Jansson Documentation

Release 1.2.1

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This is the documentation for Jansson 1.2.1, last updated August 20, 2013.

CHAPTER

ONE

INTRODUCTION

Jansson is a C library for encoding, decoding and manipulating JSON data. Its main features and design principles are:

- Simple and intuitive API and data model
- Comprehensive documentation
- No dependencies on other libraries
- Full Unicode support (UTF-8)
- Extensive test suite

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CHAPTER

TWO

CONTENTS

2.1 Getting Started

2.1.1 Compiling and Installing Jansson

The Jansson source is available at http://www.digip.org/jansson/releases/.

Unpack the source tarball and change to the source directory:

```
bunzip2 -c jansson-1.2.1.tar.bz2 | tar xf -
cd jansson-1.2.1
```

The source uses GNU Autotools (autoconf, automake, libtool), so compiling and installing is extremely simple:

```
./configure
make
make check
make install
```

To change the destination directory (`/usr/local` by default), use the `--prefix=DIR` argument to `./configure`. See `./configure --help` for the list of all possible installation options. (There are no options to customize the resulting Jansson binary.)

The command `make check` runs the test suite distributed with Jansson. This step is not strictly necessary, but it may find possible problems that Jansson has on your platform. If any problems are found, please report them.

If you obtained the source from a Git repository (or any other source control system), there's no `./configure` script as it's not kept in version control. To create the script, Autotools needs to be bootstrapped. There are many ways to do this, but the easiest one is to use `autoreconf`:

```
autoreconf -vi
```

This command creates the `./configure` script, which can then be used as described above.

Installing Prebuilt Binary Packages

Binary `.deb` packages for Ubuntu are available in this PPA at Launchpad. Follow the instructions in the PPA ("Technical details about this PPA" link) to take the PPA into use. Then install the -dev package:

```
sudo apt-get install libjansson-dev
```

Building the Documentation

(This subsection describes how to build the HTML documentation you are currently reading, so it can be safely skipped.)

Documentation is in the `doc/` subdirectory. It's written in reStructuredText with Sphinx annotations. To generate the HTML documentation, invoke:

```
make html
```

and point your browser to `doc/_build/html/index.html`. Sphinx is required to generate the documentation.

2.1.2 Compiling Programs That Use Jansson

Jansson involves one C header file, `jansson.h`, so it's enough to put the line

```
#include <jansson.h>
```

in the beginning of every source file that uses Jansson.

There's also just one library to link with, `libjansson`. Compile and link the program as follows:

```
cc -o prog prog.c -ljansson
```

Starting from version 1.2, there's also support for pkg-config:

```
cc -o prog prog.c `pkg-config --cflags --libs jansson`
```

2.2 Tutorial

In this tutorial, we create a program that fetches the latest commits of a repository in GitHub over the web. One of the response formats supported by GitHub API is JSON, so the result can be parsed using Jansson.

To stick to the the scope of this tutorial, we will only cover the the parts of the program related to handling JSON data. For the best user experience, the full source code is available: `github_commits.c`. To compile it (on Unix-like systems with gcc), use the following command:

```
gcc -o github_commits github_commits.c -ljansson -lcurl
```

libcurl is used to communicate over the web, so it is required to compile the program.

The command line syntax is:

```
github_commits USER REPOSITORY
```

`USER` is a GitHub user ID and `REPOSITORY` is the repository name. Please note that the GitHub API is rate limited, so if you run the program too many times within a short period of time, the sever starts to respond with an error.

2.2.1 The GitHub Commits API

The GitHub commits API is used by sending HTTP requests to URLs starting with `http://github.com/api/v2/json/commits/`. Our program only lists the latest commits, so the rest of the URL is `list/USER/REPOSITORY/BRANCH`, where `USER`, `REPOSITORY` and `BRANCH` are the GitHub user ID, the name of the repository, and the name of the branch whose commits are to be listed, respectively.

GitHub responds with a JSON object of the following form:

```
{
    "commits": [
        {
            "id": "<the commit ID>",
            "message": "<the commit message>",
            <more fields, not important to this tutorial>
        },
        {
            "id": "<the commit ID>",
            "message": "<the commit message>",
            <more fields, not important to this tutorial>
        },
        <more commits...>
    ]
}
```

In our program, the HTTP request is sent using the following function:

```
static char *request(const char *url);
```

It takes the URL as a parameter, preforms a HTTP GET request, and returns a newly allocated string that contains the response body. If the request fails, an error message is printed to stderr and the return value is *NULL*. For full details, refer to `the code`, as the actual implementation is not important here.

