

Awesum User's Guide

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Part I. Introduction

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About this document

This document attempts to thoroughly describe the operation of the Awesum graphical checksum verifier. The intended audience for this document is anyone who may be interested in using Awesum. It assumes only a basic knowledge of computers.

As is the case with the documentation for most open source software, this is a perpetual work in progress. The author of this document makes no guarantees that the information contained herein is complete and/or accurate for any given period of time.

Sorry about the above paragraph, I just reaaaally want to make sure I don't get sued. Now, on with the show...

Chapter 1. What is Awesum?

You may be wondering at this point what Awesum is and why you should be interested in it. Well, let me explain.

Awesum is an easy to use graphical checksum verification program. That definition may not clarify things very much for you. Let's break it down to basics:

- *Graphical* - Graphical programs are the pretty-pointy-clicky programs that most people are used to. This is opposed to text-based programs that are executed from the command line and only input and output text. Graphical programs tend to be relatively easy to use, especially for beginners.
- *Checksum* - Checksums are strings of characters that are mathematically generated from files. They are useful for verifying the authenticity and integrity of downloaded files because it is extremely difficult to find two files that will generate the same checksum value. There are two major forms of checksums used on the Internet: MD5 and SHA1. Awesum fully supports both types.
- *Verification* - Verification, at least as it pertains to checksums, is the process of ensuring that a file of uncertain origin contains the expected content. It makes sure that what you want is what you get.

So, to put it all together, Awesum is a fairly easy to use program that is useful for checking the validity of files obtained from the Internet and other insecure sources.

Chapter 2. Why should I care about checksums?

Unfortunately, the Internet can be a nasty place. There are several people that would love to do harm to your computer. This is where checksums come into the picture. If the computed checksum for a downloaded file does not match the one posted by the original author of the file, then it is extremely probable that the file has been tampered with. To ensure that all of the files you download are in their pristine and intended state, you should always verify them against the official checksums posted by the author.

Additionally, downloaded files sometimes become corrupt due to network errors during the download process. This is especially prevalent while downloading large files. Checksums come to the rescue again in this situation. They ensure that your file was not corrupted or truncated during the download process.

In short, if the checksums don't match, you don't want anything to do with the file. Try downloading it again, possibly from a different source.

Note

Not all files that are available for download from the Internet are accompanied by checksums. In these situations, you should contact the author of the file directly and request one via e-mail.

Part II. Getting Started With Awesum

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Chapter 3. Getting Awesum

The latest version of Awesum is available from <http://awesum.sf.net/>. Click on the *Download* link for a list of Awesum related files that are available for download. This site is automatically mirrored by SourceForge.net so downloads should always be reasonably fast.

All distributions of Awesum contain a copy of this documentation.

Chapter 4. Installing Awesum

For Fedora Core and other RPM-based distributions

1. Download the binary RPM distribution of Awesum. It will be a file of the form `awesum-x.y.z-n.noarch.rpm`, where `x.y.z` is the version number and `n` is the RPM release number.
2. Install the RPM package you just downloaded using the following command:

```
$ rpm -Uvh awesum-x.y.z-n.noarch.rpm
```

Note

The '\$' symbol in the command lines above is a typical UNIX command prompt and should not be typed as part of the commands. Also, be sure to replace the `x.y.z` portion of the file name with the actual version number for Awesum.

3. The RPM package integrates Awesum into the system by adding it to your path. To run Awesum, simply type the following command:

```
$ awesum
```

For other flavors of Linux and UNIX-like systems

1. Download the tarball distribution of Awesum. It will be a file of the form `awesum-x.y.z-src.tar.gz`, where `x.y.z` is the version number.
2. Unpack the tarball distribution. One of the following commands should be sufficient:

```
$ tar zxvf awesum-x.y.z-src.tar.gz
```

-or-

```
$ gunzip -c awesum.tar.gz | tar xvf -
```

Note

The '\$' symbol in the command lines above is a typical UNIX command prompt and should not be typed as part of the commands. Also, be sure to replace the `x.y.z` portion of the file name with the actual version number for Awesum.

3. Make sure you have a recent version of Python and PyGTK installed.

- Python is available from <http://www.python.org/> if it is not already installed on your system.
- PyGTK is available from <http://www.pygtk.org/>.

4. Run the `awesum.py` Python script from the directory you unpacked the Awesum distribution to in step 2.

This may be achieved in two ways. Firstly, `awesum.py` is an executable shell script, meaning that you may run it directly using the following command:

```
$ ./awesum.py
```

The second method is to invoke the Python interpreter like so:

```
$ python awesum.py
```

As an optional final step, you may wish to integrate Awesum into your system by creating a symbolic link or a shell script pointing to the location of `awesum.py`. If you are writing a shell script, be sure to run the `awesum.py` Python script from the same directory as the `awesum.glade` file that is part of the distribution.

