

How to fix "configure: error: pcre.h not found"

Author : Dan Nanni

Categories : [Development](#)

Tagged as : [pcreregular expression](#)

Question:When I try to compile a program, it fails with the following error. How can I fix this error on [insert your Linux distro]?

`configure: error: pcre.h not found ...`

`pcre.h` is a development header file for [PCRE](#) (Perl Compatible Regular Expressions), which is a C library for pattern-matching regular expressions whose syntax and semantics are inspired by the Perl language. More powerful and flexible than POSIX regular expressions, PCRE is popularly used by many open-source projects such as [Apache HTTP server](#), PHP, Postfix, Nmap, etc. There are also PCRE wrappers written in different languages (e.g., C++, PHP, .NET, Java) and built around PCRE API specification.

The error "**configure: error: pcre.h not found**" indicates that your Linux system does not have PCRE development files installed.

To install PCRE library and development header files, do the following.

Install PCRE on Ubuntu, Debian, Linux Mint

```
$ sudo apt-get install libpcre3-dev
```

Install PCRE on CentOS, Fedora, RHEL

```
$ sudo yum install pcre-devel
```

Install PCRE from the Latest Source

If you want to build and install PCRE library and development files from the [latest source](#), you can do the following.

Prior to building, install build dependencies on Debian-based system:

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```
$ sudo apt-get install gcc g++ make
```

Prior to building, install build dependencies on Red Hat-based system:

```
$ sudo yum install gcc gcc-c++ make
```

Finally, compile and install PCRE as follows. To customize build options, you can pass additional parameters (e.g., `--prefix=/opt`) to the `configure` script. To check available build options, you can run `./configure --help`

```
$ wget ftp://ftp.csx.cam.ac.uk/pub/software/programming/pcre/pcre-8.38.tar.gz
$ tar -xf pcre-8.38.tar.gz
$ cd pcre-8.38
$ ./configure
$ make
$ sudo make install
```

```
config.status: creating pcre.h
config.status: creating pcre_stringpiece.h
config.status: creating pcrecpparg.h
config.status: creating config.h
config.status: config.h is unchanged
config.status: executing depfiles commands
config.status: executing libtool commands
config.status: executing script-chmod commands
config.status: executing delete-old-chartables commands

pcre-8.38 configuration summary:

  Install prefix ..... : /usr/local
  C preprocessor ..... : gcc -E
  C compiler ..... : gcc
  C++ preprocessor ..... : g++ -E
  C++ compiler ..... : g++
  Linker ..... : /usr/bin/ld -m elf_x86_64
  C preprocessor flags ..... :
  C compiler flags ..... : -g -O2 -fvisibility=hidden
  C++ compiler flags ..... : -O2 -fvisibility=hidden -fvisibility-inlines-hidden
  Linker flags ..... :
  Extra libraries ..... :

  Build 8 bit pcre library ..... : yes
  Build 16 bit pcre library ..... : no
  Build 32 bit pcre library ..... : no
  Build C++ library ..... : yes
  Enable JIT compiling support ... : no
```