.

Alternate names

co

Changes

Creates a working copy.

Accesses Repository

Yes

Switches

```
--revision (-r) REV
--quiet (-q)
--non-recursive (-N)
--username USER
--password PASS
--no-auth-cache
--non-interactive
```

Examples

Check out a working copy into a directory called 'mine':

```
$ svn checkout file:///tmp/repos/test mine
A mine/a
A mine/b
Checked out revision 2.
$ ls
mine
```

Check out 2 different directories into two separate working copies:

```
$ svn checkout file:///tmp/repos/test file:///tmp/repos/quiz
A test/a
A test/b
Checked out revision 2.
A quiz/l
A quiz/m
Checked out revision 2.
$ ls
quiz test
```

Check out 2 different directories into two separate working copies, but place both into a directory called 'working copies':

```
$ svn checkout file:///tmp/repos/test file:///tmp/repos/quiz working-copies
A working-copies/test/a
A working-copies/test/b
Checked out revision 2.
A working-copies/quiz/l
A working-copies/quiz/m
Checked out revision 2.
$ ls
working-copies
```

Name

svn cleanup -- Recursively clean up the working copy.

svn cleanup

Synopsis

```
svn cleanup [PATH [PATH ... ]]
```

Description

Recursively clean up the working copy, removing locks resuming unfinished operations. If you ever get a “working copy locked” error, run this command to remove stale locks and get your working copy into a useable state again.

Alternate names

None

Changes

Working copy

Accesses Repository

No

Switches:

None

Examples

Well, there's not much to the examples here as svn cleanup generates no output. If you pass no PATH, '.' is used.

```
$ svn cleanup
```

```
$ svn cleanup /path/to/working-copy
```

Name

svn commit -- Send changes from your working copy to the repository.

svn commit

Synopsis

```
svn commit [PATH [PATH ... ]]
```

Description

Send changes from your working copy to the repository. If you do not supply a log message with your commit by using either the `--file` or `--message` switch, **svn** will launch your editor for you to compose a commit message. See the `editor-cmd` section in Section , “Config”.

Alternate names

ci

Changes

Working copy, repository

Accesses Repository

Yes

Switches

```
--message (-m) TEXT
--file (-F) FILE
--quiet (-q)
--non-recursive (-N)
--targets FILENAME
--force
--username USER
--password PASS
--no-auth-cache
--non-interactive
--encoding ENC
```

Examples

Commit a simple modification to a file with the commit message on the command line and an implicit target of your current directory (“.”):

```
$ svn commit -m "added howto section."
Sending          a
Transmitting file data .
```

Committed revision 3.

Commit a modification to the file `foo.c` (explicitly specified on the command line) with the commit message in a file named `msg`:

```
$ svn commit -F msg foo.c
Sending      foo.c
Transmitting file data .
Committed revision 5.
```

Note that if you want to use a file that's under version control for your commit message with `--file`, you need to pass the `--force` switch:

```
$ svn commit --file file_under_vc.txt foo.c
subversion/clients/cmdline/main.c:862: (apr_err=205004)
svn: The log message file is under version control
svn: Log message file is a versioned file; use '--force' to override.

$ svn commit --force --file file_under_vc.txt foo.c
Sending      foo.c
Transmitting file data .
Committed revision 6.
```

To commit a file scheduled for deletion:

```
svn commit -m "removed file 'c'."
Deleting     c

Committed revision 7.
```

Name

svn copy -- Copy a file or directory in a working copy or in the repository.

svn copy

Synopsis

```
svn copy SRC DST
```

Description

Copy a file in a working copy or in the repository. SRC and DST can each be either a working copy (WC) path or URL:

WC -> WC	Copy and schedule an item for addition (with history).
WC -> URL	Immediately commit a copy of WC to URL.
URL -> WC	Check out URL into WC, and schedule it for addition.
URL -> URL	Complete server-side copy. This is usually used to branch and tag.

Alternate names

cp

Changes

Repository, and working copy if operating on files

Accesses Repository

Yes

Switches

```
--message (-m) TEXT
--file (-F) FILE
--revision (-r) REV
--quiet (-q)
--username USER
--password PASS
--no-auth-cache
--non-interactive
--encoding ENC
```

Examples

Copy an item within your working copy (just schedules the copy--nothing goes into the repository until you commit):

```
$ svn copy foo.txt bar.txt
$ svn status
A + bar.txt
```

Copy an item in your working copy to a URL in the repository (an immediate commit, so you must supply a commit message):

```
$ svn copy near.txt file:///tmp/repos/test/far-away.txt -m "Remote copy."
Committed revision 8.
```

Copy an item from the repository to your working copy (Just schedules the copy--nothing goes into the repository until you commit):

Tip

This is the recommended way to resurrect a dead file in your repository!

```
$ svn copy file:///tmp/repos/test/far-away near-here
A near-here
```

And finally, copying between two URLs:

```
$ svn copy file:///tmp/repos/test/far-away file:///tmp/repos/test/over-there -m "remote copy."
Committed revision 9.
```

(Note: This is the easiest way to 'tag' a revision in your repository—just `svn copy` that revision (usually `HEAD`) into your tags directory).

```
$ svn copy file:///tmp/repos/test/trunk file:///tmp/repos/test/tags/0.6.32-prerelease -m "tag tree"
Committed revision 12.
```

And don't worry if you forgot to tag—you can always specify an older revision and tag anytime:

```
$ svn copy -r 11 file:///tmp/repos/test/trunk file:///tmp/repos/test/tags/0.6.32-prerelease -m "Forgo"
Committed revision 13.
```

Name

`svn delete --` Delete an item from a working copy or the repository.

`svn delete`

Synopsis

```
svn delete [TARGET [TARGET ... ]]
```

Description

Items specified on the command line are scheduled for deletion upon the next commit. Files (and directories that have not been committed) are immediately removed from the working copy. The command will not remove any unversioned or modified items; use the `--force` switch to override this behavior.

If run on an URL, the item is deleted from the repository via an immediate commit.

Alternate names

`del`, `remove`, `rm`

Changes

Working copy if operating on files, Repository if operating on URLs

Accesses Repository

Only if operating on URLs

Switches

```
--force  
--message (-m) TEXT  
--file (-F) FILE  
--quiet (-q)  
--targets FILENAME  
--username USER  
--password PASS  
--no-auth-cache  
--non-interactive  
--encoding ENC
```

Examples

Using `svn` to delete a file from your working copy merely schedules it to be deleted. When you commit, the file is deleted in the repository.

```
$ svn delete myfile  
D      myfile
```

```
$ svn ci -m "Deleted file 'myfile'."
Deleting      myfile
Transmitting file data .
Committed revision 14.
```

Deleting a URL, however, is immediate, so you have to supply a log message:

```
$ svn delete -m "Deleting file 'yourfile'" file:///tmp/repos/test/yourfile
Committed revision 15.
```

Here's an example of how to force deletion of a file that has local mods:

```
$ svn delete over-there
subversion/clients/cmdline/delete-cmd.c:47: (apr_err=195006)
svn: Attempting restricted operation for modified resource
svn: Use --force to override this restriction
subversion/libsvn_client/delete.c:90: (apr_err=195006)
svn: 'over-there' has local modifications

$ svn delete --force over-there
D      over-there
```

Name

svn diff -- Display the differences between two paths.

svn diff

Synopsis

```
svn diff [-r N[:M]] [TARGET [TARGET ... ]]
```

```
svn diff URL1[@N] URL2[@M]
```

Description

Display the differences between two paths. Each TARGET can be either a working copy path or URL. If no TARGET is specified, a value of '.' is assumed.

