

# The ctanbib package

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## 1 Introduction

This package provides script named ctanbib which can be used for retrieving of the bibliographic information for packages hosted on CTAN.

It looks up the Catalogue entry for each PKGNAME on CTAN (at <https://ctan.org/xml/2.0/pkg/PKGNAME>), and convert relevant information to a BibTeX entry.

By default, the url field in the output entry is the package's home field value if that is specified in the Catalogue entry; if it isn't, <https://ctan.org/pkg/PKGNAME> is used.

## 2 Usage

It can be used in the following way:

```
ctanbib [options] <packagename1> ... <packagenameX> > filename.bib
```

The curl utility needs to be installed on the user's system in order to support the package info download.

## 3 Available options

**-c,--ctan** always use CTAN /pkg/ url instead of the package homepage

**-C,--ctanpath** use the package's CTAN path as url (e.g.: /support/ctanbib)

**-e,--entrypoint** explicitly set the BibTeX entry type.

**-h,--help** print the help message.

**-p,--pkgname** wrap the package name in a \ctanbibpkgname command.

**-v,--version** print the version info.

## 4 Examples

```
ctanbib latex
```

This invocation will print data in the Bib(La)TeX format to the standard output:

```
@manual{latex,
  title = {The latex package},
  subtitle = {A TeX macro package that defines LaTeX},
  author = {{The LaTeX Team} and Lamport, Leslie},
  url = {http://www.latex-project.org/},
  urldate = {2021-06-26},
  date = {},
  version = {2021-06-01},
}
```

The `--ctan` option:

```
ctanbib -c latex
```

This produces a bib record that uses the CTAN package entry for the URL, instead of the original package URL.

```
@manual{latex,
  title = {The latex package},
  ...
  url = {https://ctan.org/pkg/latex},
  ...
}
```

The `--ctanpath` option:

```
ctanbib -C biblatex
```

This produces a bib record that uses the CTAN package tree location for the URL.

```
@manual{biblatex,
  ...
  url = {/macros/latex/contrib/biblatex},
  ...
}
```

The `--entrytype` option:

```
ctanbib -e ctan latex
```

It selects different entry type for the record:

```
@ctan{latex,  
  ...  
}
```

The `--pkgname` option:

```
ctanbib -p latex
```

Puts the package name into the `\ctanbibpkgname` command, which can be redefined by user to produce a special formatting of the name:

```
@preamble{ "\providecommand\ctanbibpkgname[1]{\textsl{#1}}"}  
@manual{latex,  
  title = {The \ctanbibpkgname{latex} package},  
  ...  
}
```

## 5 License

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## 6 Acknowledgements

This package was created thanks to TeX.sx user Daniel<sup>1</sup>. Lukas C. Bossert had useful comments which led to update of the original script and it's eventual release on CTAN. Herbert Voss added the `--CTAN` option. Karl Berry and Boris Veytsman suggested addition of the `--pkgname` option and leaving package names uncapitalized.

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<sup>1</sup><https://tex.stackexchange.com/users/3751/daniel>

## 7 Changelog

2026-05-26 Version 0.2e released  
2026-05-26 Use repository address as URL if the home field is missing  
2026-05-26 Rewrote the man page, thanks to Karl Berry  
2023-10-25 Version 0.2d released  
2023-10-20 Sort authors alphabetically  
2023-10-19 Updated the --help message  
2023-10-16 Use larger font in the documentation  
2023-10-16 Indent the BibTeX entry by two spaces  
2023-10-08 Get date from the copyright field if we cannot retrieve it from version  
2023-09-18 Version 0.2c released  
2023-09-14 Renamed the --tugboat option to --pkgname  
2023-09-12 Don't capitalize package names  
2023-09-12 Added the --tugboat option for creation of records suitable for the TUGboat journal  
2023-02-20 Version 0.2b released  
2023-02-20 Use --ssl-no-revoke option for Curl, to prevent SSL certificate errors  
2023-02-20 Better handling of errors in package info downloading  
2023-02-20 Fixed link to the author mail address  
2021-06-29 Version 0.2a released  
2021-06-29 Added the --ctanpath option.  
2021-06-26 Version 0.2 released  
2021-06-26 Removed the --CTAN option, entry type can be set using --entrytype and CTAN URL is requested using --ctan  
2021-06-26 Added --entrytype option for explicit specification of the BibTeX entry type  
2021-06-26 Fixed package name verification  
2021-06-26 Added support for multiple package names  
2021-06-26 Print <https://www.ctan.org/pkg/<pkgname>> with the -c option  
2021-06-20 Version 0.1e released  
2021-06-20 Added --CTAN option, thanks to Herbert Voss  
2019-12-23 Don't return non-zero exit codes for non-error runs  
2019-12-23 Test for the packagename with the -c option  
2019-09-21 Try to find the author in full CTAN author list if the author cannot be found in the package info  
2019-09-16 Use the CTAN API 2.0 to fetch the package info  
2019-05-04 Version 0.1c released  
2019-05-04 Use the curl command to download the package info  
2019-05-04 Added information about the need to have the curl command installed

2019-03-11 Version 0.1b released  
 2018-09-10 Added support for institutional names  
 2018-09-10 Escape TeX commands in the title and subtitle  
 2018-08-29 Added man page  
 2018-08-27 Added `-ctan` option  
 2018-08-23 Version 0.1 released.  
 2018-08-23 Created documentation.  
 2018-08-21 Rewrote the script to use the DOM api provided by LuaXML. This provides greater flexibility in the XML processing.  
 2018-08-20 Fixed the script for the current XML format provided by CTAN.  
 2014-09-12 Initial version of the script have been released in answer on TeX.sx<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup><https://tex.stackexchange.com/a/200856/2891>