Ninja Fast build executor

CONCEPTS

Ninja is a fast executor, not a build language: a generator such as CMake or Meson writes build.ninja for you.

CMakeLists / meson.build you write
↓ cmake / meson setup
build.ninja generated
↓ ninja
Outputs only what is stale

Ninja skips the work when outputs are newer than their inputs and the recorded command is unchanged.

BUILDING

ninja
Build the default targets

ninja *<target>*
Build only the named target(s)

ninja -C *<dir>*
Change to a directory first

ninja -j *<N>*
Run N jobs in parallel

ninja -n
Dry run, do not execute

ninja -v
Show full command lines

ninja -k *<N>*
Keep going until N jobs fail

ninja -f *<file>*
Use another build file

ninja -l *<N>*
Hold back at load average above N

ninja --quiet
Hide progress, show command output

ninja --version
Print the Ninja version

ninja -h
Show help and options

INSPECTING THE GRAPH

ninja -t targets all
List every target and its rule

ninja -t targets rule *<rule>*
List targets built by a rule

INSPECTING THE GRAPH (cont.)

ninja -t commands *<target>*
Print commands to rebuild a target

ninja -t query *<path>*
Show a file's inputs and outputs

ninja -t inputs *<target>*
List all inputs of a target

ninja -t graph *<target>*
Emit a Graphviz dot file

CLEANING AND TOOLING

ninja -t clean
Remove all built files

ninja -t clean *<target>*
Clean one target and its deps

ninja -t compdb *<rule>* **...**
Dump compile_commands.json

DEBUGGING AND ENV

ninja -d explain
Say why each command reruns

NINJA_STATUS="[%f/%t %e] " ninja
Customize progress line

ninja -j1 -v
Serial verbose build to find a failure

WRITING BUILD.NINJA

rule *<name>*
Declare a rule with a command

command = cc -c $in -o $out
Rule command using $in and $out

build *<out>*: *<rule>* *<in>*
Declare a build edge

build *<out>*: *<rule>* *<in>* **|** *<dep>*
Add an implicit dependency

build *<out>*: *<rule>* *<in>* **||** *<dep>*
Add an order-only dependency

default *<target>*
Set what a bare ninja builds

build *<name>*: **phony** *<targets>*
Alias for other targets

depfile = $out.d
Read header deps from a depfile

description = CC $out
Short text shown while building