If TARGET is a URL, then revs N and M must be given via the `--revision`.

If TARGET is a working copy path, then the `--revision` switch means:

--revision N:M	The server compares TARGET@N and TARGET@M.
--revision N	The client compares TARGET@N against working copy.
(no --revision)	The client compares base and working copies of TARGET.

If the alternate syntax is used, the server compares URL1 and URL2 at revisions N and M respectively. If either N or M are omitted, a value of HEAD is assumed.

Alternate names

di

Changes

Nothing

Accesses Repository

For diffs against anything but BASE revision in your working copy

Switches

```
--revision (-r) REV
--extensions (-x) "ARGS"
--non-recursive (-N)
--username USER
--password PASS
--no-auth-cache
```

```
--non-interactive
--no-diff-deleted
```

Examples

Compare BASE and your working copy (One of the most popular uses of svn diff):

```
$ svn diff COMMITTERS
Index: COMMITTERS
=====
--- COMMITTERS (revision 4404)
+++ COMMITTERS (working copy)
```

See how your working copy's modifications compare against an older revision:

```
$ svn diff -r 3900 COMMITTERS
Index: COMMITTERS
=====
--- COMMITTERS (revision 3900)
+++ COMMITTERS (working copy)
```

Compare revision 3000 to revision 3500 using '@' syntax:

```
$ svn diff http://svn.collab.net/repos/svn/trunk/COMMITTERS@3000 http://svn.collab.net/repos/svn/trunk/COMMITTERS
Index: COMMITTERS
=====
--- COMMITTERS (revision 3000)
+++ COMMITTERS (revision 3500)
...
```

Compare revision 3000 to revision 3500 using range notation (note that you only pass the one URL in this case):

```
$ svn diff -r 3000:3500 http://svn.collab.net/repos/svn/trunk/COMMITTERS
Index: COMMITTERS
=====
--- COMMITTERS (revision 3000)
+++ COMMITTERS (revision 3500)
```

If you have a working copy, you can do the diffs without typing in the long URLs:

```
$ svn diff -r 3000:3500 COMMITTERS
Index: COMMITTERS
=====
--- COMMITTERS (revision 3000)
+++ COMMITTERS (revision 3500)
```

Use `-x` to pass arguments directly to the external diff program

```
svn diff -x "-i -b" COMMITTERS
Index: COMMITTERS
```

```
=====
0a1,2
> This is a test
>
```

Name

`svn export --` Exports a clean directory tree.

`svn export`

Synopsis

```
svn export [-r REV] URL [PATH]
```

```
svn export PATH1 PATH2
```

Description

The first form exports a clean directory tree from the repository specified by URL, at revision REV if it is given, otherwise at HEAD, into PATH. If PATH is omitted, the last component of the URL is used for the local directory name.

The second form exports a clean directory tree from the working copy specified by PATH1 into PATH2. all local changes will be preserved, but files not under revision control will not be copied.

Alternate names

None

Changes

local disk

Accesses Repository

Only if exporting from a URL

Switches

```
--revision (-r) REV  
--quiet (-q)  
--username USER  
--password PASS  
--no-auth-cache  
--non-interactive
```

Examples

Export from your working copy (doesn't print every file/dir):

```
$ svn export a-wc my-export  
pantheon: /tmp>
```

Export directly from the repository (prints every file/dir):

```
$ svn export file:///tmp/repos my-export
A my-export/test
A my-export/quiz
...
Exported revision 15.
```

Name

svn help -- Help!

svn help

Synopsis

```
svn help [SUBCOMMAND [SUBCOMMAND ... ]]
```

Description

This is your best friend when you're using Subversion and this book isn't within reach!

Alternate names

?, h

Changes

Nothing

Accesses Repository

No

Switches

```
--version  
--quiet (-q)
```

Name

svn import -- Recursively commit a copy of PATH to URL.

svn import

Synopsis

```
svn import URL [PATH [NEW_ENTRY_IN_REPOS]]
```

Description

Recursively commit a copy of PATH to URL. If there is no third argument, copy the top-level contents of PATH into URL directly. Otherwise, create NEW_ENTRY underneath URL and begin copy there.

Alternate names

None

Changes

Repository

Accesses Repository

Yes

Switches

```
--message (-m) TEXT
--file (-F) FILE
--quiet (-q)
--non-recursive (-N)
--username USER
--password PASS
--no-auth-cache
--non-interactive
--encoding ENC
```

Examples

This imports the local directory 'myproj' into the root of your repository:

```
$ svn import -m "New import" http://svn.red-bean.com/repos/test myproj
Adding          myproj/sample.txt
...
Transmitting file data .....
Committed revision 16.
```

This imports the local directory 'myproj' into 'trunk/vendors' in your repository. The directory 'trunk/vendors' must exist before you import into it—**svn import** will not recursively create directories for you:

```
$ svn import -m "New import" http://svn.red-bean.com/repos/test myproj trunk/vendors/myproj
Adding          myproj/sample.txt
...
Transmitting file data .....
Committed revision 19.
```

Name

svn info -- Print information about PATHs.

svn info

Synopsis

```
svn info [PATH [PATH ... ]]
```

Description

Print information about paths in your working copy, including:

- Path
- Name
- Url
- Revision
- Node Kind
- Last Changed Author
- Last Changed Revision
- Last Changed Date
- Text Last Updated
- Properties Last Updated
- Checksum

Alternate names

None

Changes

Nothing

Accesses Repository

No

Switches

```
--targets FILENAME  
--recursive (-R)
```

Examples

svn info will show you all the useful information that it has for items in your working copy. It will show information for files:

```
$ svn info foo.c  
Path: foo.c  
Name: foo.c  
Url: http://svn.red-bean.com/repos/test/foo.c  
Revision: 4417  
Node Kind: file  
Schedule: normal  
Last Changed Author: sally  
Last Changed Rev: 20  
Last Changed Date: 2003-01-13 16:43:13 -0600 (Mon, 13 Jan 2003)  
Text Last Updated: 2003-01-16 21:18:16 -0600 (Thu, 16 Jan 2003)  
Properties Last Updated: 2003-01-13 21:50:19 -0600 (Mon, 13 Jan 2003)  
Checksum: /3L38YwzhT93BWvgpdF6Zw==
```

It will also show information for directories:

```
$ svn info vendors  
Path: trunk  
Url: http://svn.red-bean.com/repos/test/vendors  
bRevision: 19  
Node Kind: directory  
Schedule: normal  
Last Changed Author: harry  
Last Changed Rev: 19  
Last Changed Date: 2003-01-16 23:21:19 -0600 (Thu, 16 Jan 2003)
```

Name

svn list -- List directory entries of a URL.

svn list

Synopsis

```
svn list URL [URL ... ]
```

Description

List directory entries of a URL. If URL is a file, just file entry will be displayed. **svn list** does not work on paths in your working copy.

