Make: Dependency Manager

Version 9.4.0.4

November 5, 2026

The `make` library provides a Racket version of the popular `make` utility. Its syntax is intended to imitate the syntax of `make`, only in Racket.

Contents

1 Overview **3**

2 Make from Dependencies **5**

2.1 Signature 6

2.2 Unit 6

3 Building Native-Code Extensions **7**

4 Making Collections **10**

4.1 Signature 10

4.2 Unit 10

1 Overview

If you want to build Racket modules with automatic dependency tracking, just use `raco make` as described in *raco: Racket Command-Line Tools*.

If you are already familiar with `make`, skip to the precise details of the `make` library in §2 "Make from Dependencies". This section contains a brief overview of `make` for everyone else.

When you use `make`, the idea is that you explain how to generate files in a project from a collection of source files that go through several stages of processing.

For example, say that you are writing a project that has three input files (which you create and maintain) called `"a.input"`, `"b.input"`, and `"c.input"`. Further, there are two stages of processing: first you run a particular tool `make-output` that takes an input file and produces an output file, and then you combine the input files into a single file using `combine-files`. Using `make`, you might describe this as:

```
a.output: a.input
        make-output a.input a.output
b.output: b.input
        make-output b.input b.output
c.output: c.input
        make-output c.input c.output
total: a.output b.output c.output
        combine-files a.output b.output c.output
```

Once you've put this description in a file called `"Makefile"` you can issue the command:

```
make total
```

to build your entire project. The `"Makefile"` consists of several rules that tell `make` how to create each piece of your project. For example, the rule that is specified in the first two lines say that `"a.output"` depends on `"a.input"` and the command for making `"a.output"` from `"a.input"` is

```
make-output a.input a.output
```

The main feature of `make` is that it uses the time stamps of files to determine when a certain step is necessary. The `make` utility uses existing programs to build your project — each rule has a shell command line.

The `make` library provides similar functionality, except that the description is in Racket, and the steps that are needed to build target files are implemented as Racket functions.

Here's a Racket program that is equivalent to the above:

```
(require make)

(define (make-output in out)
```

```
  ....)

(define (combine-files . args)
  ....)

(make
  (("a.output" ("a.input") (make-output "a.input" "a.output"))
   ("b.output" ("b.input") (make-output "b.input" "b.output"))
   ("c.output" ("c.input") (make-output "c.input" "c.output"))
   ("total" ("a.output" "b.output" "c.output")
            (combine-files "a.output" "b.output" "c.output"))))
```

If you were to fill in the ellipses above with calls to `system`, you'd have the exact same functionality as the original `"Makefile"`. In addition, you can use `make/proc` to abstract over the various lines. For example, the `"a.output"`, `"b.output"`, and `"c.output"` lines are very similar so you can write the code that generates those lines:

```
(require make)

(define (make-output in out)
  ....)

(define (combine-files . args)
  ....)

(define files '("a" "b" "c"))
(define inputs  (map (lambda (f) (string-append f ".input")) files))
(define outputs (map (lambda (f) (string-append f ".output")) files))

(define (line file)
  (let ([i (string-append file ".input")]
        [o (string-append file ".output")])
    `(,o (,i))
    (list o (list i) (lambda () (make-output o i)))))

(make/proc
  `(,@(map (lambda (i o) `(o (,i) ,(lambda () (make-output i o))))
           inputs outputs)
    ("total" ,outputs ,(lambda () (apply combine-
files outputs)))))
```

2 Make from Dependencies

```
(require make)
```
package: make

```
(make ((target-expr (depend-expr ...)
         command-expr ...)
       ...)
      argv-expr)
```

Expands to

```
(make/proc
 (list (list target-expr (list depend-expr ...)
             (lambda () command-expr ...))
       ...)
 argv-expr)
```

```
(make/proc spec argv) → void?
  spec : (listof
          (cons/c (or/c path-string? (listof path-string?))
                  (cons/c (listof path-string?)
                          (or/c null?
                                (list/c (-> any))))))
  argv : (or/c string? (vectorof string?) (listof string?))
```

Performs a make according to `spec` and using `argv` as command-line arguments selecting one or more targets.

Each element of the `spec` list is a target. A target element that starts with a list of strings is the same as multiple elements, one for each string. The second element of each target is a list of dependencies, and the third element (if any) of a target is the optional command thunk.

To make a target, `make/proc` is first called recursively on each of the target's dependencies. If a target is not in `spec` and it exists as a file, then the target is considered made. If a target's modification date is older than any of its dependencies' modification dates, the corresponding command thunk is called. If the dependency has no command thunk then no action is taken; such a target is useful for triggering the make of other targets (i.e., the dependencies).

While running a command thunk, `make/proc` catches exceptions and wraps them in an `exn:fail:make` structure, the raises the resulting structure.}

```
(struct exn:fail:make exn:fail (targets orig-exn)
    #:extra-constructor-name make-exn:fail:make)
  targets : (listof path-string?)
  orig-exn : any/c
```

The `targets` field is a list of strings naming the target(s), and the `orig-exn` field is the original raised value.

```
(make-print-checking) → boolean?
(make-print-checking on?) → void?
  on? : any/c
```

A parameter that controls whether `make/proc` prints a message when making a target. The default is `#t`.

```
(make-print-dep-no-line) → boolean?
(make-print-dep-no-line on?) → void?
  on? : any/c
```

A parameter that controls whether `make/proc` prints "checking..." lines for dependencies that have no target in the given k*spec*. The default is `#f`.

```
(make-print-reasons) → boolean?
(make-print-reasons on?) → void?
  on? : any/c
```

A parameter that controls whether `make/proc` prints the reason that a command thunk is called. The default is `#t`.

