# DNS HOWTO Nicolai Langfeldt (

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# DNS HOWTO

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*HOWTO become a totally small time DNS admin.*

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## 1. Preamble

Keywords: DNS, BIND, BIND 4, BIND 8, named, dialup, PPP, slip, ISDN, Internet, domain, name, resolution, hosts, caching.

This document is part of the Linux Documentation Project.

### 1.1 Legal stuff

### 1.2 Credits and request for help.

I want to thank Arnt Gulbrandsen whom I cause to suffer through the drafts to this work and who provided many useful suggestions. I also want to thank the numerous people that have e−mailed suggestions and notes.

This will never be a finished document; please send me mail about your problems and successes. You can help make this a better HOWTO. So please send comments and/or questions or money to janl@linpro.no. Or buy my DNS book. See the bibliography for information about that. If you send e−mail and want an answer please show the simple courtesy of *making sure* that the return address is correct and working. Also, **please** read the qanda section before mailing me. Another thing, I can only understand Norwegian and English.

This is a HOWTO. I have maintained it as part of the LDP since 1995. I have, during 2000, written a book on the same subject. I want to say that, though this HOWTO is in many ways much like the book it is *not* a watered down version concocted to market the book. You will however find the book in the bibliography at the end of this HOWTO. The readers of this HOWTO have helped me understand what is difficult to understand about DNS. This has helped the book, but the book has also helped me to think more about what this HOWTO needs. The HOWTO begot the book. The book begot version 3 of this HOWTO. My thanks to the book publisher, Que, that took a chance on me :−)

## 1.3 Dedication

This HOWTO is dedicated to Anne Line Norheim Langfeldt. Though she will probably never read it since she's not that kind of girl.

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# 2. Introduction.

**What this is and isn't.**

DNS is the Domain Name System. DNS converts machine names to the IP addresses that all machines on the net have. It translates (or "maps" as the jargon would have it) from name to address and from address to name, and some other things. This HOWTO documents how to define such mappings using Unix system, with a few things specific to Linux.

A mapping is simply an association between two things, in this case a machine name, like `ftp.linux.org`, and the machine's IP number (or address) `199.249.150.4`. DNS also contains mappings the other way, from the IP number to the machine name; this is called a "reverse mapping".

DNS is, to the uninitiated (you ;−), one of the more opaque areas of network administration. Fortunately DNS isn't really that hard. This HOWTO will try to make a few things clearer. It describes how to set up a *simple* DNS name server, starting with a caching only server and going on to setting up a primary DNS server for a domain. For more complex setups you can check the qanda section of this document. If it's not described there you will need to *read* the Real Documentation. I'll get back to what this Real Documentation consists of in the last chapter.

Before you start on this you should configure your machine so that you can telnet in and out of it, and successfully make all kinds of connections to the net, and you should especially be able to do `telnet 127.0.0.1` and get your own machine (test it now!). You also need good `/etc/nsswitch.conf`, `/etc/resolv.conf` and `/etc/hosts` files as a starting point, since I will not explain their function here. If you don't already have all this set up and working the Networking−HOWTO and/or the Networking−Overview−HOWTO explains how to set it up. Read them.

When I say `your machine' I mean the machine you are trying to set up DNS on, not any other machine you might have that's involved in your networking effort.

I assume you're not behind any kind of firewall that blocks name queries. If you are you will need a special configuration −−− see the section on qanda.

Name serving on Unix is done by a program called `named`. This is a part of the ``BIND'' package which is coordinated by The Internet Software Consortium. `Named` is included in most Linux distributions and is usually installed as `/usr/sbin/named`, usually from a package called `BIND`.

If you have a named you can probably use it; if you don't have one you can get a binary off a Linux ftp site, or get the latest and greatest source from ftp://ftp.isc.org/isc/bind/src/. This HOWTO is about BIND version 8. The old version of the HOWTO, about BIND 4, is still available at http://www.math.uio.no/~janl/DNS/ in case you use BIND 4. If the named man page talks about (at the very end, in the FILES section) `named.conf` you have BIND 8; if it talks about `named.boot` you have BIND 4. If you have 4 and are security conscious you really ought to upgrade to the latest version of BIND 8. Now.

DNS is a net−wide database. Take care about what you put into it. If you put junk into it, you, and others, will get junk out of it. Keep your DNS tidy and consistent and you will get good service from it. Learn to use it, admin it, debug it and you will be another good admin keeping the net from falling to its knees by mismanagement.

**Tip:** Make backup copies of all the files I instruct you to change if you already have them, so that if after going through this nothing works you can get it back to your old, working state.

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## 3. A resolving, caching name server.

**A first stab at DNS config, very useful for dialup, cable−modem and ADSL users.**

On Red Hat and Red Hat related distributions you can achieve the same practical result as this HOWTO's first section by installing the packages `bind`, `bind−utils` and caching−nameserver. If you use Debian simply install `bind` and `bind−doc`. Of course just installing those packages won't teach you as much as reading this HOWTO. So install the packages, and then read along verifying the files they installed.

A caching only name server will find the answer to name queries and remember the answer the next time you need it. This will shorten the waiting time the next time significantly, especially if you're on a slow connection.

First you need a file called `/etc/named.conf` (Debian: `/etc/bind/named.conf`). This is read when named starts. For now it should simply contain:

```
// Config file for caching only name server

options {
        directory "/var/named";

        // Uncommenting this might help if you have to go through a
        // firewall and things are not working out.  But you probably
        // need to talk to your firewall admin.

        // query−source port 53;
};

zone "." {
        type hint;
        file "root.hints";
};

zone "0.0.127.in−addr.arpa" {
        type master;
        file "pz/127.0.0";
};
```

The Linux distribution packages may use different file names for each kind of file mentioned here; they will still contain about the same things.

The `directory' line tells named where to look for files. All files named subsequently will be relative to this. Thus `pz` is a directory under `/var/named`, i.e., `/var/named/pz`. `/var/named` is the right directory according to the *Linux File system Standard*.

The file named `/var/named/root.hints` is named in this. `/var/named/root.hints` should contain this: (*If you cut and paste this file from an electronic version of this document, please note that there should be* ***no*** *leading spaces in the file, i.e. all the lines should start with a non−blank character. Some document processing software will insert spaces at beginning of the lines, causing some confusion. In that case please remove the leading spaces*)

```
;
; There might be opening comments here if you already have this file.
; If not don't worry.
;
.                       6D IN NS        M.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.
.                       6D IN NS        I.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.
.                       6D IN NS        E.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.
.                       6D IN NS        D.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.
.                       6D IN NS        A.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.
.                       6D IN NS        H.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.
.                       6D IN NS        C.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.
.                       6D IN NS        G.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.
.                       6D IN NS        F.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.
.                       6D IN NS        B.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.
.                       6D IN NS        J.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.
.                       6D IN NS        K.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.
.                       6D IN NS        L.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.
;
M.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.     6D IN A         202.12.27.33
I.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.     6D IN A         192.36.148.17
E.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.     6D IN A         192.203.230.10
D.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.     6D IN A         128.8.10.90
A.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.     6D IN A         198.41.0.4
H.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.     6D IN A         128.63.2.53
C.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.     6D IN A         192.33.4.12
G.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.     6D IN A         192.112.36.4
F.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.     6D IN A         192.5.5.241
B.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.     6D IN A         128.9.0.107
J.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.     6D IN A         198.41.0.10
K.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.     6D IN A         193.0.14.129
L.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.     6D IN A         198.32.64.12
```

The file describes the root name servers in the world. The servers change over time and must be maintained now and then. See the maintenance section for how to keep it up to date.

The next section in `named.conf` is the last `zone`. I will explain its use in a later chapter; for now just make this a file named `127.0.0` in the subdirectory `pz`: (*Again, please remove leading spaces if you cut and paste this*)

```
$TTL 3D
@               IN      SOA     ns.linux.bogus. hostmaster.linux.bogus. (
                                1       ; Serial
                                8H      ; Refresh
                                2H      ; Retry
                                4W      ; Expire
                                1D)     ; Minimum TTL
                        NS      ns.linux.bogus.
1                       PTR     localhost.
```

Next, you need a `/etc/resolv.conf` looking something like this: (*Again: Remove spaces!*)

```
search subdomain.your-domain.edu your-domain.edu
nameserver 127.0.0.1
```

The `` `search`' `` line specifies what domains should be searched for any host names you want to connect to. The `` `nameserver`' `` line specifies the address of your nameserver, in this case your own machine since that is where your named runs (127.0.0.1 is right, no matter if your machine has another address too). If you want to list several name servers put in one `` `nameserver`' `` line for each. (Note: Named never reads this file, the resolver that uses named does. Note 2: In some resolv.conf files you find a line saying "domain". That's fine, but don't use both "search" and "domain", only one of them will work).

To illustrate what this file does: If a client tries to look up `foo`, then `foo.subdomain.your-domain.edu` is tried first, then `foo.your-domain.edu`, and finally `foo`. You may not want to put in too many domains in the search line, as it takes time to search them all.