Alternate names

ls

Changes

Nothing

Accesses Repository

Yes

Switches

```
--revision (-r) REV
--verbose (-v)
--recursive (-R)
--username USER
--password PASS
--no-auth-cache
--non-interactive
```

Examples

svn list is most useful if you want to see what files a repository has without downloading a working copy:

```
$ svn list http://svn.red-bean.com/repos/test/support
README.txt
INSTALL
examples/
...
```

Like UNIX **ls**, you can also pass the `--verbose` switch for additional information:

```
svn list --verbose file:///tmp/repos
P      16      sally    28361 Jan 16 23:18 README.txt
_      27      sally      0 Jan 18 15:27 INSTALL
_      24      harry      0 Jan 18 11:27 examples/
```

For further details, see Section , “svn list”.

Name

svn log -- Displays commit log messages.

svn log

Synopsis

```
svn log [URL] [PATH [PATH ... ]]
```

Description

When using the log command, you can operate on either URLs or PATHs.

The default target is the path of your current directory. If no arguments are supplied, **svn log** shows the log messages for all files and directories inside of (and including) the current working directory of your working copy. You can refine the results by specifying one or more paths, one or more revisions, or any combination of the two.

If you specify a URL alone, then it prints log messages for everything that the URL contains. If you add paths past the URL, only messages for those paths under that URL will be printed.

With `--verbose`, also print all affected paths with each log message. With `--quiet`, **svn log** don't print the log message body itself (this is compatible with `--verbose`).

Each log message is printed just once, even if more than one of the affected paths for that revision were explicitly requested. Logs cross copy history by default; use `--strict` to disable this.

Alternate names

None

Changes

Nothing

Accesses Repository

Yes

Switches

```
--revision (-r) REV
--quiet (-q)
--verbose (-v)
--targets FILENAME
--username USER
--password PASS
--no-auth-cache
--non-interactive
--strict
--incremental
--xml
```

Examples

You can see the log messages for all the paths that changed in your working copy by running `svn log` from the top:

```
$ svn log
-----
rev 20:  harry | 2003-01-17 22:56:19 -0600 (Fri, 17 Jan 2003) | 1 line
Tweak.
-----
rev 17:  sally | 2003-01-16 23:21:19 -0600 (Thu, 16 Jan 2003) | 2 lines
...

```

Examine all log messages for a particular file in your working copy:

```
$ svn log foo.c
-----
rev 32:  sally | 2003-01-13 16:43:13 -0600 (Mon, 13 Jan 2003) | 1 line
Added defines.
-----
rev 28:  sally | 2003-01-07 21:48:33 -0600 (Tue, 07 Jan 2003) | 3 lines
...

```

If you don't have a working copy handy, you can log a URL:

```
$ svn log http://svn.red-bean.com/repos/test/foo.c
-----
rev 32:  sally | 2003-01-13 16:43:13 -0600 (Mon, 13 Jan 2003) | 1 line
Added defines.
-----
rev 28:  sally | 2003-01-07 21:48:33 -0600 (Tue, 07 Jan 2003) | 3 lines
...

```

If you want several distinct paths underneath the same URL, you can use the `[URL PATH ...]` syntax.

```
$ svn log http://svn.red-bean.com/repos/test/ foo.c bar.c
-----
rev 32:  sally | 2003-01-13 16:43:13 -0600 (Mon, 13 Jan 2003) | 1 line
Added defines.
-----
rev 31:  harry | 2003-01-10 12:25:08 -0600 (Fri, 10 Jan 2003) | 1 line
Added new file bar.c
-----
rev 28:  sally | 2003-01-07 21:48:33 -0600 (Tue, 07 Jan 2003) | 3 lines
...

```

That is the same as explicitly placing both URLs on the command line:

```
$ svn log http://svn.red-bean.com/repos/test/foo.c \
          http://svn.red-bean.com/repos/test/foo.c
...

```

Warning

If you run `svn log` on a specific path and provide a specific revision and get no output at all

```
$ svn log -r 20 http://svn.red-bean.com/untouched.txt
```

That just means that the path was not modified in that revision. If you log from the top of the repository, or know the file that changed in that revision, you can specify it explicitly:

```
$ svn log -r 20 touched.txt
```

```
-----
```

```
rev 20:  sally | 2003-01-17 22:56:19 -0600 (Fri, 17 Jan 2003) | 1 line
```

```
Made a change.
```

```
-----
```

Name

svn merge -- Apply the differences between two URLs to a working copy path.

svn merge

Synopsis

```
svn merge URL1[@N] URL2[@M] [PATH]
```

```
merge -r N:M TARGET [PATH]
```

Description

In the first form, URL1 and URL2 are URLs specified at revisions N and M. These are the two sources to be compared. The revisions default to HEAD if omitted.

In the second form TARGET can be a URL, or it can be a working copy path, in which case the corresponding URL is used. This URL, at revisions N and M, defines the two sources to be compared.

PATH is the working copy path that will receive the changes. If omitted, a default value of '.' is assumed.

Alternate names

None

Changes

Working copy

Accesses Repository

Only if working with URLs

Switches

```
--revision (-r) REV  
--non-recursive (-N)  
--quiet (-q)  
--force  
--dry-run  
--username USER  
--password PASS  
--no-auth-cache  
--non-interactive
```

Examples

Merge a branch back into the trunk (assuming that you have a working copy of the trunk):

```
$ svn merge http://svn.red-bean.com/repos/trunk/vendors http://svn.red-bean.com/repos/branches/vendors
U myproj/tiny.txt
U myproj/thhgttg.txt
U myproj/win.txt
U myproj/flo.txt
```

If you branched at revision 23, and you want to merge changes on trunk into your branch, you could do this from inside the working copy of your branch:

```
$ svn merge -r 23:30 file:///tmp/repos/trunk/vendors
U myproj/thhgttg.txt
...
```

Name

svn mkdir -- Create a new directory under revision control.

svn mkdir

Synopsis

```
svn mkdir TARGET [TARGET [TARGET ... ]]
```

Description

Create a directory with a name given by the final component of TARGET. If TARGET is a working copy path the directory is scheduled for addition in the working copy. If TARGET is an URL the directory is created in the repository via an immediate commit. In both cases all the intermediate directories must already exist.

Alternate names

None

Changes

Working copy, repository if operating on a URL

Accesses Repository

Only if operating on a URL

Switches

```
--message (-m) TEXT  
--file (-F) FILE  
--quiet (-q)  
--username USER  
--password PASS  
--no-auth-cache  
--non-interactive  
--encoding ENC
```

Examples

Create a directory in your working copy:

```
$ svn mkdir newdir  
A      newdir
```

Create on in the repository (instant commit, so a log message is required):

```
$ svn mkdir -m "Making a new dir." http://svn.red-bean.com/repos/newdir  
Committed revision 26.
```

Name

svn move -- Move a file or directory.

svn move

Synopsis

```
svn move SRC DST
```

Description

This command moves a file or directory in your working copy or in the repository.