2.1 Signature

```
(require make/make-sig)
```
package: `make`

```
make^ : signature
```

Includes all of the names provided by `make`.

2.2 Unit

```
(require make/make-unit)
```
package: `make`

```
make@ : unit?
```

A unit that imports nothing and exports `make^`.

3 Building Native-Code Extensions

```
(require make/setup-extension)
```
package: make

The make/setup-extension library helps compile C code via Setup PLT's "pre-install" phase (triggered by a pre-install-collection item in "info.rkt"; see also §6.3 "Controlling raco setup with "info.rkt" Files").

The pre-install function takes a number of arguments that describe how the C code is compiled—mainly the libraries that it depends on. It then drives a C compiler via the dynext/compile and dynext/link functions.

Many issues can complicate C compilation, and the pre-install function helps with a few:

- finding non-standard libraries and header files,
- taming to some degree the differing conventions of Unix and Windows,
- setting up suitable dependencies on Racket headers, and
- using a pre-compiled binary when a "precompiled" directory is present.

Many extension installers will have to sort out addition platform issues manually, however. For example, an old "readline" installer used to pick whether to link to "libcurses" or "libncurses" heuristically by inspecting "/usr/lib". More generally, the "last chance" argument to pre-install allows an installer to patch compiler and linker options (see dynext/compile and dynext/link) before the C code is compiled or linked.

```
(pre-install plthome-dir
             collection-dir
             c-file
             default-lib-dir
             include-subdirs
             find-unix-libs
             find-windows-libs
             unix-libs
             windows-libs
             extra-depends
             last-chance-k
            [3m-too?])          → void?
  plthome-dir : path-string?
  collection-dir : path-string?
  c-file : path-string?
  default-lib-dir : path-string?
  include-subdirs : (listof path-string?)
```

```
find-unix-libs : (listof string?)
find-windows-libs : (listof string?)
unix-libs : (listof string?)
windows-libs : (listof string?)
extra-depends : (listof path-string?)
last-chance-k : ((-> any) . -> . any)
3m-too? : any/c = #f
```

The arguments are as follows:

- *plthome-dir* — the directory provided to a ‘pre-installer’ function.
- *collection-dir* — a directory to use as the current directory while building.
- *c-file* — the name of the source file (relative to *collection-dir*). The output file will be the same, except with a `".c"` suffix replaced with `(system-type 'so-suffix)`, and the path changed to `(build-path "compiled" "native" (system-library-subpath))`.

  If `(build-path "precompiled" "native" (system-library-subpath) (path-replace-suffix c-file (system-type 'so-suffix)))` exists, then *c-file* is not used at all, and the file in the `"precompiled"` directory is simply copied.
- *default-lib-dir* — a default directory for finding supporting libraries, often a subdirectory of `"collection-dir"`. The user can supplement this path by setting the `PLT_EXTENSION_LIB_PATHS` environment variable, which applies to all extensions manged by `pre-install`.
- *include-subdirs* — a list of relative paths in which `#include` files will be found; the path will be determined through a search, in case it’s not in a standard place like `"/usr/include"`.

  For example, the list used to be `'("openssl")` for the `"openssl"` collection, because the source uses `#include <openssl/ssl.h>` and `#include <openssl/err.h>`.
- *find-unix-libs* — like *include-subdirs*, but a list of library bases. Leave off the `"lib"` prefix and any suffix (such as `".a"` or `".so"`). For `"openssl"`, the list used to be `'("ssl" "crypto")`. Each name will essentially get a `-l` prefix for the linker command line.
- *find-windows-libs* — like *find-unix-libs*, but for Windows. The library name will be suffixed with `".lib"` and supplied directly to the linker.
- *unix-libs* — like *find-unix-libs*, except that the installer makes no attempt to find the libraries in a non-standard place. For example, the `"readline"` installer used to supply `'("curses")`.

- *windows-libs* — like *unix-libs*, but for Windows. For example, the "openssl" installer used to supply '("wsock32").

- *extra-depends* — a list of relative paths to treat as dependencies for compiling "file.c". Often this list will include "file.c" with the ".c" suffix replaced by ".rkt". For example, the "openssl" installer supplies '("mzssl.rkt") to ensure that the stub module "mzssl.rkt" is never used when the true extension can be built.

- *last-chance-k* — a procedure of one argument, which is a thunk. This procedure should invoke the thunk to make the file, but it may add parameterizations before the final build. For example, the "readline" installer used to add an AIX-specific compile flag in this step when compiling on AIX.

- *3m-too?*— a boolean. If true, when the 3m variant is installed, use the equivalent to raco ctool --xform to transform the source file and then compile and link for 3m. Otherwise, the extension is built only for CGC when the CGC variant is installed.

4 Making Collections

```
(require make/collection)
```
package: make

```
(make-collection collection-name
                 collection-files
                 argv)                → void?
  collection-name : any/c
  collection-files : (listof path-string?)
  argv : (or/c string? (vectorof string?))
```

Builds bytecode files for each file in *collection-files*, writing each to a "compiled" subdirectory and automatically managing dependencies. Supply '#("zo") as *argv* to compile all files. The *collection-name* argument is used only for printing status information.

Compilation is performed as with raco make (see *raco: Racket Command-Line Tools*).

4.1 Signature

```
(require make/collection-sig)
```
package: make

```
make:collection^ : signature
```

Provides make-collection.

4.2 Unit

```
(require make/collection-unit)
```
package: make

```
make:collection@ : unit?
```

Imports make^, dynext:file^, and compiler^, and exports make:collection^.