To create a symbolic link for convenient execution of Awesum, use a command similar to the following:

```
$ ln -s LOCATION_OF_AWESUM /usr/bin/awesum
```

As an alternative, one could write a shell script similar to the following:

```
#!/bin/sh
# Save this script as /usr/bin/awesum and make it executable.
(cd LOCATION_OF_AWESUM; python awesum.py)
```

Note

As of Awesum 0.6.0, installation (`install.sh`) and uninstallation (`clean.sh`) shell scripts are included as part of the distribution. Be careful with these though. They have only been tested on Fedora Core 1, so they may blow up your system or something. If you are the cautious type, it is recommended that you manually integrate Awesum into your system or use the RPM distribution.

For Microsoft Windows systems

Note

The installation procedure for Awesum on Windows is currently a somewhat manual process. However, this will soon change. The next release will focus on providing an executable installer package for Microsoft Windows.

TODO: Awesum has not been tested for use on Windows yet. It should work in theory as long as you install recent versions of Python (<http://www.python.org/>) and PyGTK (<http://www.pygtk.org/>).

Note

Installation of PyGTK requires that a copy of GTK+ be installed on your system as well. GTK+ is available from <http://www.gtk.org/>.

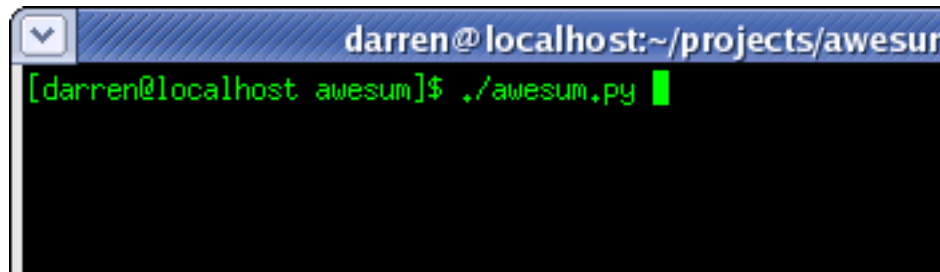
Once you install Python and PyGTK, in theory, all that you should have to do is unpack the tarball archive and double click on `awesum.py` or from the command prompt, run the following command:

```
C:\awesum-0.6.0\> python awesum.py
```

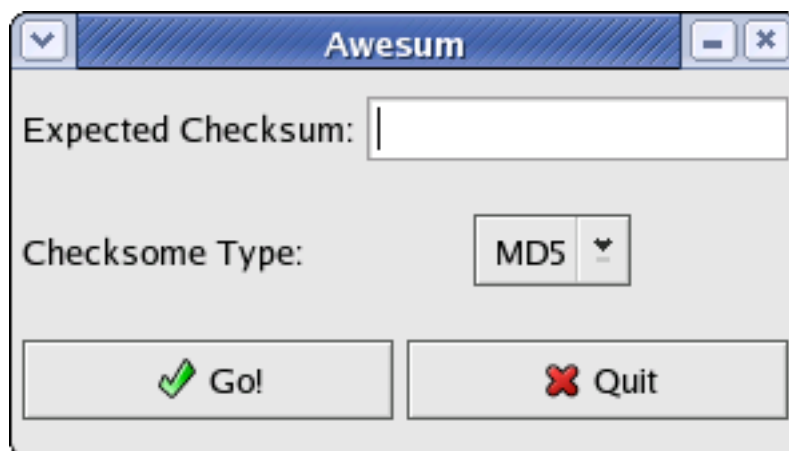
Chapter 5. Using Awesum

This chapter is intended to be a quick walk through of how to use Awesum. (It even has some pictures for people like me who hate to read.)