Tip

This command is equivalent to a **svn copy** followed by **svn delete**.

Warning

Subversion does not support moving between working copies and URLs.

WC -> WC Move and schedule a file or directory for addition (with history).

URL -> URL Complete server-side rename.

Alternate names

mv, rename, ren

Changes

Working copy, repository if operating on a URL

Accesses Repository

Only if operating on a URL

Switches

```
--message (-m) TEXT
--file (-F) FILE
--revision (-r) REV
--quiet (-q)
--username USER
--password PASS
--no-auth-cache
--non-interactive
--force
--encoding ENC
```

Examples

Move a file in your working copy:

```
$ svn mv foo.c bar.c
A      bar.c
D      foo.c
```

Move a file in the repository (an immediate commit, so it requires a commit message):

```
$ svn mv -m "Move a file" http://svn.red-bean.com/repos/foo.c http://svn.red-bean.com/repos/bar.c
Committed revision 27.
```

Name

svn propset -- Set PROPNAME to PROPVAL on files, dirs, or revisions.

svn propset

Synopsis

```
svn propset PROPNAME [PROPVAL | -F VALFILE] PATH [PATH [PATH ... ]]
```

```
propset PROPNAME --revprop -r REV [PROPVAL | -F VALFILE] [URL]
```

Description

Set PROPNAME to PROPVAL on files, dirs, or revisions. The first example creates a versioned, local propchange in working copy, and the second creates an unversioned, remote propchange on a repository revision.

Note: Subversion has a number of “special” properties that affect its behavior. See Section , “Special properties” for more on these properties.

Alternate names

pset, ps

Changes

working copy, repository only if operating on a URL

Accesses Repository

Only if operating on a URL

Switches

```
--file (-F) FILE  
--quiet (-q)  
--revision (-r) REV  
--targets FILENAME  
--recursive (-R)  
--revprop  
--encoding ENC
```

Examples

Set the mimetype on a file:

```
$ svn propset svn:mime-type image/jpeg foo.jpg  
property 'svn:mime-type' set on 'foo.jpg'
```

On a UNIX system, if you want a file to have the executable permission set:

```
$ svn ps svn:executable ON somescript
property `svn:executable' set on 'somescript'
```

Perhaps you have an internal policy to set certain properties for the benefit of your coworkers:

```
$ svn propset owner sally foo.c
property `owner' set on 'foo.c'
```

If you made a mistake in a log message for a particular revision and want to change it, use `--revprop` and set `svn:log` to the new log message:

```
$ svn propset --revprop -r 25 svn:log "Journaled about trip to New York."
property `svn:log' set on repository revision '25'
```

Or, if you don't have a working copy, you can provide a URL.

```
$ svn propset --revprop -r 26 svn:log "Document nap." http://svn.red-bean.com/repos
property `svn:log' set on repository revision '25'
```

Lastly, you can tell `propset` to take its input from a file. You could even use this to set the contents of a property to something binary:

```
$ svn propset owner-pic -F sally.jpg moo.c
property `owner-pic' set on 'moo.c'
```

Warning

By default, you cannot modify revprops in a Subversion repository. Your repository administrator must explicitly enable revprop modifications by creating a hook named `'pre-revprop-change'`. See Section , “Hook scripts” for more information on hook scripts.

Name

svn propdel -- Remove a property from an item.

svn propdel

Synopsis

```
svn propdel PROPNAME [PATH [PATH ... ]]
```

```
svn propdel PROPNAME --revprop -r REV [URL]
```

Description

This removes properties from files, directories, or revisions. The first form removes versioned properties in working copy, while the second removes unversioned remote properties on a repository revision.

Alternate names

pdel

Changes

working copy, repository only if operating on a URL

Accesses Repository

Only if operating on a URL

Switches

```
--quiet (-q)
--recursive (-R)
--revision (-r) REV
--revprop
```

Examples

Delete a property from a file in your working copy

```
$ svn propdel svn:mime-type some-script
property `svn:mime-type' deleted from 'some-script'.
```

Delete a revision property:

```
$ svn propdel --revprop -r 26 release-date
property `release-date' deleted from repository revision '26'
```


Name

svn propedit -- Edit the property of one or more items under version control.

svn propedit

Synopsis

```
svn propedit PROPNAME PATH [PATH [PATH ... ]]
```

```
svn propedit PROPNAME --revprop -r REV [URL]
```

Description

Edits one or more properties using your favorite editor. The first form edits versioned properties in your working copy, while the second edits unversioned remote properties on a repository revision.

Alternate names

pedit, pe

Changes

working copy, repository only if operating on a URL

Accesses Repository

Only if operating on a URL

Switches

```
--revision (-r) REV  
--revprop  
--encoding ENC
```

Examples

svn propedit makes it easy to modify properties that have multiple values:

```
$ svn propedit svn:keywords foo.c  
  <svn will launch your favorite editor here, with a buffer open  
  containing the current contents of the svn:keywords property.  You  
  can add multiple values to a property easily here by entering one  
  value per line.>  
Set new value for property `svn:keywords' on `foo.c'
```

Name

svn propget -- Prints the value of a property.

svn propget

Synopsis

```
svn propget PROPNAME [PATH [PATH ... ]]
```

```
svn propget PROPNAME --revprop -r REV [URL]
```

Description

Prints the value of a property on files, directories, or revisions. The first form prints the versioned property of an item or items in your working copy, while the second prints unversioned remote property on a repository revision. See Section , “Properties” for more information on properties.

Alternate names

pget, pg

Changes

Working copy, repository only if operating on a URL

Accesses Repository

Only if operating on a URL

Switches

```
--recursive (-R)
--revision (-r) REV
--revprop
```

Examples

Examine a property of a file in your working copy:

```
$ svn propget svn:keywords foo.c
Author
Date
Rev
```

The same goes for a revision property:

```
$ svn propget svn:log --revprop -r 20  
Began journal.
```

Name

svn proplist -- Lists all properties.

svn proplist

Synopsis

```
svn proplist [PATH [PATH ... ]]
```

```
svn proplist --revprop -r REV [URL]
```

Description

Lists all properties on files, directories, or revisions. The first form lists versioned properties in working copy, while the second lists unversioned remote properties on a repository revision.

Alternate names

plist, pl

Changes

Working copy, repository only if operating on a URL

Accesses Repository

Only if operating on a URL

Switches

```
--verbose (-v)
--recursive (-R)
--revision (-r) REV
--revprop
```

Examples

You can use proplist to see the properties on an item in your working copy:

```
$ svn proplist foo.c
Properties on 'foo.c':
  svn:mime-type
  svn:keywords
  owner
```

But with the `--verbose` flag, svn proplist is extremely handy as it also shows you the values for the properties:

```
$ svn proplist --verbose foo.c
Properties on 'foo.c':
  svn:mime-type : text/plain
  svn:keywords : Author Date Rev
  owner       : sally
```

Name

svn revert -- Undo all local edits.

svn revert

Synopsis

```
svn revert PATH [PATH [PATH ... ]]
```

Description

Reverts any local changes to a file or directory and resolves any conflicted states. **svn revert** will not only revert the contents of an item in your working copy, but also any property changes. Finally, you can use it to undo any scheduling operations that you may have done (e.g. files scheduled for addition or deletion can be “unscheduled”).

Alternate names

None

Changes

working copy

Accesses Repository

No

Switches

```
--targets FILENAME  
--recursive (-R)  
--quiet (-q)
```

Examples

Discard changes to a file:

```
$ svn revert foo.c  
Reverted foo.c
```

If you want to revert a whole directory of files, use the `--recursive` flag:

```
$svn revert --recursive .  
Reverted newdir/afile  
Reverted foo.c  
Reverted bar.txt
```

Lastly, you can undo any scheduling operations:

```
$ svn add mistake.txt whoops
A      mistake.txt
A      whoops
A      whoops/oopsie.c

$ svn revert mistake.txt whoops
Reverted mistake.txt
Reverted whoops

$ svn status
?      mistake.txt
?      whoops
```

Warning

If you provide no targets to `svn revert`, it will do nothing—to protect you from accidentally losing changes in your working copy, `svn revert` requires you to provide at least one target.

Name

svn resolve -- Remove “conflicted” state on working copy files or directories.

svn resolve

Synopsis

```
svn resolve PATH [PATH [PATH ... ]]
```

Description

Remove “conflicted” state on working copy files or directories. Note: this routine does not semantically resolve conflict markers; it merely removes conflict-related artifact files and allows PATH to be committed again. See Section , “Resolving conflicts (Merging others' changes)” for an in-depth look at resolving conflicts.

Alternate names

None

Changes

Working copy

Accesses Repository

No

Switches

```
--targets FILENAME
--recursive (-R)
--quiet (-q)
```

Examples

If you get a conflict on an update, your working copy will sprout three new files:

```
$ svn up
C foo.c
Updated to revision 31.
$ ls
foo.c
foo.c.mine
foo.c.r30
foo.c.r31
```

Once you've resolved the conflict and `foo.c` is ready to be committed, run **svn resolve** to let your working copy

know you've taken care of everything.

Warning

You *can* just remove the conflict files and commit, but `svn resolve` fixes up some bookkeeping data in the working copy administrative area in addition to removing the conflict files, so we recommend that you use this command.

Name

`svn status --` Print the status of working copy files and directories.

`svn status`

Synopsis

```
svn status [PATH [PATH ... ]]
```

Description

Print the status of working copy files and directories. With no args, it prints only locally modified items (no repository access). With `--show-updates`, add working revision and server out-of-date information. With `--verbose`, print full revision information on every item.

The first five columns in the output are each one character wide, and each column gives you information about different aspects of each working copy item.

The first column indicates that an item was added, deleted, or otherwise changed.

- ' ' No modifications.
- 'A' Item is scheduled for Addition.
- 'D' Item is scheduled for Deletion.
- 'M' Item has been modified.
- 'C' Item is in conflict with updates received from the repository.
- '?' Item is not under version control.
- !' Item is missing (e.g. you moved or deleted it without using `svn`).
- '~' Item is versioned as a directory, but has been replaced by a file, or vice versa

The second column tells the status of a file's or directory's properties.

- ' ' No modifications.
- 'M' Properties for this item have been modified.
- 'C' Properties for this item are in conflict with property updates received from the repository.

The third column is populated only if the working copy directory is locked.

- ' ' Item is not locked.
- 'L' Item is locked.

The fourth column is populated only if the item is scheduled for addition-with-history.

' ' No history scheduled with commit.

'+' History scheduled with commit.

The fifth column is populated only if the item is switched relative to its parent (See Section , “Switching a working copy”).

' ' Item is child of its parent directory.

'S' Item is switched.

The out-of-date information appears in the eighth column (only if you pass the `--show-updates` switch).

' ' The item in your working copy is up-to-date.

'*' A newer revision of the item exists on the server.

The remaining fields are variable width and delimited by spaces. The working revision is the next field if the `-show-updates` or `--verbo` switches are passed.

If the `--verbose` switch is passed, the last committed revision and last committed author are displayed next.

The working copy path is always the final field, so it can include spaces.

Alternate names

stat, st

Changes

Nothing

Accesses Repository

Only if using `--show-updates`

Switches

```
--show-updates (-u)
--verbose (-v)
--non-recursive (-N)
--quiet (-q)
--username USER
--password PASS
--no-auth-cache
--non-interactive
--no-ignore
```

Examples

This is the easiest way to find out what changes you have made to your working copy:

```
$ svn status wc
M      wc/bar.c
A +    wc/qax.c
```

If you want to find out what files in your working copy are out-of-date, pass the `--show-updates` switch (This will *not* make any changes to your working copy). Here you can see that `wc/foo.c` has changed in the repository since we last updated our working copy:

```
$ svn status --show-updates wc
M      965      wc/bar.c
*      965      wc/foo.c
A +    965      wc/qax.c
Head revision: 981
```

And finally, the most information you can get out of the status subcommand:

```
$ svn status --show-updates --verbose wc
M      965      938      sally  wc/bar.c
*      965      922      harry  wc/foo.c
A +    965      687      harry  wc/qax.c
      965      687      harry  wc/zip.c
Head revision: 981
```

For many more examples of `svn status`, see Section , “`svn status`”.

Name

svn switch -- Update working copy to a different URL.

svn switch

Synopsis

```
svn switch URL [PATH]
```

Description

This subcommand updates your working copy to mirror a new URL—usually a URL which shares a common ancestor with your working copy, although not necessarily. This is the Subversion way to move a working copy to a new branch. (See Section , “Switching a working copy”) for an in-depth look at switching.

Alternate names

sw

Changes

working copy

Accesses Repository

Yes

Switches

```
--revision (-r) REV
--non-recursive (-N)
--quiet (-q)
--username USER
--password PASS
--no-auth-cache
--non-interactive
```

Examples

If you're currently inside the directory 'vendors' which was branched to 'vendors-with-fix' and you'd like to switch your working copy to that branch:

```
$ svn switch http://svn.red-bean.com/repos/branches/vendors-with-fix .
U myproj/foo.txt
U myproj/bar.txt
U myproj/baz.c
U myproj/qux.c
Updated to revision 31.
```

And to switch back, just provide the URL to the location in the repository from which you originally checked out your working copy:

```
$ svn switch http://svn.red-bean.com/repos/trunk/vendors .
U myproj/foo.txt
U myproj/bar.txt
U myproj/baz.c
U myproj/qux.c
Updated to revision 31.
```

Tip

You can just switch part of your working copy to a branch if you don't want to switch your entire working copy.

Name

svn update -- Updates your working copy.

svn update

Synopsis

```
svn update [PATH [PATH ... ]]
```

Description

svn update brings changes from the repository into your working copy. If no revision given, it brings your working copy up-to-date with the HEAD revision. Otherwise, it synchronizes the working copy to the revision given by the `-revision` switch.

For each updated item a line will start with a character reporting the action taken. These characters have the following meaning:

```
###TODO Reformat all of this
A Added
D Deleted
U Updated
C Conflict
G Merged
```

A character in the first column signifies an update to the actual file, while updates to the file's props are shown in the second column.

Alternate names

up

Changes

Working copy

Accesses Repository

Yes

Switches

```
--revision (-r) REV
--non-recursive (-N)
--quiet (-q)
--username USER
--password PASS
--no-auth-cache
--non-interactive
```

Examples

Pick up repository changes that have happened since your last update:

```
$ svn up
A newdir/toggle.c
A newdir/disclose.c
A newdir/launch.c
D newdir/README
Updated to revision 32.
```

You can also update your working copy to an older revision (Subversion doesn't have the concept of “sticky” files like CVS does. See Appendix A, *Subversion for CVS Users*):

```
svn up -r30
A newdir/README
D newdir/toggle.c
D newdir/disclose.c
D newdir/launch.c
U foo.c
Updated to revision 30.
```

Tip

If you want to examine an older revision of a single file, you may want to use 'svn cat' (###TODO xref)

svnadmin

svnadmin is the administrative tool for monitoring and repairing your Subversion repository. For detailed information, see Section , “svnadmin”

###TODO Mark this up.

Switches

--copies

Follow copy history when examining a path.

--in-repos-template ARG

Specify a template for the repository structure when creating a new repository.

The "in-repository" templates specify the layout of the repository itself (which lives in Berkeley DB files inside the db/ directory) like /trunk, /branches, etc. These templates can be used by an administrator or application to do an initial load of the repository (without invoking hooks). There is no default; the repository is built "empty" unless you tell it otherwise.

--incremental

Dump a revision only as a diff against the previous revision, instead of the usual fulltext.

--on-disk-template ARG

Specify a template to use for the on-disk structure (i.e. conf/,

hooks/, etc.) of the repository you want to create.

The "on-disk" templates describe the repository directory itself. Each of the templates have a name, and the "default" on-disk template contains:

```
default/  
  README  
  dav/  
  format  
  hooks/  
    post-commit.tmpl  
    post-revprop-change.tmpl  
    pre-commit.tmpl  
    pre-revprop-change.tmpl  
    start-commit.tmpl  
  locks/  
    db.lock
```

The typical usage for the on-disk structures is to predefine the hook scripts that will be created. For example, you could prepopulate the 'post-commit' script with a commit mailer and backup script. Then, each time the administrator creates a new repository, she can refer to this new template which automatically includes all of the hooks.

--revision (-r) ARG

Specify a particular revision to operate on.

Name

svn create -- Create a new, empty repository at REPOS_PATH.

svn create

Synopsis

```
svnadmin create REPOS_PATH
```

Description

Create a new, empty repository at REPOS_PATH.

Switches

```
--on-disk-template arg  
--in-repos-template arg
```

Examples

###TODO need description here?

```
$ svnadmin create /usr/local/svn/repos
```

###TODO more examples with templates?

Name

svnadmin createtxn -- Create a new transaction.

svnadmin createtxn

Synopsis

```
svnadmin createtxn REPOS_PATH -r REVISION
```

Description

Create a new transaction in the repository based on REVISION.

Switches

```
--revision (-r)
```

Examples

###TODO need description here?

```
$ svnadmin createtxn /usr/local/svn/repos -r 21
```

###TODO more examples with templates?

Name

svnadmin dump -- Dump the contents of filesystem to stdout.

svnadmin dump

Synopsis

```
svnadmin dump REPOS_PATH [-r LOWER[:UPPER]] [--incremental]
```

Description

Dump the contents of filesystem to stdout in a 'dumpfile' portable format, sending feedback to stderr. Dump revisions LOWER rev through UPPER rev. If no revisions are given, dump all revision trees. If only LOWER is given, dump that one revision tree.

Switches

```
--revision (-r)  
--incremental
```

Examples

Dump your whole repository:

```
$ svnadmin dump /usr/local/svn/repos  
SVN-fs-dump-format-version: 1  
Revision-number: 0  
* Dumped revision 0.  
Prop-content-length: 56  
Content-length: 56  
...
```

Incrementally dump a single transaction from your repository:

```
$ svnadmin dump /usr/local/svn/repos -r 21 --incremental  
* Dumped revision 21.  
SVN-fs-dump-format-version: 1  
Revision-number: 21  
Prop-content-length: 101  
Content-length: 101  
...
```

Name

svnadmin help

svnadmin help

Synopsis

```
svn help [SUBCOMMAND1 [SUBCOMMAND2] ...]
```

Description

This is another good friend when you're using Subversion and this book isn't within reach!

Name

svnadmin load -- Read a 'dumpfile'-formatted stream from STDIN.

svnadmin load

Synopsis

```
svnadmin load REPOS_PATH
```

Description

Read a “dumpfile”-formatted stream from stdin, committing new revisions into the repository's filesystem. Send progress feedback to stdout.

Example

###TODO need description here?

```
$ svnadmin load /usr/local/svn/restored < repos-backup
<<< Started new txn, based on original revision 1
    * adding path : test ... done.
    * adding path : test/a ... done.
...
```

Name

svnadmin lscr -- Print, one-per-line and youngest-to-eldest, the revisions in which PATH was modified.

svnadmin lscr

Synopsis

```
svnadmin lscr REPOS_PATH PATH [--copies]
```

Description

Print, one-per-line and youngest-to-eldest, the revisions in which PATH was modified. Use the COPIES flag to allow this operation to cross copy history while searching for revisions. PATH must exist in the HEAD of the repository). It's not immediately obvious, but lscr stands for LiSt Changed Revisions.

Switches

--copies

Examples

List the revisions in which a path was modified:

```
$ svnadmin lscr /usr/local/svn/repos/ test-moved-file
34
33
```

List the revisions in which a path was modified including changes that occurred before it was moved/copied:

```
$ svnadmin lscr /usr/local/svn/repos/ test-moved-file --copies
34
33
15
14
...
```

Name

svnadmin lstxns -- Print the names of all uncommitted transactions.

svnadmin lstxns

Synopsis

```
svnadmin lstxns REPOS_PATH
```

Description

Print the names of all uncommitted transactions. ###TODO Tell more here.

Examples

###TODO need description here?

```
$ svnadmin lstxns /usr/local/svn/repos/  
lw  
lx
```

Name

svnadmin recover -- Run the Berkeley DB recovery procedure on a repository.

svnadmin recover

Synopsis

```
svnadmin recover REPOS_PATH
```

Description

Run the Berkeley DB recovery procedure on a repository. Do this if you've been getting errors indicating that recovery ought to be run.

Warning

Only run this when you are SURE you're the only process accessing the repository. Requires exclusive access.