The example assumes you belong in the domain `subdomain.your-domain.edu`; your machine, then, is probably called `your-machine.subdomain.your-domain.edu`. The search line should not contain your TLD (Top Level Domain, `` `edu`' `` in this case). If you frequently need to connect to hosts in another domain you can add that domain to the search line like this: (*Remember to remove the leading spaces, if any*)

```
search subdomain.your-domain.edu your-domain.edu other-domain.com
```

and so on. Obviously you need to put real domain names in instead. Please note the lack of periods at the end of the domain names. This is important; please note the lack of periods at the end of the domain names.

## 3.1 Starting named

After all this it's time to start named. If you're using a dialup connection connect first. Type `` `ndc start`' ``, and press return, no options. If that does not work try `` `/usr/sbin/ndc start`' `` instead. If that back−fires see the qanda section. If you view your syslog message file (usually called `/var/adm/messages`, but another directory to look in is `/var/log` and another file to look in is `syslog`) while starting named (do `tail -f /var/log/messages`) you should see something like:

(the lines ending in \ continues on the next line)

```
Dec 15 23:53:29 localhost named[3768]: starting.  named 8.2.2−P7 \
                Fri Nov 10 04:50:23 EST 2000 ^Iprospector@porky.\
                devel.redhat.com:/usr/src/bs/BUILD/bind−8.2.2_P7/\
                src/bin/named
Dec 15 23:53:29 localhost named[3768]: hint zone "" (IN) loaded\
                (serial 0)
```

```
Dec 15 23:53:29 localhost named[3768]: Zone "0.0.127.in−addr.arpa"\
                (file pz/127.0.0): No default TTL set using SOA\
                minimum instead
Dec 15 23:53:29 localhost named[3768]: master zone\
                "0.0.127.in−addr.arpa" (IN) loaded (serial 1)
Dec 15 23:53:29 localhost named[3768]: listening on [127.0.0.1].53 (lo)
Dec 15 23:53:29 localhost named[3768]: listening on [10.0.0.129].53\
                (wvlan0)
Dec 15 23:53:29 localhost named[3768]: Forwarding source address is\
                [0.0.0.0].1034
Dec 15 23:53:29 localhost named[3769]: Ready to answer queries.
```

If there are any messages about errors then there is a mistake. Named will name the file it is in. Go back and check the file. Run "ndc restart" when you have fixed it.

Now you can test your setup. Traditionally a program called `nslookup` is used for this. These days `dig` is recommended:

```
$ dig −x 127.0.0.1

; <<>> DiG 8.2 <<>> −x
;; res options: init recurs defnam dnsrch
;; got answer:
;; −>>HEADER<<− opcode: QUERY, status: NOERROR, id: 4
;; flags: qr aa rd ra; QUERY: 1, ANSWER: 1, AUTHORITY: 1, ADDITIONAL: 0
;; QUERY SECTION:
;;      1.0.0.127.in−addr.arpa, type = ANY, class = IN

;; ANSWER SECTION:
1.0.0.127.in−addr.arpa.  1D IN PTR  localhost.

;; AUTHORITY SECTION:
0.0.127.in−addr.arpa.   1D IN NS        ns.penguin.bv.

;; Total query time: 30 msec
;; FROM: lookfar to SERVER: default −− 127.0.0.1
;; WHEN: Sat Dec 16 00:16:12 2000
;; MSG SIZE  sent: 40  rcvd: 110
```

If that's what you get it's working. We hope. Anything else, go back and check everything. Each time you change the `named.conf` file you need to restart named using the `ndc restart` command.

Now you can enter a query. Try looking up some machine close to you. `pat.uio.no` is close to me, at the University of Oslo:

```
$ dig pat.uio.no

; <<>> DiG 8.2 <<>> pat.uio.no
;; res options: init recurs defnam dnsrch
;; got answer:
;; −>>HEADER<<− opcode: QUERY, status: NOERROR, id: 4
;; flags: qr aa rd ra; QUERY: 1, ANSWER: 1, AUTHORITY: 3, ADDITIONAL: 3
;; QUERY SECTION:
;;      pat.uio.no, type = A, class = IN

;; ANSWER SECTION:
pat.uio.no.             1D IN A         129.240.130.16

;; AUTHORITY SECTION:
```

```
uio.no.                 1D IN NS        nissen.uio.no.
uio.no.                 1D IN NS        ifi.uio.no.
uio.no.                 1D IN NS        nn.uninett.no.

;; ADDITIONAL SECTION:
nissen.uio.no.          1D IN A         129.240.2.3
ifi.uio.no.             1H IN A         129.240.64.2
nn.uninett.no.          1D IN A         158.38.0.181

;; Total query time: 112 msec
;; FROM: lookfar to SERVER: default -- 127.0.0.1
;; WHEN: Sat Dec 16 00:23:07 2000
;; MSG SIZE  sent: 28  rcvd: 162
```

This time dig asked your named to look for the machine `pat.uio.no`. It then contacted one of the name server machines named in your `root.hints` file, and asked its way from there. It might take tiny while before you get the result as it may need to search all the domains you named in `/etc/resolv.conf`. Please note the "aa" on the "flags:" line. It means that the answer is authoritative, that it is fresh from an authoritative server. I'll explain "authoritative" later.

If you ask the same again you get this:

```
$ dig pat.uio.no

; <<>> DiG 8.2 <<>> pat.uio.no
;; res options: init recurs defnam dnsrch
;; got answer:
;; ->>HEADER<<- opcode: QUERY, status: NOERROR, id: 4
;; flags: qr rd ra; QUERY: 1, ANSWER: 1, AUTHORITY: 3, ADDITIONAL: 3
;; QUERY SECTION:
;;      pat.uio.no, type = A, class = IN

;; ANSWER SECTION:
pat.uio.no.             23h59m58s IN A  129.240.130.16

;; AUTHORITY SECTION:
UIO.NO.                 23h59m58s IN NS  nissen.UIO.NO.
UIO.NO.                 23h59m58s IN NS  ifi.UIO.NO.
UIO.NO.                 23h59m58s IN NS  nn.uninett.NO.

;; ADDITIONAL SECTION:
nissen.UIO.NO.          23h59m58s IN A  129.240.2.3
ifi.UIO.NO.             1d23h59m58s IN A  129.240.64.2
nn.uninett.NO.          1d23h59m58s IN A  158.38.0.181

;; Total query time: 4 msec
;; FROM: lookfar to SERVER: default -- 127.0.0.1
;; WHEN: Sat Dec 16 00:23:09 2000
;; MSG SIZE  sent: 28  rcvd: 162
```

Note the lack of a "aa" flag in this answer. That means that named did not go out on the network to ask this time, as the information is in the cache now. But the cached information *might* be out of date (stale). So you are informed of this (very slight) possibility by the "aa" not being there. But, now you know that your cache is working.

## 3.2 Resolvers

All OSes implementing the standard C API has the calls gethostbyname and gethostbyaddr. These can get information from several different sources. Which sources it gets it from is configured in `/etc/nsswitch.conf` on Linux (and some other Unixes). This is a long file specifying from which file or database to get different kinds of data types. It usually contains helpful comments at the top, which you should consider reading. After that find the line starting with `` `hosts:' ``; it should read:

```
hosts:      files dns
```

(*You remembered about the leading spaces, right? I won't mention them again.*)

If there is no line starting with `` `hosts:' `` then put in the one above. It says that programs should first look in the `/etc/hosts` file, then check DNS according to `resolv.conf`.

## 3.3 Congratulations

Now you know how to set up a caching named. Take a beer, milk, or whatever you prefer to celebrate it.

# 4. Forwarding

In large, well organized, academic or ISP (Internet Service Provider) networks you will sometimes find that the network people have set up a forwarder hierarchy of DNS servers which helps lighten the internal network load and the load on the outside servers as well. It's not easy to know if you're inside such a network or not. It is however not important and by using the DNS server of your network provider as a ``forwarder'' you can make the responses to queries faster and less of a load on your network. If you use a modem this can be quite a win. For the sake of this example we assume that your network provider has two name servers they want you to use, with IP numbers `10.0.0.1` and `10.1.0.1`. Then, in your `named.conf` file, inside the opening section called ``options'', insert these lines:

```
           forward first;
           forwarders {
                10.0.0.1;
                10.1.0.1;
            };
```

There is also a nice trick for dialup machines using forwarders, it is described in the qanda section.

Restart your nameserver and test it with dig. Should work fine.

# 5. A *simple* domain.

**How to set up your own domain.**

## 5.1 But first some dry theory

First of all: you read all the stuff before here right? You have to.

Before we *really* start this section I'm going to serve you some theory on and an example of how DNS works. And you're going to read it because it's good for you. If you don't want to you should at least skim it very quickly. Stop skimming when you get to what should go in your `named.conf` file.

DNS is a hierarchical, tree structured, system. The top is written `` `.' `` and pronounced `root', as is usual for tree data−structures. Under `.` there are a number of Top Level Domains (TLDs); the best known ones are `ORG`, `COM`, `EDU` and `NET`, but there are many more. Just like a tree it has a root and it branches out. If you have any computer science background you will recognize DNS as a search tree, and you will be able to find nodes, leaf nodes and edges. The dots are nodes, the edges are on the names.

When looking for a machine the query proceeds recursively into the hierarchy starting at the root. If you want to find the address of `prep.ai.mit.edu.`, your nameserver has to start asking somewhere. It starts by looking it its cache. If it knows the answer, having cached it before, it will answer right away as we saw in the last section. If it does not know it will remove parts from the name starting at the left, checking if it knows anything about `ai.mit.edu.`, then `mit.edu.`, then `edu.` and if not that it does know about `.` because that was in the hints file. It will then ask a `.` server about `prep.ai.mit.edu`. This `.` server will not know the answer, but it will help your server on its way by giving a referral, telling it where to look instead. These referrals will eventually lead your server to a nameserver that knows the answer. I will illustrate that now. `+norec` means that dig is asking non−recursive questions so that we get to do the recursion ourselves. The other options are to reduce the amount of dig produces so this won't go on for too many pages:

```
$ dig +norec +noH +noques +nostats +nocmd prep.ai.mit.edu.
;; res options: init defnam dnsrch
;; got answer:
; flags: qr ra; QUERY: 1, ANSWER: 0, AUTHORITY: 13, ADDITIONAL: 13
;; AUTHORITY SECTION:
.                       5d23h48m47s IN NS  I.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.
.                       5d23h48m47s IN NS  E.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.
.                       5d23h48m47s IN NS  D.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.
.                       5d23h48m47s IN NS  A.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.
.                       5d23h48m47s IN NS  H.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.
.                       5d23h48m47s IN NS  C.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.
.                       5d23h48m47s IN NS  G.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.
.                       5d23h48m47s IN NS  F.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.
.                       5d23h48m47s IN NS  B.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.
.                       5d23h48m47s IN NS  J.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.
.                       5d23h48m47s IN NS  K.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.
.                       5d23h48m47s IN NS  L.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.
.                       5d23h48m47s IN NS  M.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.

;; ADDITIONAL SECTION:
I.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.     6d23h48m47s IN A  192.36.148.17
E.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.     6d23h48m47s IN A  192.203.230.10
D.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.     6d23h48m47s IN A  128.8.10.90
A.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.     6d23h48m47s IN A  198.41.0.4
```

```
H.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.     6d23h48m47s IN A  128.63.2.53
C.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.     6d23h48m47s IN A  192.33.4.12
G.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.     6d23h48m47s IN A  192.112.36.4
F.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.     6d23h48m47s IN A  192.5.5.241
B.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.     6d23h48m47s IN A  128.9.0.107
J.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.     6d23h48m47s IN A  198.41.0.10
K.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.     6d23h48m47s IN A  193.0.14.129
L.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.     6d23h48m47s IN A  198.32.64.12
M.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.     6d23h48m47s IN A  202.12.27.33
```

This is a referral. It is giving us an "Authority section" only, no "Answer section". Our own nameserver refers us to a nameserver. Pick one at random:

```
$ dig +norec +noH +noques +nostats +nocmd prep.ai.mit.edu. @H.ROOT−SERVERS.NET.
; (1 server found)
;; res options: init defnam dnsrch
;; got answer:
; flags: qr; QUERY: 1, ANSWER: 0, AUTHORITY: 3, ADDITIONAL: 3
;; AUTHORITY SECTION:
MIT.EDU.                2D IN NS        BITSY.MIT.EDU.
MIT.EDU.                2D IN NS        STRAWB.MIT.EDU.
MIT.EDU.                2D IN NS        W20NS.MIT.EDU.

;; ADDITIONAL SECTION:
BITSY.MIT.EDU.          2D IN A         18.72.0.3
STRAWB.MIT.EDU.         2D IN A         18.71.0.151
W20NS.MIT.EDU.          2D IN A         18.70.0.160
```

It refers us to MIT.EDU servers at once. Again pick one at random:

```
$ dig +norec +noH +noques +nostats +nocmd prep.ai.mit.edu. @bitsy.mit.edu
; (1 server found)
;; res options: init defnam dnsrch
;; got answer:
; flags: qr ra; QUERY: 1, ANSWER: 1, AUTHORITY: 4, ADDITIONAL: 4
;; ANSWER SECTION:
prep.ai.mit.edu.        3h50m7s IN A    198.186.203.18

;; AUTHORITY SECTION:
AI.MIT.EDU.             6H IN NS        FEDEX.AI.MIT.EDU.
AI.MIT.EDU.             6H IN NS        LIFE.AI.MIT.EDU.
AI.MIT.EDU.             6H IN NS        ALPHA−BITS.AI.MIT.EDU.
AI.MIT.EDU.             6H IN NS        BEET−CHEX.AI.MIT.EDU.

;; ADDITIONAL SECTION:
FEDEX.AI.MIT.EDU.       6H IN A         192.148.252.43
LIFE.AI.MIT.EDU.        6H IN A         128.52.32.80
ALPHA−BITS.AI.MIT.EDU.  6H IN A         128.52.32.5
BEET−CHEX.AI.MIT.EDU.   6H IN A         128.52.32.22
```

This time we got a "ANSWER SECTION", and an answer for our question. The "AUTHORITY SECTION" contains information about which servers to ask about `ai.mit.edu` the next time. So you can ask them directly the next time you wonder about `ai.mit.edu` names.

So starting at `.` we found the successive name servers for each level in the domain name by referral. If you had used your own DNS server instead of using all those other servers, your named would of−course cache all the information it found while digging this out for you, and it would not have to ask again for a while.

In the tree analogue each ``.'' in the name is a branching point. And each part between the ``.''s are the names of individual branches in the tree. One climbs the tree by taking the name we want (`prep.ai.mit.edu`) asking the root (`.`) or whatever servers father from the root toward prep.ai.mit.edu we have information about in the cache. Once the cache limits are reached the recursive resolver goes out asking servers, pursuing referrals (edges) further into the name.

A much less talked about, but just as important domain is `in−addr.arpa`. It too is nested like the `normal' domains. `in−addr.arpa` allows us to get the host's name when we have its address. A important thing to note here is that the IP addresses are written in reverse order in the `in−addr.arpa` domain. If you have the address of a machine: `192.148.52.43` named proceeds just like for the `prep.ai.mit.edu` example: find `arpa.` servers. Find `in−addr.arpa.` servers, find `192.in−addr.arpa.` servers, find `148.192.in−addr.arpa.` servers, find `52.148.192.in−addr.arpa.` servers. Find needed records for `43.52.148.192.in−addr.arpa.` Clever huh? (Say `yes'.) The reversion of the numbers can be confusing for years though.

## 5.2 Our own domain

Now to define our own domain. We're going to make the domain `linux.bogus` and define machines in it. I use a totally bogus domain name to make sure we disturb no−one Out There.

One more thing before we start: Not all characters are allowed in host names. We're restricted to the characters of the English alphabet: a−z, and numbers 0−9 and the character '−' (dash). Keep to those characters. Upper and lower−case characters are the same for DNS, so `pat.uio.no` is identical to `Pat.UiO.No`.

We've already started this part with this line in `named.conf`:

```
zone "0.0.127.in−addr.arpa" {
        type master;
        file "pz/127.0.0";
};
```

Please note the lack of `.' at the end of the domain names in this file. This says that now we will define the zone `0.0.127.in−addr.arpa`, that we're the master server for it and that it is stored in a file called `pz/127.0.0`. We've already set up this file, it reads:

```
$TTL 3D
@               IN      SOA     ns.linux.bogus. hostmaster.linux.bogus. (
                                1       ; Serial
                                8H      ; Refresh
                                2H      ; Retry
                                4W      ; Expire
                                1D)     ; Minimum TTL
                        NS      ns.linux.bogus.
1                       PTR     localhost.
```

Please note the `.' at the end of all the full domain names in this file, in contrast to the `named.conf` file above. Some people like to start each zone file with a `$ORIGIN` directive, but this is superfluous. The origin (where in the DNS hierarchy it belongs) of a zone file is specified in the zone section of the named.conf file; in this case it's 0.0.127.in−addr.arpa.

This `zone file' contains 3 `resource records' (RRs): A SOA RR. A NS RR and a PTR RR. SOA is short for Start Of Authority. The `@' is a special notation meaning the origin, and since the `domain' column for this file says 0.0.127.in−addr.arpa the first line really means

```
0.0.127.in−addr.arpa.   IN      SOA ...
```

NS is the Name Server RR. There is no '@' at the start of this line; it is implicit since the previous line started with a '@'. Saves some typing that. So the NS line could also be written

```
0.0.127.in−addr.arpa.   IN      NS      ns.linux.bogus
```

It tells DNS what machine is the name server of the domain 0.0.127.in−addr.arpa, it is ns.linux.bogus. 'ns' is a customary name for name−servers, but as with web servers who are customarily named www.*something* the name may be anything.

And finally the PTR (Domain Name Pointer) record says that the host at address 1 in the subnet 0.0.127.in−addr.arpa, i.e., 127.0.0.1 is named localhost.

The SOA record is the preamble to *all* zone files, and there should be exactly one in each zone file. It describes the zone, where it comes from (a machine called ns.linux.bogus), who is responsible for its contents (hostmaster@linux.bogus; you should insert your e−mail address here), what version of the zone file this is (serial: 1), and other things having to do with caching and secondary DNS servers. For the rest of the fields (refresh, retry, expire and minimum) use the numbers used in this HOWTO and you should be safe. Before the SOA comes a mandatory line, the $TTL 3D line. Put it in all your zone files.

Now restart your named (the command is ndc restart) and use dig to examine your handy work. −x asks for the inverse query:

```
$ dig −x 127.0.0.1

; <<>> DiG 8.2 <<>> −x
;; res options: init recurs defnam dnsrch
;; got answer:
;; −>>HEADER<<− opcode: QUERY, status: NOERROR, id: 4
;; flags: qr aa rd ra; QUERY: 1, ANSWER: 1, AUTHORITY: 1, ADDITIONAL: 0
;; QUERY SECTION:
;;      1.0.0.127.in−addr.arpa, type = ANY, class = IN

;; ANSWER SECTION:
1.0.0.127.in−addr.arpa.  1D IN PTR  localhost.

;; AUTHORITY SECTION:
0.0.127.in−addr.arpa.   1D IN NS        ns.penguin.bv.

;; Total query time: 5 msec
;; FROM: lookfar to SERVER: default −− 127.0.0.1
;; WHEN: Sat Dec 16 01:13:48 2000
;; MSG SIZE  sent: 40  rcvd: 110
```

So it manages to get localhost from 127.0.0.1, good. Now for our main task, the linux.bogus domain, insert a new 'zone' section in named.conf:

```
zone "linux.bogus" {
        notify no;
        type master;
        file "pz/linux.bogus";
};
```

Note again the lack of ending `.' on the domain name in the `named.conf` file.

In the `linux.bogus` zone file we'll put some totally bogus data:

```
;
; Zone file for linux.bogus
;
; The full zone file
;
$TTL 3D
@       IN      SOA     ns.linux.bogus. hostmaster.linux.bogus. (
                        199802151       ; serial, todays date + todays serial #
                        8H              ; refresh, seconds
                        2H              ; retry, seconds
                        4W              ; expire, seconds
                        1D )            ; minimum, seconds
;
                NS      ns              ; Inet Address of name server
                MX      10 mail.linux.bogus     ; Primary Mail Exchanger
                MX      20 mail.friend.bogus.   ; Secondary Mail Exchanger
;
localhost       A       127.0.0.1
ns              A       192.168.196.2
mail            A       192.168.196.4
```

Two things must be noted about the SOA record. `ns.linux.bogus` *must* be a actual machine with a A record. It is not legal to have a CNAME record for the machine mentioned in the SOA record. Its name need not be `ns', it could be any legal host name. Next, hostmaster.linux.bogus should be read as hostmaster@linux.bogus. This should be a mail alias, or a mailbox, where the person(s) maintaining DNS should read mail frequently. Any mail regarding the domain will be sent to the address listed here. The name need not be `hostmaster', it can be your normal e−mail address, but the e−mail address `hostmaster' is often expected to work as well.

There is one new RR type in this file, the MX, or Mail eXchanger RR. It tells mail systems where to send mail that is addressed to `someone@linux.bogus`, namely to `mail.linux.bogus` or `mail.friend.bogus`. The number before each machine name is that MX RR's priority. The RR with the lowest number (10) is the one mail should be sent to if possible. If that fails the mail can be sent to one with a higher number, a secondary mail handler, i.e., `mail.friend.bogus` which has priority 20 here.

Restart named by running `ndc restart`. Examine the results with dig:

```
$ dig any linux.bogus +pfmin
;; res options: init recurs defnam dnsrch
;; got answer:
;; −>>HEADER<<− opcode: QUERY, status: NOERROR, id: 23499
;; QUERY: 1, ANSWER: 4, AUTHORITY: 1, ADDITIONAL: 1
;; QUERY SECTION:
```

```
;;      linux.bogus, type = ANY, class = IN

;; ANSWER SECTION:
linux.bogus.            3D IN MX        10 mail.linux.bogus.linux.bogus.
linux.bogus.            3D IN MX        20 mail.friend.bogus.
linux.bogus.            3D IN NS        ns.linux.bogus.
linux.bogus.            3D IN SOA       ns.linux.bogus. hostmaster.linux.bogus. (
                                        199802151       ; serial
                                        8H              ; refresh
                                        2H              ; retry
                                        4W              ; expiry
                                        1D )            ; minimum
```

Upon careful examination you will discover a bug. The line

```
linux.bogus.            3D IN MX        10 mail.linux.bogus.linux.bogus.
```

is all wrong. It should be

```
linux.bogus.            3D IN MX        10 mail.linux.bogus.
```

I deliberately made a mistake so you could learn from it :−) Looking in the zone file we find this line:

```
                MX      10 mail.linux.bogus     ; Primary Mail Exchanger
```

It is missing a period. Or has a 'linux.bogus' too many. If a machine name does not end in a period in a zone file the origin is added to its end causing the double `linux.bogus.linux.bogus`. So either

```
                MX      10 mail.linux.bogus.    ; Primary Mail Exchanger
```

or

```
                MX      10 mail                 ; Primary Mail Exchanger
```

is correct. I prefer the latter form, it's less to type. There are some BIND experts that disagree, and some that agree with this. In a zone file the domain should either be written out and ended with a `.' or it should not be included at all, in which case it defaults to the origin.

I must stress that in the named.conf file there should *not* be `.'s after the domain names. You have no idea how many times a `.' too many or few have fouled up things and confused the h*ll out of people.

So having made my point here is the new zone file, with some extra information in it as well:

```
;
; Zone file for linux.bogus
;
; The full zone file
;
$TTL 3D
```

```
@       IN      SOA     ns.linux.bogus. hostmaster.linux.bogus. (
                        199802151       ; serial, todays date + todays serial #
                        8H              ; refresh, seconds
                        2H              ; retry, seconds
                        4W              ; expire, seconds
                        1D )            ; minimum, seconds
;
                TXT     "Linux.Bogus, your DNS consultants"
                NS      ns              ; Inet Address of name server
                NS      ns.friend.bogus.
                MX      10 mail         ; Primary Mail Exchanger
                MX      20 mail.friend.bogus. ; Secondary Mail Exchanger

localhost       A       127.0.0.1

gw              A       192.168.196.1
                HINFO   "Cisco" "IOS"
                TXT     "The router"

ns              A       192.168.196.2
                MX      10 mail
                MX      20 mail.friend.bogus.
                HINFO   "Pentium" "Linux 2.0"
www             CNAME   ns

donald          A       192.168.196.3
                MX      10 mail
                MX      20 mail.friend.bogus.
                HINFO   "i486"  "Linux 2.0"
                TXT     "DEK"

mail            A       192.168.196.4
                MX      10 mail
                MX      20 mail.friend.bogus.
                HINFO   "386sx" "Linux 1.2"

ftp             A       192.168.196.5
                MX      10 mail
                MX      20 mail.friend.bogus.
                HINFO   "P6" "Linux 2.1.86"
```

There are a number of new RRs here: HINFO (Host INFOrmation) has two parts; it's a good habit to quote each. The first part is the hardware or CPU on the machine, and the second part the software or OS on the machine. The machine called 'ns' has a Pentium CPU and runs Linux 2.0. CNAME (Canonical NAME) is a way to give each machine several names. So www is an alias for ns.

CNAME record usage is a bit controversial. But it's safe to follow the rule that a MX, CNAME or SOA record should *never* refer to a CNAME record, they should only refer to something with an A record, so it is inadvisable to have

```
foobar          CNAME   www                     ; NO!
```

but correct to have

```
foobar          CNAME   ns                      ; Yes!
```

It's also safe to assume that a CNAME is not a legal host name for an e−mail address: `webmaster@www.linux.bogus` is an illegal e−mail address given the setup above. You can expect quite a few mail admins Out There to enforce this rule even if it works for you. The way to avoid this is to use A records (and perhaps some others too, like a MX record) instead:

```
www             A       192.168.196.2
```

A number of the arch−BIND−wizards, recommend *not* using CNAME at all. But the discussion of why or why not is beyond the scope of this HOWTO.

But as you see, this HOWTO and many sites do not follow this rule.

Load the new database by running `ndc reload`, which causes named to read its files again.

```
$ dig linux.bogus axfr

; <<>> DiG 8.2 <<>> linux.bogus axfr
$ORIGIN linux.bogus.
@                       3D IN SOA       ns hostmaster (
                                        199802151       ; serial
                                        8H              ; refresh
                                        2H              ; retry
                                        4W              ; expiry
                                        1D )            ; minimum

                        3D IN NS        ns
                        3D IN NS        ns.friend.bogus.
                        3D IN MX        10 mail
                        3D IN MX        20 mail.friend.bogus.
                        3D IN TXT       "Linux.Bogus, your DNS consultants"
gw                      3D IN TXT       "The router"
                        3D IN HINFO     "Cisco" "IOS"
                        3D IN A         192.168.196.1
localhost               3D IN A         127.0.0.1
mail                    3D IN HINFO     "386sx" "Linux 1.2"
                        3D IN MX        10 mail
                        3D IN MX        20 mail.friend.bogus.
                        3D IN A         192.168.196.4
www                     3D IN CNAME     ns
donald                  3D IN TXT       "DEK"
                        3D IN HINFO     "i486" "Linux 2.0"
                        3D IN MX        10 mail
                        3D IN MX        20 mail.friend.bogus.
                        3D IN A         192.168.196.3
ns                      3D IN HINFO     "Pentium" "Linux 2.0"
                        3D IN MX        10 mail
                        3D IN MX        20 mail.friend.bogus.
                        3D IN A         192.168.196.2
ftp                     3D IN HINFO     "P6" "Linux 2.1.86"
                        3D IN MX        10 mail
                        3D IN MX        20 mail.friend.bogus.
                        3D IN A         192.168.196.5
@                       3D IN SOA       ns hostmaster (
                                        199802151       ; serial
                                        8H              ; refresh
                                        2H              ; retry
                                        4W              ; expiry
                                        1D )            ; minimum

;; Received 29 answers (29 records).
;; FROM: lookfar to SERVER: 127.0.0.1
;; WHEN: Sat Dec 16 01:35:05 2000
```

That's good. As you see it looks a lot like the zone file itself. Let's check what it says for `www` alone:

```
$ dig www.linux.bogus +pfmin
;; res options: init recurs defnam dnsrch
;; got answer:
;; −>>HEADER<<− opcode: QUERY, status: NOERROR, id: 27345
;; QUERY: 1, ANSWER: 2, AUTHORITY: 2, ADDITIONAL: 1
;; QUERY SECTION:
;;      www.linux.bogus, type = A, class = IN

;; ANSWER SECTION:
www.linux.bogus.        3D IN CNAME     ns.linux.bogus.
ns.linux.bogus.         3D IN A         192.168.196.2
```

In other words, the real name of `www.linux.bogus` is `ns.linux.bogus`, and it gives you some of the information it has about ns as well, enough to connect to it if you were a program.

Now we're halfway.

## 5.3 The reverse zone

Now programs can convert the names in linux.bogus to addresses which they can connect to. But also required is a reverse zone, one making DNS able to convert from an address to a name. This name is used by a lot of servers of different kinds (FTP, IRC, WWW and others) to decide if they want to talk to you or not, and if so, maybe even how much priority you should be given. For full access to all services on the Internet a reverse zone is required.

Put this in `named.conf`:

```
zone "196.168.192.in−addr.arpa" {
        notify no;
        type master;
        file "pz/192.168.196";
};
```

This is exactly as with the `0.0.127.in−addr.arpa`, and the contents are similar:

```
$TTL 3D
@       IN      SOA     ns.linux.bogus. hostmaster.linux.bogus. (
                        199802151 ; Serial, todays date + todays serial
                        8H      ; Refresh
                        2H      ; Retry
                        4W      ; Expire
                        1D)     ; Minimum TTL
                NS      ns.linux.bogus.

1               PTR     gw.linux.bogus.
2               PTR     ns.linux.bogus.
3               PTR     donald.linux.bogus.
4               PTR     mail.linux.bogus.
5               PTR     ftp.linux.bogus.
```

Now you restart your named (`ndc restart`) and examine your work with dig again:

```
$ dig -x 192.168.196.4 +pfmin
;; res options: init recurs defnam dnsrch
;; got answer:
;; ->>HEADER<<- opcode: QUERY, status: NOERROR, id: 8764
;; QUERY: 1, ANSWER: 1, AUTHORITY: 1, ADDITIONAL: 1
;; QUERY SECTION:
;;      4.196.168.192.in-addr.arpa, type = ANY, class = IN

;; ANSWER SECTION:
4.196.168.192.in-addr.arpa.  3D IN PTR  mail.linux.bogus.
```

so, it looks OK, dump the whole thing to examine that too:

```
dig -x 192.168.196 AXFR

; <<>> DiG 8.2 <<>> -x AXFR
$ORIGIN 196.168.192.in-addr.arpa.
@                       3D IN SOA       ns.linux.bogus. hostmaster.linux.bogus. (
                                        199802151       ; serial
                                        8H              ; refresh
                                        2H              ; retry
                                        4W              ; expiry
                                        1D )            ; minimum

                        3D IN NS        ns.linux.bogus.
4                       3D IN PTR       mail.linux.bogus.
2                       3D IN PTR       ns.linux.bogus.
5                       3D IN PTR       ftp.linux.bogus.
3                       3D IN PTR       donald.linux.bogus.
1                       3D IN PTR       gw.linux.bogus.
@                       3D IN SOA       ns.linux.bogus. hostmaster.linux.bogus. (
                                        199802151       ; serial
                                        8H              ; refresh
                                        2H              ; retry
                                        4W              ; expiry
                                        1D )            ; minimum

;; Received 8 answers (8 records).
;; FROM: lookfar to SERVER: 127.0.0.1
;; WHEN: Sat Dec 16 01:44:03 2000
```

Looks good! If your output didn't look like that look for error−messages in your syslog, I explained how to do that in the first section under the heading Starting named

## 5.4 Words of caution

There are some things I should add here. The IP numbers used in the examples above are taken from one of the blocks of 'private nets', i.e., they are not allowed to be used publicly on the Internet. So they are safe to use in an example in a HOWTO. The second thing is the `notify no;` line. It tells named not to notify its secondary (slave) servers when it has gotten a update to one of its zone files. In BIND−8 the named can notify the other servers listed in NS records in the zone file when a zone is updated. This is handy for ordinary use. But for private experiments with zones this feature should be off −−− we don't want the experiment to pollute the Internet do we?

And, of course, this domain is highly bogus, and so are all the addresses in it. For a real example of a real−life domain see the next main−section.

## 5.5 Why reverse lookups don't work.

There are a couple of ``gotchas'' that normally are avoided with name lookups that are often seen when setting up reverse zones. Before you go on you need reverse lookups of your machines working on your own nameserver. If it isn't go back and fix it before continuing.

I will discuss two failures of reverse lookups as seen from outside your network:

### The reverse zone isn't delegated.

When you ask a service provider for a network−address range and a domain name the domain name is normally delegated as a matter of course. A delegation is the glue NS record that helps you get from one nameserver to another as explained in the dry theory section above. You read that, right? If your reverse zone doesn't work go back and read it. Now.

The reverse zone also needs to be delegated. If you got the `192.168.196` net with the `linux.bogus` domain from your provider they need to put `NS` records in for your reverse zone as well as for your forward zone. If you follow the chain from `in−addr.arpa` and up to your net you will probably find a break in the chain, most probably at your service provider. Having found the break in the chain contact your service−provider and ask them to correct the error.

### You've got a classless subnet

This is a somewhat advanced topic, but classless subnets are very common these days and you probably have one if you're a small company.

A classless subnet is what keeps the Internet going these days. Some years ago there was much ado about the shortage of IP numbers. The smart people in IETF (the Internet Engineering Task Force, they keep the Internet working) stuck their heads together and solved the problem. At a price. The price is that you'll get less than a ``C'' subnet and some things may break. Please see Ask Mr. DNS at for an good explanation of this and how to handle it.

Did you read it? I'm not going to explain it so please read it.

The first part of the problem is that your ISP must understand the technique described by Mr. DNS. Not all small ISPs have a working understanding of this. If so you might have to explain to them and be persistent. But be sure you understand it first ;−). They will then set up a nice reverse zone at their server which you can examine for correctness with dig.

The second and last part of the problem is that you must understand the technique. If you're unsure go back and read about it again. Then you can set up your own classless reverse zone as described by Mr. DNS.

There is another trap lurking here. Old resolvers will *not* be able to follow the `CNAME` trick in the resolving chain and will fail to reverse−resolve your machine. This can result in the service assigning it an incorrect access class, deny access or something along those lines. If you stumble into such a service the only solution (that I know of) is for your ISP to insert your PTR record directly into their trick classless zone file instead of the trick CNAME record.

Some ISPs will offer other ways to handle this, like Web based forms for you to input your reverse−mappings in or other automagical systems.

## 5.6 Slave servers

Once you have set up your zones correctly on the master servers you need to set up at least one slave server. Slave servers are needed for robustness. If your master goes down the people out there on the net will still be able to get information about your domain from the slave. A slave should be as long away from you as possible. Your master and slave should share as few as possible of these: Power supply, LAN, ISP, city and country. If all of these things are different for your master and slave you've found a really good slave.

A slave is simply a nameserver that copies zone files from a master. You set it up like this:

```
zone "linux.bogus" {
        type slave;
        file "sz/linux.bogus";
        masters { 192.168.196.2; };
};
```

A mechanism called zone−transfer is used to copy the data. The zone transfer is controlled by your SOA record:

```
@       IN      SOA     ns.linux.bogus. hostmaster.linux.bogus. (
                        199802151       ; serial, todays date + todays serial #
                        8H              ; refresh, seconds
                        2H              ; retry, seconds
                        4W              ; expire, seconds
                        1D )            ; minimum, seconds
```

A zone is only transferred if the serial number on the master is larger than on the slave. Every refresh interval the slave will check if the master has been updated. If the check fails (because the master is unavailable) it will retry the check every retry interval. If it continues to fail as long as the expire interval the slave will remove the zone from it's filesystem and no longer be a server for it.