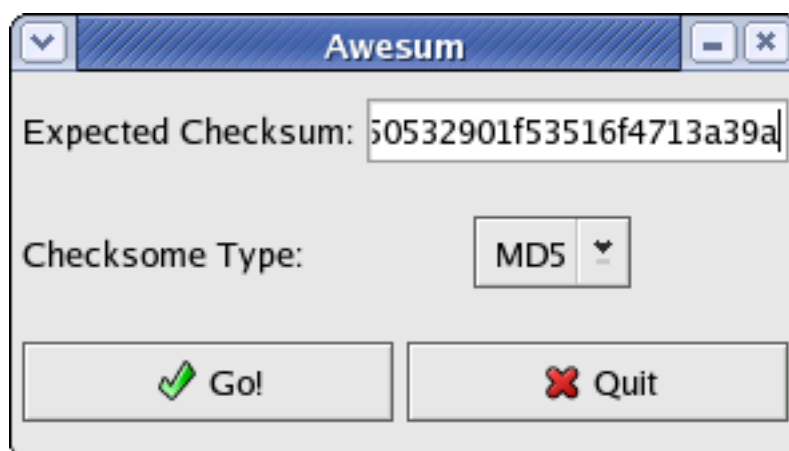
1. Invoke Awesum using one of the methods described in the previous chapter.



2. You will now be presented with the following window.

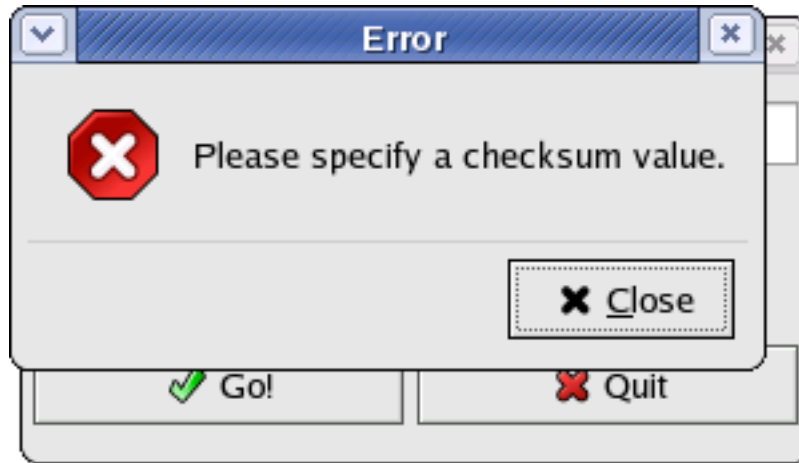


3. Copy the expected checksum for the file you want to verify and paste it into the Expected Checksum box. (To achieve this, right click on the Expected Checksum box and select paste.)