Examples

###TODO need description here?

```
$ svnadmin recover /usr/local/svn/repos/  
Acquiring exclusive lock on repository db.  
Recovery is running, please stand by...  
Recovery completed.  
The latest repos revision is 34.
```

Name

svnadmin rmtxns -- Delete the named transaction(s).

```
svnadmin rmtxns
```

Synopsis

```
svnadmin rmtxns REPOS_PATH TXN_NAME [TXN_NAME2 ...]TODO
```

Description

Delete the named transaction(s). ###TODO Tell more here.

Examples

Remove named transactions:

```
$ svnadmin rmtxns /usr/local/svn/repos/ 1w 1x
```

Fortunately, the output of `svn lstxns` works great as the input for `rmtxns`:

```
$ svnadmin rmtxns /usr/local/svn/repos/ `svnadmin lstxns /usr/local/svn/repos/`
```

Which will remove all uncommitted transactions from your repository.

Name

svnadmin setlog -- Set the log-message on a revision.

svnadmin setlog

Synopsis

```
svnadmin setlog REPOS_PATH -r REVISION FILE
```

Description

Set the log-message on revision REVISION to the contents of FILE. (Note that revision properties are not under version control, so this command will permanently overwrite the previous log message.)

Switches

```
--revision (-r) ARG
```

Examples

Set the log message for revision 19 to the contents of the file 'msg':

```
$ svnadmin setlog /usr/local/svn/repos/ -r 19 msg
```

svnlook

svnlook is a command line utility for examining different aspects of a Subversion repository.

svnlook is typically used by the repository hooks, but a repository administrator might find it useful for diagnostic purposes. Since **svnlook** can only be used on the machine that holds the repository, it takes paths as targets and not URLs.

If no revision or transaction is specified, **svnlook** defaults to the youngest (most recent) revision of the repository.

Switches

```
###TODO Mark this up.  
--no-diff-deleted
```

Prevents **svnlook** from printing differences for deleted files. The default behavior when a file is deleted in a transaction/revision is to print the same differences that you would see if you had left the file but removed all the content.

```
--revision (-r)
```

Specify a particular revision number that you wish to examine.

```
--transaction (-t)
```

Specify a particular transaction id that you wish to examine.

`--show-ids`

Show the filesystem node revision IDs for each path in the filesystem tree.

Name

svnlook author -- Print the author.

svnlook author

Synopsis

```
svnlook author REPOS_PATH
```

Description

Print the author of a path in the repository. ###TODO Tell more here.

Switches

```
--revision (-r)  
--transaction (-t)
```

Examples

###TODO need examples

Name

svnlook changed -- Print the paths that were changed.

svnlook changed

Synopsis

```
svnlook changed REPOS_PATH
```

Description

Print the paths that were changed. ###TODO Tell more here.

Switches

```
--revision (-r)  
--transaction (-t)
```

Examples

###TODO need examples

Name

svnlook date -- Print the datestamp.

svnlook date

Synopsis

```
svnlook date REPOS_PATH
```

Description

Print the datestamp. ###TODO tell more here.

Switches

```
--revision (-r)  
--transaction (-t)
```

Examples

###TODO need examples

Name

svnlook diff -- Print diffs of changed files and properties.

svnlook diff

Synopsis

```
svnlook diff REPOS_PATH
```

Description

Print GNU-style diffs of changed files and properties. ###TODO Tell more here.

Switches

```
--revision (-r)  
--transaction (-t)  
--no-diff-deleted
```

Examples

###TODO need examples

Name

svnlook dirs-changed -- Print the directories that were themselves changed.

svnlook dirs-changed

Synopsis

```
svnlook dirs-changed REPOS_PATH
```

Description

Print the directories that were themselves changed (property edits) or whose file children were changed.

Switches

```
--revision (-r)  
--transaction (-t)
```

Examples

###TODO need examples

Name

svnlook help

svnlook help

Synopsis

Also `svnlook -h` and `svnlook -?`.

Description

Display the help message for `svnlook`. This command is still your friend, even though you never call it anymore.

Name

svnlook info -- Print the author, datestamp, log message size, and log message.

svnlook info

Synopsis

```
svnlook info REPOS_PATH
```

Description

Print the author, datestamp, log message size, and log message. ###TODO Tell more here.

Switches

```
--revision (-r)  
--transaction (-t)
```

Examples

###TODO need examples

Name

svnlook log -- Print the log message.

svnlook log

Synopsis

```
svnlook log REPOS_PATH
```

Description

Print the log message. ###TODO Tell more here.

Switches

```
--revision (-r)  
--transaction (-t)
```

Examples

###TODO need examples

Name

svnlook tree -- Print the tree

svnlook tree

Synopsis

```
svnlook tree REPOS_PATH
```

Description

Print the tree, optionally showing node revision ids. ###TODO Tell more here.

Switches

```
--revision (-r)  
--transaction (-t)  
--show-ids
```

Examples

###TODO need examples

Name

svnlook youngest -- Print the youngest revision number.

svnlook youngest

Synopsis

```
svnlook youngest REPOS_PATH
```

Description

Print the youngest revision number. ###TODO Tell more here.

Examples

###TODO need examples

Appendix A. Subversion for CVS Users

This appendix is a guide for CVS users new to Subversion. It's essentially a list of differences between the two systems as “viewed from 10,000 feet.” For each section, we provide backreferences to relevant chapters when possible.

Although the goal of Subversion is to take over the current and future CVS user base, some new features and design changes were required to fix certain “broken” behaviors that CVS had. This means that, as a CVS user, you may need to break habits—ones that you forgot were odd to begin with.

Revision Numbers Are Different Now

In CVS, revision numbers are per-file. This is because CVS uses RCS as a backend; each file has a corresponding RCS file in the repository, and the repository is roughly laid out according to the structure of your project tree.

In Subversion, the repository looks like a single filesystem. Each commit results in an entirely new filesystem tree; in essence, the repository is an array of trees. Each of these trees is labeled with a single revision number. When someone talks about “revision 54,” they're talking about a particular tree (and indirectly, the way the filesystem looked after the 54th commit).

Technically, it's not valid to talk about “revision 5 of `f00.c`”. Instead, one would say “`f00.c` as it appears in revision 5.” Also, be careful when making assumptions about the evolution of a file. In CVS, revisions 5 and 6 of `f00.c` are always different. In Subversion, it's most likely that `f00.c` did *not* change between revisions 5 and 6.

For more details on this topic, see Section , “Revisions”.

Directory versions

Subversion tracks tree structures, not just file contents. It's one of the biggest reasons Subversion was written to replace CVS.

Here's what this means to you, as a former CVS user:

- The **svn add** and **svn rm** commands work on directories now, just as they work on files. So do **svn cp** and **svn mv**. However, these commands do *not* cause any kind of immediate change in the repository. Instead, the working items are simply “scheduled” for addition or deletion. No repository changes happen until you run **svn commit**.
- Directories aren't dumb containers anymore; they have revision numbers like files. (Or more properly, it's correct to talk about “directory `f00/` in revision 5”.)

Let's talk more about that last point. Directory versioning is a hard problem; because we want to allow mixed-revision working copies, there are some limitations on how far we can abuse this model.

From a theoretical point of view, we define “revision 5 of directory `f00`” to mean a specific collection of directory-entries and properties. Now suppose we start adding and removing files from `f00`, and then commit. It would be a lie to say that we still have revision 5 of `f00`. However, if we bumped `f00`'s revision number after the commit, that would be a lie too; there may be other changes to `f00` we haven't yet received, because we haven't updated yet.

Subversion deals with this problem by quietly tracking committed adds and deletes in the `.svn` area. When you eventually run **svn update**, all accounts are settled with the repository, and the directory's new revision number is set correctly. *Therefore, only after an update is it truly safe to say that you have a “perfect” revision of a directory.* Most of the time, your working copy will contain “imperfect” directory revisions.

Similarly, a problem arises if you attempt to commit property changes on a directory. Normally, the commit would bump the working directory's local revision number. But again, that would be a lie, because there may be adds or deletes that the directory doesn't yet have, because no update has happened. *Therefore, you are not allowed to commit property-changes on a directory unless the directory is up-to-date.*

For more discussion about the limitations of directory versioning, see Section , “The limitations of mixed revisions”.

More Disconnected Operations

In recent years, disk space has become outrageously cheap and abundant, but network bandwidth has not. Therefore, the Subversion working copy has been optimized around the scarcer resource.

The `.svn` administrative directory serves the same purpose as the `CVS` directory, except that it also stores read-only, “pristine” copies of your files. This allows you to do many things off-line:

svn status Shows you any local changes you've made. (see Section , “svn status”)

svn diff Shows you the details of your changes. (see Section , “svn diff”)

svn revert Removes your local changes. (see Section , “svn revert”)

Also, the cached pristine files allow the Subversion client to send differences when committing, which CVS cannot do.

The last subcommand in the list is new; it will not only remove local mods, but it will un-schedule operations such as adds and deletes. It's the preferred way to revert a file; running **rm file**; **svn up** will still work, but it blurs the purpose of updating. And, while we're on this subject...

Distinction Between Status and Update

In Subversion, we've tried to erase a lot of the confusion between the **cvcs status** and **cvcs update** commands.

The **cvcs status** command has two purposes: first, to show the user any local modifications in the working copy, and second, to show the user which files are out-of-date. Unfortunately, because of CVS's hard-to-read status output, many CVS users don't take advantage of this command at all. Instead, they've developed a habit of running **cvcs up** to quickly see their mods. Of course, this has the side effect of merging repository changes that you may not be ready to deal with!

With Subversion, we've tried to remove this muddle by making the output of **svn status** easy to read for both humans and parsers. Also, **svn update** only prints information about files that are updated, *not* local modifications.

Here's a quick guide to **svn status**. We encourage all new Subversion users to use it early and often:

svn status prints all files that have local modifications; the network is not accessed by default.

`-u` switch Add out-of-dateness information from repository.
`-v` switch Show *all* entries under version control.
`-n` switch Nonrecursive.

The status command has two output formats. In the default “short” format, local modifications look like this:

```
% svn status
M    ./foo.c
M    ./bar/baz.c
```

If you specify the `--update (-u)` switch, a longer output format is used:

```
% svn status -u
M          *      1047    ./foo.c
-          *      1045    ./faces.html
-          *      -      ./bloo.png
M          *      1050    ./bar/baz.c
Head revision: 1066
```

In this case, two new columns appear. The second column contains an asterisk if the file or directory is out-of-date. The third column shows the working-copy's revision number of the item. In the example above, the asterisk indicates that `faces.html` would be patched if we updated, and that `bloo.png` is a newly added file in the repository. (The `-` next to `bloo.png` means that it doesn't yet exist in the working copy.)

Lastly, here's a quick summary of status codes that you may see:

```
A    Add
D    Delete
R    Replace (delete, then re-add)
M    local Modification
U    Updated
G    merGed
C    Conflict
```

Subversion has combined the CVS **P** and **U** codes into just **U**. When a merge or conflict occurs, Subversion simply prints **G** or **C**, rather than a whole sentence about it.

For a more detailed discussion of **svn status**, see Section , “svn status”.

Branches and Tags

Subversion doesn't distinguish between filesystem space and “branch” space; branches and tags are ordinary directories within the filesystem. This is probably the single biggest mental hurdle a CVS user will need to climb. Read all about it in Chapter 4, *Branching and Merging*

Meta-data Properties

A new feature of Subversion is that you can attach arbitrary metadata to files and directories. We refer to this data as *properties*, and they can be thought of as collections of arbitrary name/value pairs attached to each item in your working copy.

To set or get a property name, use the **svn propset** and **svn propget** subcommands. To list all properties on an object, use **svn proplist**.

For more information, see Section , “Properties”.

Conflict resolution

CVS marks conflicts with in-line “conflict markers”, and prints a **C** during an update. Historically, this has caused problems, because CVS isn't doing enough. Many users forget about (or don't see) the **C** after it whizzes by on their terminal. They often forget that the conflict-markers are even present, and then accidentally commit files containing conflict-markers.

Subversion solves this problem by making conflicts more tangible. It remembers that a file is in a state of conflict, and won't allow you to commit your changes until you run **svn resolve**. See Section , “Resolving conflicts (Merging others' changes)” for more details.

Binary files and translation

CVS users have to mark binary files with `-kb` flags, to prevent data from being garbled (due to keyword expansion and line-ending translations). They sometimes forget to do this.

Subversion takes the more paranoid route: first, it never performs any kind of keyword or line-ending translation unless you explicitly ask it do so (see Section , “svn:keywords” and Section , “svn:eol-style” for more details.) By default, Subversion treats all file data as literal bytestrings, and files are always stored in the repository in an untranslated state.

Second, Subversion maintains an internal notion of whether a file is “text” or “binary” data, but this notion is *only* extant in the working copy. During a **svn update**, Subversion will perform contextual merges on locally modified text files, but will not attempt to do so for binary files.

To determine whether a contextual merge is possible, Subversion examines the `svn:mime-type` property. If the file has no `svn:mime-type` property, or has a mime-type that is textual (e.g. `text/*`), Subversion assumes it is text. Otherwise, Subversion it assumes the file is binary. Subversion also helps users by running a binary-detection algorithm in the **svn import** and **svn add** commands. These commands will make a good guess and then (possibly) set a binary `svn:mime-type` property on the file being added. (If Subversion guesses wrong, the user can always remove or hand-edit the property.)

Versioned Modules

Unlike CVS, a Subversion working copy is aware that it has checked out a module. That means that if somebody changes the definition of a module, then a call to **svn up** will update the working copy appropriately.

Subversion defines modules as a list of directories within a directory property: see Section , “Externals Definitions”.

Appendix B. CVS Repository Migration

TODO Write this

Appendix C. Troubleshooting

TODO Write this

Appendix D. FAQ?

TODO Write this?

Appendix E. Other Subversion Clients

TODO Write this

Appendix F. Third Party Tools

TODO Write this

Glossary

Add A **svn** command that is used to add a file or directory to a repository.

Colophon

Etc.