# 6. Basic security options.

*By Jamie Norrish*

**Setting configuration options to reduce the possibility of problems.**

There are a few simple steps that you can take which will both make your server more secure and potentially reduce its load. The material presented here is nothing more than a starting point; if you are concerned about security (and you should be), please consult other resources on the net (see the last chapter).

The following configuration directives occur in `named.conf`. If a directive occurs in the `options` section of the file, it applies to all zones listed in that file. If it occurs within a `zone` entry, it applies only to that zone. A `zone` entry overrides an `options` entry.

## 6.1 Restricting zone transfers

In order for your slave server(s) to be able to answer queries about your domain, they must be able to transfer the zone information from your primary server. Very few others have a need to do so. Therefore restrict zone transfers using the `allow-transfer` option, assuming 192.168.1.4 is the IP address of ns.friend.bogus and adding yourself for debugging purposes:

```
zone "linux.bogus" {
      allow-transfer { 192.168.1.4; localhost; };
};
```

By restricting zone transfers you ensure that the only information available to people is that which they ask for directly − no one can just ask for all the details about your set−up.

## 6.2 Protecting against spoofing

Firstly, disable any queries for domains you don't own, except from your internal/local machines. This not only helps prevent malicious use of your DNS server, but also reduces unnecessary use of your server.

```
options {
      allow-query { 192.168.196.0/24; localhost; };
};

zone "linux.bogus" {
      allow-query { any; };
};

zone "196.168.192.in-addr.arpa" {
      allow-query { any; };
};
```

Further, disable recursive queries except from internal/local sources. This reduces the risk of cache poisoning attacks (where false data is fed to your server).

```
options {
        allow−recursion { 192.168.196.0/24; localhost; };
};
```

## 6.3 Running named as non−root

It is a good idea to run named as a user other than root, so that if it is compromised the privileges gained by the cracker are as limited as possible. You first have to create a user and group for named to run under, and then modify whatever init script you use that starts named. Pass the new username and group to named using the −u and −g flags.

For example, in Debian GNU/Linux 2.2 you might modify your `/etc/init.d/bind` script to have the following line (where user and group named have been created:

```
start−stop−daemon −−start −−quiet −−exec /usr/sbin/named −− −u named −g named
```

The same can be done with Red Hat and the other distributions. Dave Lugo has described a secure dual chroot setup http://www.etherboy.com/dns/chrootdns.html which you may find interesting to read.

# 7. A real domain example

**Where we list some *real* zone files**

Users have suggested that I include a real example of a working domain as well as the tutorial example.

I use this example with permission from David Bullock of LAND−5. These files were current 24th of September 1996, and were then edited to fit BIND 8 restrictions and use extensions by me. So, what you see here differs a bit from what you find if you query LAND−5's name servers now.

## 7.1 /etc/named.conf (or /var/named/named.conf)

Here we find master zone sections for the two reverse zones needed: the 127.0.0 net, as well as LAND−5's `206.6.177` subnet, and a primary line for land−5's forward zone `land−5.com`. Also note that instead of stuffing the files in a directory called `pz`, as I do in this HOWTO, he puts them in a directory called `zone`.

```
// Boot file for LAND−5 name server

options {
        directory "/var/named";
};
```

```
zone "." {
        type hint;
        file "root.hints";
};

zone "0.0.127.in-addr.arpa" {
        type master;
        file "zone/127.0.0";
};

zone "land-5.com" {
        type master;
        file "zone/land-5.com";
};

zone "177.6.206.in-addr.arpa" {
        type master;
        file "zone/206.6.177";
};
```

If you put this in your named.conf file to play with **PLEASE** put ``notify no;'' in the zone sections for the two `land-5` zones so as to avoid accidents.

## 7.2 /var/named/root.hints

Keep in mind that this file is dynamic, and the one listed here is old. You're better off using one produced now, with dig, as explained earlier.

```
; <<>> DiG 8.1 <<>> @A.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
; (1 server found)
;; res options: init recurs defnam dnsrch
;; got answer:
;; ->>HEADER<<- opcode: QUERY, status: NOERROR, id: 10
;; flags: qr aa rd; QUERY: 1, ANSWER: 13, AUTHORITY: 0, ADDITIONAL: 13
;; QUERY SECTION:
;;      ., type = NS, class = IN

;; ANSWER SECTION:
.                       6D IN NS        G.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
.                       6D IN NS        J.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
.                       6D IN NS        K.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
.                       6D IN NS        L.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
.                       6D IN NS        M.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
.                       6D IN NS        A.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
.                       6D IN NS        H.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
.                       6D IN NS        B.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
.                       6D IN NS        C.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
.                       6D IN NS        D.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
.                       6D IN NS        E.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
.                       6D IN NS        I.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
.                       6D IN NS        F.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.

;; ADDITIONAL SECTION:
G.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.     5w6d16h IN A    192.112.36.4
J.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.     5w6d16h IN A    198.41.0.10
K.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.     5w6d16h IN A    193.0.14.129
L.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.     5w6d16h IN A    198.32.64.12
```

```
M.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.     5w6d16h IN A    202.12.27.33
A.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.     5w6d16h IN A    198.41.0.4
H.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.     5w6d16h IN A    128.63.2.53
B.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.     5w6d16h IN A    128.9.0.107
C.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.     5w6d16h IN A    192.33.4.12
D.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.     5w6d16h IN A    128.8.10.90
E.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.     5w6d16h IN A    192.203.230.10
I.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.     5w6d16h IN A    192.36.148.17
F.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.     5w6d16h IN A    192.5.5.241

;; Total query time: 215 msec
;; FROM: roke.uio.no to SERVER: A.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.  198.41.0.4
;; WHEN: Sun Feb 15 01:22:51 1998
;; MSG SIZE  sent: 17  rcvd: 436
```

## 7.3 /var/named/zone/127.0.0

Just the basics, the obligatory SOA record, and a record that maps 127.0.0.1 to `localhost`. Both are required. No more should be in this file. It will probably never need to be updated, unless your nameserver or hostmaster address changes.

```
@               IN      SOA     land-5.com. root.land-5.com. (
                                199609203       ; Serial
                                28800   ; Refresh
                                7200    ; Retry
                                604800  ; Expire
                                86400)  ; Minimum TTL
                        NS      land-5.com.

1                       PTR     localhost.
```

If you look at a random BIND installation you will probably find that the `$TTL` line is missing as it is here. It was not used before, and only version 8.2 of BIND has started to warn about its absence. I would recommend that you put the `$TTL` in line in zone files as you discover that they are missing.

## 7.4 /var/named/zone/land-5.com

Here we see the mandatory SOA record, the needed NS records. We can see that he has a secondary name server at `ns2.psi.net`. This is as it should be, *always* have a off site secondary server as backup. We can also see that he has a master host called `land-5` which takes care of many of the different Internet services, and that he's done it with CNAMEs (a alternative is using A records).

As you see from the SOA record, the zone file originates at `land-5.com`, the contact person is `root@land-5.com`. `hostmaster` is another oft used address for the contact person. The serial number is in the customary yyyymmdd format with todays serial number appended; this is probably the sixth version of zone file on the 20th of September 1996. Remember that the serial number *must* increase monotonically, here there is only *one* digit for todays serial#, so after 9 edits he has to wait until tomorrow before he can edit the file again. Consider using two digits.

```
@       IN      SOA     land−5.com. root.land−5.com. (
                        199609206       ; serial, todays date + todays serial #
                        8H              ; refresh, seconds
                        2H              ; retry, seconds
                        4W              ; expire, seconds
                        1D )            ; minimum, seconds
                NS      land−5.com.
                NS      ns2.psi.net.
                MX      10 land−5.com.  ; Primary Mail Exchanger
                TXT     "LAND−5 Corporation"

localhost       A       127.0.0.1

router          A       206.6.177.1

land−5.com.     A       206.6.177.2
ns              A       206.6.177.3
www             A       207.159.141.192

ftp             CNAME   land−5.com.
mail            CNAME   land−5.com.
news            CNAME   land−5.com.

funn            A       206.6.177.2

;
;       Workstations
;
ws−177200       A       206.6.177.200
                MX      10 land−5.com.   ; Primary Mail Host
ws−177201       A       206.6.177.201
                MX      10 land−5.com.   ; Primary Mail Host
ws−177202       A       206.6.177.202
                MX      10 land−5.com.   ; Primary Mail Host
ws−177203       A       206.6.177.203
                MX      10 land−5.com.   ; Primary Mail Host
ws−177204       A       206.6.177.204
                MX      10 land−5.com.   ; Primary Mail Host
ws−177205       A       206.6.177.205
                MX      10 land−5.com.   ; Primary Mail Host
; {Many repetitive definitions deleted − SNIP}
ws−177250       A       206.6.177.250
                MX      10 land−5.com.   ; Primary Mail Host
ws−177251       A       206.6.177.251
                MX      10 land−5.com.   ; Primary Mail Host
ws−177252       A       206.6.177.252
                MX      10 land−5.com.   ; Primary Mail Host
ws−177253       A       206.6.177.253
                MX      10 land−5.com.   ; Primary Mail Host
ws−177254       A       206.6.177.254
                MX      10 land−5.com.   ; Primary Mail Host
```

If you examine land−5s nameserver you will find that the host names are of the form `ws`_*number*. As of late BIND 4 versions named started enforcing the restrictions on what characters may be used in host names. So that does not work with BIND−8 at all, and I substituted '−' (dash) for '_' (underline) for use in this HOWTO.

Another thing to note is that the workstations don't have individual names, but rather a prefix followed by the two last parts of the IP numbers. Using such a convention can simplify maintenance significantly, but can be a bit impersonal, and, in fact, be a source of irritation among your customers.

We also see that `funn.land−5.com` is an alias for `land−5.com`, but using an A record, not a CNAME record. This is a good policy as noted earlier.

## 7.5 /var/named/zone/206.6.177

I'll comment on this file below

```
@               IN      SOA     land−5.com. root.land−5.com. (
                                199609206       ; Serial
                                28800   ; Refresh
                                7200    ; Retry
                                604800  ; Expire
                                86400)  ; Minimum TTL
                        NS      land−5.com.
                        NS      ns2.psi.net.
;
;       Servers
;
1       PTR     router.land−5.com.
2       PTR     land−5.com.
2       PTR     funn.land−5.com.
;
;       Workstations
;
200     PTR     ws−177200.land−5.com.
201     PTR     ws−177201.land−5.com.
202     PTR     ws−177202.land−5.com.
203     PTR     ws−177203.land−5.com.
204     PTR     ws−177204.land−5.com.
205     PTR     ws−177205.land−5.com.
; {Many repetitive definitions deleted − SNIP}
250     PTR     ws−177250.land−5.com.
251     PTR     ws−177251.land−5.com.
252     PTR     ws−177252.land−5.com.
253     PTR     ws−177253.land−5.com.
254     PTR     ws−177254.land−5.com.
```

The reverse zone is the bit of the setup that seems to cause the most grief. It is used to find the host name if you have the IP number of a machine. Example: you are an IRC server and accept connections from IRC clients. However you are a Norwegian IRC server and so you only want to accept connections from clients in Norway and other Scandinavian countries. When you get a connection from a client the C library is able to tell you the IP number of the connecting machine because the IP number of the client is contained in all the packets that are passed over the network. Now you can call a function called gethostbyaddr that looks up the name of a host given the IP number. Gethostbyaddr will ask a DNS server, which will then traverse the DNS looking for the machine. Supposing the client connection is from ws−177200.land−5.com. The IP number the C library provides to the IRC server is 206.6.177.200. To find out the name of that machine we need to find `200.177.6.206.in−addr.arpa`. The DNS server will first find the `arpa.` servers, then find `in−addr.arpa.` servers, following the reverse trail through 206, then 6 and at last finding the server for the `177.6.206.in−addr.arpa` zone at LAND−5. From which it will finally get the answer that for `200.177.6.206.in−addr.arpa` we have a ``PTR ws−177200.land−5.com'' record, meaning that the name that goes with `206.6.177.200` is `ws−177200.land−5.com`. As with the explanation of how `prep.ai.mit.edu` is looked up, this is slightly fictitious.

Getting back to the IRC server example. The IRC server only accepts connections from the Scandinavian countries, i.e., `*.no`, `*.se`, `*.dk`, the name `ws−177200.land−5.com` clearly does not match any of those, and the server will deny the connection. If there was *no* reverse mapping of `206.2.177.200` through the `in−addr.arpa` zone the server would have been unable to find the name at all and would have to settle to comparing `206.2.177.200` with `*.no`, `*.se` and `*.dk`, none of which will match.

Some people will tell you that reverse lookup mappings are only important for servers, or not important at all. Not so: Many ftp, news, IRC and even some http (WWW) servers will *not* accept connections from machines of which they are not able to find the name. So reverse mappings for machines are in fact *mandatory*.

# 8. Maintenance

**Keeping it working.**

There is one maintenance task you have to do on nameds, other than keeping them running. That's keeping the `root.hints` file updated. The easiest way is using dig. First run dig with no arguments you will get the `root.hints` according to your own server. Then ask one of the listed root servers with `dig @rootserver`. You will note that the output looks terribly like a `root.hints` file. Save it to a file (`dig @e.root−servers.net . ns >root.hints.new`) and replace the old `root.hints` with it.

Remember to reload named after replacing the cache file.

Al Longyear sent me this script that can be run automatically to update `root.hints`. Install a crontab entry to run it once a month and forget it. The script assumes you have mail working and that the mail−alias `hostmaster' is defined. You must hack it to suit your setup.

```
#!/bin/sh
#
# Update the nameserver cache information file once per month.
# This is run automatically by a cron entry.
#
# Original by Al Longyear
# Updated for BIND 8 by Nicolai Langfeldt
# Miscelanious error−conditions reported by David A. Ranch
# Ping test suggested by Martin Foster
# named up−test suggested by Erik Bryer.
#
(
 echo "To: hostmaster <hostmaster>"
 echo "From: system <root>"

 # Is named up? Check the status of named.
 case `ndc status 2>&1` in
    *'cannot connect to command channel'*)
        echo "named is DOWN. root.hints was NOT updated"
        echo
        exit 0
        ;;
 esac

 PATH=/sbin:/usr/sbin:/bin:/usr/bin:
 export PATH
 # NOTE: /var/named must be writable only by trusted users or this script
 # will cause root compromise/denial of service opportunities.
 cd /var/named 2>/dev/null || {
    echo "Subject: Cannot cd to /var/named, error $?"
    echo
    echo "The subject says it all"
    exit 1
 }

 # Are we online?  Ping a server at your ISP
 case `ping −qnc 1 some.machine.net 2>&1` in
   *'100% packet loss'*)
        echo "Subject: root.hints NOT updated.  The network is DOWN."
        echo
        echo "The subject says it all"
        exit 1
        ;;
 esac

 dig @e.root−servers.net . ns >root.hints.new 2> errors

 case `cat root.hints.new` in
   *NOERROR*)
        # It worked
        :;;
   *)
        echo "Subject: The root.hints file update has FAILED."
        echo
        echo "The root.hints update has failed"
        echo "This is the dig output reported:"
        echo
        cat root.hints.new errors
        exit 1
        ;;
 esac

 echo "Subject: The root.hints file has been updated"
 echo
 echo "The root.hints file has been updated to contain the following
information:"
 echo
 cat root.hints.new

 chown root.root root.hints.new
 chmod 444 root.hints.new
 rm −f root.hints.old errors
 mv root.hints root.hints.old
 mv root.hints.new root.hints
 ndc restart
 echo
 echo "The nameserver has been restarted to ensure that the update is complete."
 echo "The previous root.hints file is now called
/var/named/root.hints.old."
) 2>&1 | /usr/lib/sendmail −t
exit 0
```

---

Some of you might have picked up that the `root.hints` file is also available by ftp from Internic. Please don't use ftp to update `root.hints`, the above method is much more friendly to the net, and Internic.

---

# 9. Converting from version 4 to version 8

This was originally a section on using BIND 8 written by David E. Smith (dave@bureau42.ml.org). I have edited it some to fit the new section name.

There's not much to it. Except for using named.conf instead of named.boot, everything is identical. And BIND 8 comes with a perl script that converts old−style files to new. Example named.boot (old style) for a cache−only name server:

```
directory /var/named
cache   .                                         root.hints
primary 0.0.127.IN−ADDR.ARPA                      127.0.0.zone
primary localhost                                 localhost.zone
```

On the command line, in the bind8/src/bin/named directory (*this assumes you got a source distribution. If you got a binary package the script is probably around, I'm not sure where it would be though. −ed.*), type:

```
./named−bootconf.pl < named.boot > named.conf
```

Which creates named.conf:

```
// generated by named−bootconf.pl

options {
        directory "/var/named";
};

zone "." {
        type hint;
        file "root.hints";
};

zone "0.0.127.IN−ADDR.ARPA" {
        type master;
        file "127.0.0.zone";
};

zone "localhost" {
        type master;
        file "localhost.zone";
};
```

It works for everything that can go into a `named.boot` file, although it doesn't add all of the new enhancements and configuration options that BIND 8 allows. Here's a more complete `named.conf` that does the same things, but a little more efficiently.

```
// This is a configuration file for named (from BIND 8.1 or later).
// It would normally be installed as /etc/named.conf.
// The only change made from the `stock' named.conf (aside from this
// comment :) is that the directory line was uncommented, since I
// already had the zone files in /var/named.

options {
        directory "/var/named";
        datasize 20M;
};

zone "localhost" IN {
        type master;
        file "localhost.zone";
};

zone "0.0.127.in-addr.arpa" IN {
        type master;
        file "127.0.0.zone";
};

zone "." IN {
        type hint;
        file "root.hints";
};
```

In the BIND 8 distributions directory bind8/src/bin/named/test you find this, and copies of the zone files, that many people can just drop in and use instantly.

The formats for zone files and `root.hints` files are identical, as are the commands for updating them.

## 10. Questions and Answers

Please read this section before mailing me.

1. My named wants a named.boot file

   You are reading the wrong HOWTO. Please see the old version of this HOWTO, which covers BIND 4, at http://www.math.uio.no/~janl/DNS/

2. How do use DNS from inside a firewall?

   A hint: `forward only;`. You might also need

   ```
     query-source port 53;
   ```

   inside the ``options'' part of the `named.conf` file as suggested in the example caching section.

3. How do I make DNS rotate through the available addresses for a service, say `www.busy.site` to obtain a load balancing effect, or similar?

Make several **A** records for `www.busy.site` and use BIND 4.9.3 or later. Then BIND will round−robin the answers. It will *not* work with earlier versions of BIND.

4. I want to set up DNS on a (closed) intranet. What do I do?

   You drop the `root.hints` file and just do zone files. That also means you don't have to get new hint files all the time.

5. How do I set up a secondary (slave) name server?

   If the primary/master server has address 127.0.0.1 you put a line like this in the named.conf file of your secondary:

   ```
   zone "linux.bogus" {
         type slave;
         file "sz/linux.bogus";
         masters { 127.0.0.1; };
   };
   ```

   You may list several alternate master servers the zone can be copied from inside the `masters` list, separated by ';' (semicolon).

6. I want BIND running when I'm disconnected from the net.

   There are four items regarding this:

   ♦ Specific to BIND 8, Adam L Rice has sent me this e−mail, about how to run DNS painlessly on a dialup machine:

   ```
   I have discovered with newer versions of BIND that this
   [<em/shuffeling files, −ed/] is no longer necessary.  There is a
   "forward" directive in addition to the "forwarders" directive that
   controls how they are used.  The default setting is "forward first",
   which first asks each of the forwarders, and then tries the normal
   approach of doing the legwork itself if that fails.  This gives the
   familiar behaviour of gethostbyname() taking an inordinately long time
   when the link is not up.  But if "forward only" is set, then BIND
   gives up when it doesn't get a response from the forwarders, and
   gethostbyname() returns immediately.  Hence there is no need to
   perform sleight−of−hand with files in /etc and restart the server.

   In my case, I just added the lines

   forward only;
   forwarders { 193.133.58.5; };

   to the options { } section of my named.conf file. It works very nicely. The
   only disadvantage of this is that it reduces an incredibly sophisticated
   piece of DNS software to the status of a dumb cache. To some extent, I would
   just like to run a dumb cache for DNS instead, but there doesn't seem to be
   such a piece of software available for Linux.
   ```

   ♦ I have received this mail from Ian Clark <ic@deakin.edu.au> where he explains his way of doing this:

```
I run named on my 'Masquerading' machine here. I have
two root.hints files, one called root.hints.real which contains
the real root server names and the other called root.hints.fake
which contains...

----
; root.hints.fake
; this file contains no information
----

When I go off line I copy the root.hints.fake file to root.hints and
restart named.

When I go online I copy root.hints.real to root.hints and restart
named.

This is done from ip-down & ip-up respectively.

The first time I do a query off line on a domain name named doesn't
have details for it puts an entry like this in messages..

Jan 28 20:10:11 hazchem named[10147]: No root nameserver for class IN

which I can live with.

It certainly seems to work for me. I can use the nameserver for
local machines while off the 'net without the timeout delay for
external domain names and I while on the 'net queries for external
domains work normally
```

Peter Denison thought that Ian does not go far enough though. He writes:

```
When connected) serve all cached (and local network) entries immediately
                for non-cached entries, forward to my ISPs nameserver
When off-line)  serve local network queries immediately
                fail all other queries **immediately**

The combination of changing the root cache file and forwarding queries
doesn't work.

So, I've set up (with some discussion of this on the local LUG) two nameds
as follows:

named-online:   forwards to ISPs nameserver
                master for localnet zone
                master for localnet reverse zone (1.168.192.in-addr.arpa)
                master for 0.0.127.in-addr.arpa
                listens on port 60053

named-offline:  no forwarding
                "fake" root cache file
                slave for 3 local zones (master is 127.0.0.1:60053)
                listens on port 61053

And combined this with port forwarding, to send port 53 to 61053 when
off-line, and to port 60053 when online. (I'm using the new netfilter
package under 2.3.18, but the old (ipchains) mechanism should work.)

Note that this won't quite work out-of-the-box, as there's a slight bug in
BIND 8.2, which I have logged wth the developers, preventing a slave
having a master on the same IP address (even if a different port). It's a
```

```
trivial patch, and should go in soon I hope.
```

- ♦ I have also received information about how BIND interacts with NFS and the portmapper on a mostly offline machine from Karl−Max Wanger:

```
I use to run my own named on all my machines which are only
occasionally connected to the Internet by modem. The nameserver only
acts as a cache, it has no area of authority and asks back for
everything at the name servers in the root.cache file. As is usual
with Slackware, it is started before nfsd and mountd.

With one of my machines (a Libretto 30 notebook) I had the problem
that sometimes I could mount it from another system connected to my
local LAN, but most of the time it didn't work.  I had the same effect
regardless of using PLIP, a PCMCIA ethernet card or PPP over a serial
interface.

After some time of guessing and experimenting I found out that
apparently named messed with the process of registration nfsd and
mountd have to carry out with the portmapper upon startup (I start
these daemons at boot time as usual). Starting named after nfsd and
mountd eliminated this problem completely.

As there are no disadvantages to expect from such a modified boot
sequence I'd advise everybody to do it that way to prevent potential
trouble.
```

- ♦ Finally, there is HOWTO information about this at Ask Mr. DNS at. It is about BIND 4 though, so you have to adapt what he says to BIND 8.

7. Where does the caching name server store its cache? Is there any way I can control the size of the cache?

   The cache is completely stored in memory, it is *not* written to disk at any time. Every time you kill named the cache is lost. The cache is *not* controllable in any way. named manages it according to some simple rules and that is it. You cannot control the cache or the cache size in any way for any reason. If you want to you can ``fix" this by hacking named. This is however not recommended.

8. Does named save the cache between restarts? Can I make it save it?

   No, named does *not* save the cache when it dies. That means that the cache must be built anew each time you kill and restart named. There is *no* way to make named save the cache in a file. If you want you can ``fix" this by hacking named. This is however not recommended.

9. How can I get a domain? I want to set up my own domain called (for example) `linux-rules.net`. How can I get the domain I want assigned to me?

   Please contact your network service provider. They will be able to help you with this. Please note that in most parts of the world you need to pay money to get a domain.

10. How can I secure my DNS server? How do I set up split DNS?

    Both of these are advanced topics. They are both covered in http://www.etherboy.com/dns/chrootdns.html. I will not explain the topics further here.

# 11. How to become a bigger time DNS admin.

**Documentation and tools.**

Real Documentation exists. Online and in print. The reading of several of these is required to make the step from small time DNS admin to a big time one. In print I have written *The Concise Guide to DNS and BIND* (by Nicolai Langfeldt), published by Que (ISDN 0−7897−2273−9). The book is much like this HOWTO. Just more details, and a lot more of everything. But the standard book is *DNS and BIND* by C. Liu and P. Albitz from O'Reilly & Associates (ISBN 0−937175−82−X). It's excellent too. Get the 3rd edition, it covers BIND 8 as well as BIND 4. There is also a section on DNS in *TCP/IP Network Administration*, by Craig Hunt from O'Reilly (ISBN 0−937175−82−X). Another must for good DNS administration (or good anything for that matter) is *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* by Robert M. Pirsig :−) Available as ISBN 0688052304 and others.

Online you will find stuff on http://www.dns.net/dnsrd/ (DNS Resources Directory), http://www.isc.org/bind.html; A FAQ, a reference manual (BOG; BIND Operations Guide) as well as papers and protocol definitions and DNS hacks (these, and most, if not all, of the RFCs mentioned below, are also contained in the BIND distribution). I have not read most of these, but then I'm not a big−time DNS admin either. Arnt Gulbrandsen on the other hand has read BOG and he's ecstatic about it :−). The newsgroup news:comp.protocols.tcp−ip.domains is about DNS. In addition there are a number of RFCs about DNS, the most important are probably the ones listed here. Those that have BCP (Best Current Practice) numbers are *highly recommended*.

***RFC 2671***

P. Vixie, *Extension Mechanisms for DNS (EDNS0)* August 1999.

***RFC 2317***

, BCP 20, H. Eidnes et. al. *Classless IN−ADDR.ARPA delegation*, March 1998. This is about CIDR, or classless subnet reverse lookups.

***RFC 2308***

, M. Andrews, *Negative Caching of DNS Queries*, March 1998. About negative caching and the $TTL zone file directive.

***RFC 2219***

, BCP 17, M. Hamilton and R. Wright, *Use of DNS Aliases for Network Services*, October 1997. About CNAME usage.

***RFC 2182***

, BCP 16, R. Elz et. al., *Selection and Operation of Secondary DNS Servers*, July 1997.

***RFC 2052***

A. Gulbrandsen, P. Vixie, *A DNS RR for specifying the location of services (DNS SRV)*, October 1996

***RFC 1918***

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