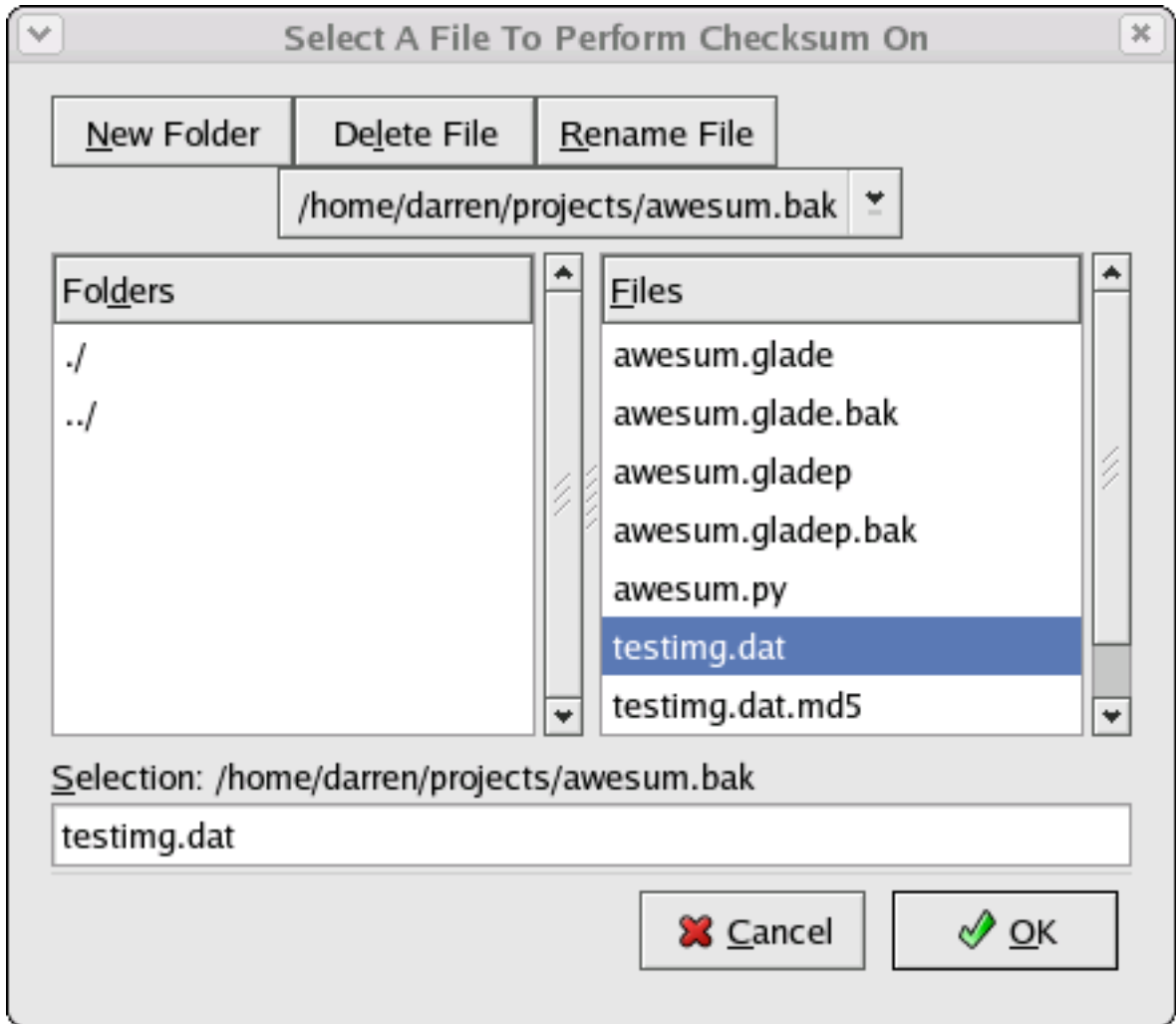


Note

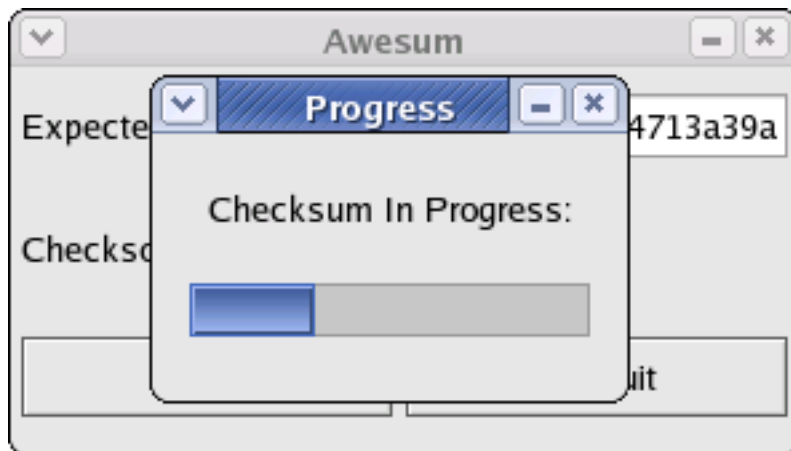
If you forget to enter an expected checksum value, Awesum will remind you and stubbornly refuse to continue until you do enter one. The following screen shot is an example of this:



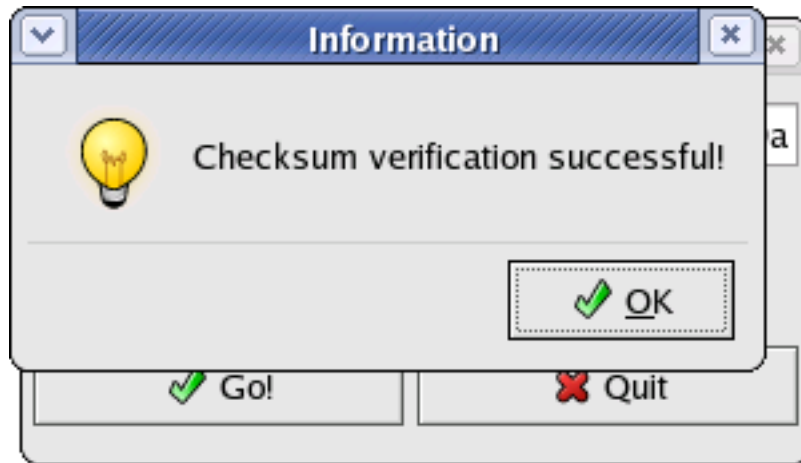
4. Click the Go! button. A file selection dialog will show up on your screen. Select the file that you want to verify the checksum of and click OK.



5. A progress window will now appear on your screen indicating how much of the checksum operation is complete.



6. Upon completion of the checksum operation, a window will show up on your screen indicating whether or not the checksums matched. If the expected checksum matches the checksum that was just computed, the following window will appear on your screen:



Otherwise, you will see this window:

