polybar Documentation

Release doc-polybar.5

Polybar Team

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Note: This is still very much a work-in-progress. Most information is still to be found on our GitHub Wiki. We will migrate the wiki content step-by-step.

Welcome to the official polybar documentation.

CHAPTER 1

polybar(1)

1.1 SYNOPSIS

polybar [*OPTIONS*]. . . *BAR*

1.2 DESCRIPTION

Polybar aims to help users build beautiful and highly customizable status bars for their desktop environment, without the need of having a black belt in shell scripting.

1.3 OPTIONS

`-h, --help`
Display help text and exit

`-v, --version`
Display build details and exit

`-l, --log``=LEVEL`

Set the logging verbosity (default: **WARNING**)

LEVEL is one of: error, warning, info, trace

`-q, --quiet`
Be quiet (will override -l)

`-c, --config``=FILE`
Specify the path to the configuration file. By default, the configuration file is loaded from:

$XDG_CONFIG_HOME/polybar/config
$HOME/.config/polybar/config

-r, --reload
Reload the application when the config file has been modified

-d, --dump=PARAM
Print the value of the specified parameter *PARAM* in bar section and exit

-m, --list-monitors
Print list of available monitors and exit

-w, --print-wmname
Print the generated *WM_NAME* and exit

-s, --stdout
Output the data to stdout instead of drawing it to the X window

-p, --png=FILE
Save png snapshot to *FILE* after running for 3 seconds

1.4 AUTHOR

Michael Carlberg <c@rlberg.se>
Contributors can be listed on GitHub.

1.5 REPORTING BUGS

Report issues on GitHub <https://github.com/polybar/polybar>

1.6 SEE ALSO

Full documentation at: <https://github.com/polybar/polybar>
Project wiki: <https://github.com/polybar/polybar/wiki>

polybar(5)

CHAPTER 2

polybar(5)

2.1 Description

The polybar configuration file defines the behavior and look of polybar. It uses a variant of the INI file format. The exact syntax is described below but first a small snippet to get familiar with the syntax:

```
[section_name]
; A comment
# Another comment

background = #ff992a
width = 90%
monitor = HDMI-0

screenchange-reload = false

; Use double quotes if you want to keep the surrounding space.
text = " Some text "
```

When started `polybar` will search for the config file in one of several places in the following order:

- If the `-c` or `--config` command line argument is specified, it will use the path given there.
- If the environment variable `XDG_CONFIG_HOME` is set it will use `$XDG_CONFIG_HOME/polybar/config`
- If the environment variable `HOME` is set it will use `$HOME/.config/polybar/config`

2.2 Syntax

The entire config is line-based so everything is constrained to a single line. This means there are no multiline values or other multiline constructs (except for sections). Each line has one of four types:

- Empty

- Comment
- Section Header
- Key

Spaces at the beginning and end of each line will be ignored.

Note: In this context "spaces" include the regular space character as well as the tab character and any other character for which `isspace(3)` returns `true` (e.g. `\r`).

Any line that doesn't fit into one of these four types is a syntax error.

Note: It is recommended that *section header* names and *key* names only use alphanumeric characters as well as dashes (`-`), underscores (`_`) and forward slashes (`/`).

In practice all characters are allowed except for spaces and any of these: `"'=;#[](){}:.$\%`

2.2.1 Section Headers

Sections are used to group config options together. For example each module is defined in its own section.

A section is defined by placing the name of the section in square brackets (`[` and `]`). For example:

```
[module/wm]
```

This declares a section with the name `module/wm` and all keys defined after this line will belong to that section until a new section is declared.

Warning: The first non-empty and non-comment line in the main config file must be a section header. It cannot be a key because that key would not belong to any section.

Note: The following section names are reserved and cannot be used inside the config: `self`, `root`, and `BAR`.

2.2.2 Keys

Keys are defined by assigning a value to a name like this:

```
name = value
```

This assigns `value` to the key `name` in whatever section this line is in. Key names need to be unique per section. If the value is enclosed by double-quotes (`"`), the quotes will be ignored. So the following still assigns `value` to `name`:

```
name = "value"
```

Spaces around the equal sign are ignored, the following are all equivalent:

```
name=value
name = value
name =      value
```

Because spaces at the beginning and end of the line are also ignored, if you want your value to begin and/or end with a space, the value needs to be enclosed in double-quotes:

```
name = " value "
```

Here `name` has a leading and trailing whitespace.

2.2.3 Empty Lines & Comments

Empty lines and comment lines are ignored when reading the config file, they do not affect polybar's behavior. Comment lines start with either the `;` or the `#` character.

Note: Inline comments are not supported. For example the following line does not end with a comment, they value of `name` is actually set to `value ; comment`:

```
name = value ; comment
```

2.3 SEE ALSO

polybar(1)

CHAPTER 3

Getting Help

- Polybar Wiki
- /r/polybar on reddit
- `#polybar` on `chat.freenode.net`
- Unix & Linux StackExchange

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