2.2.2 The Program

First the includes:

```
#include <string.h>
#include <jansson.h>
```

Like all the programs using Jansson, we need to include `jansson.h`.

The following definitions are used to build the GitHub commits API request URL:

```
#define URL_FORMAT   "http://github.com/api/v2/json/commits/list/%s/%s/master"
#define URL_SIZE     256
```

The following function is used when formatting the result to find the first newline in the commit message:

```
/* Return the offset of the first newline in text or the length of
   text if there's no newline */
static int newline_offset(const char *text)
{
    const char *newline = strchr(text, '\n');
    if(!newline)
        return strlen(text);
    else
        return (int)(newline - text);
}
```

The main function follows. In the beginning, we first declare a bunch of variables and check the command line parameters:

```
unsigned int i;
char *text;
char url[URL_SIZE];
```

```
json_t *root;
json_error_t error;
json_t *commits;

if(argc != 3)
{
    fprintf(stderr, "usage: %s USER REPOSITORY\n\n", argv[0]);
    fprintf(stderr, "List commits at USER's REPOSITORY.\n\n");
    return 2;
}
```

Then we build the request URL using the user and repository names given as command line parameters:

```
snprintf(url, URL_SIZE, URL_FORMAT, argv[1], argv[2]);
```

This uses the `URL_SIZE` and `URL_FORMAT` constants defined above. Now we're ready to actually request the JSON data over the web:

```
text = request(url);
if(!text)
    return 1;
```

If an error occurs, our function `request` prints the error and returns *NULL*, so it's enough to just return 1 from the main function.

Next we'll call `json_loads()` to decode the JSON text we got as a response:

```
root = json_loads(text, &error);
free(text);

if(!root)
{
    fprintf(stderr, "error: on line %d: %s\n", error.line, error.text);
    return 1;
}
```

We don't need the JSON text anymore, so we can free the `text` variable right after decoding it. If `json_loads()` fails, it returns *NULL* and sets error information to the `json_error_t` structure given as the second parameter. In this case, our program prints the error information out and returns 1 from the main function.

Now we're ready to extract the data out of the decoded JSON response. The structure of the response JSON was explained in section *The GitHub Commits API*.

First, we'll extract the `commits` array from the JSON response:

```
commits = json_object_get(root, "commits");
if(!json_is_array(commits))
{
    fprintf(stderr, "error: commits is not an array\n");
    return 1;
}
```

This is the array that contains objects describing latest commits in the repository. We check that the returned value really is an array. If the key `commits` doesn't exist, `json_object_get()` returns *NULL*, but `json_is_array()` handles this case, too.

Then we proceed to loop over all the commits in the array:

```
for(i = 0; i < json_array_size(commits); i++)
{
    json_t *commit, *id, *message;
```

```
    const char *message_text;

    commit = json_array_get(commits, i);
    if(!json_is_object(commit))
    {
        fprintf(stderr, "error: commit %d is not an object\n", i + 1);
        return 1;
    }
...
```

The function `json_array_size()` returns the size of a JSON array. First, we again declare some variables and then extract the i'th element of the `commits` array using `json_array_get()`. We also check that the resulting value is a JSON object.

Next we'll extract the commit ID and commit message, and check that they both are JSON strings:

```
    id = json_object_get(commit, "id");
    if(!json_is_string(id))
    {
        fprintf(stderr, "error: commit %d: id is not a string\n", i + 1);
        return 1;
    }

    message = json_object_get(commit, "message");
    if(!json_is_string(message))
    {
        fprintf(stderr, "error: commit %d: message is not a string\n", i + 1);
        return 1;
    }
...
```

And finally, we'll print the first 8 characters of the commit ID and the first line of the commit message. A C-style string is extracted from a JSON string using `json_string_value()`:

```
    message_text = json_string_value(message);
    printf("%.8s %.*s\n",
           json_string_value(id),
           newline_offset(message_text),
           message_text);
}
```

After sending the HTTP request, we decoded the JSON text using `json_loads()`, remember? It returns a *new reference* to the JSON value it decodes. When we're finished with the value, we'll need to decrease the reference count using `json_decref()`. This way Jansson can release the resources:

```
json_decref(root);
return 0;
```

For a detailed explanation of reference counting in Jansson, see *Reference Count* in *API Reference*.

The program's ready, let's test it and view the latest commits in Jansson's repository:

```
$ ./github_commits akheron jansson
86dc1d62 Fix indentation
b67e130f json_dumpf: Document the output shortage on error
4cd77771 Enhance handling of circular references
79009e62 json_dumps: Close the strbuffer if dumping fails
76999799 doc: Fix a small typo in apiref
22af193a doc/Makefile.am: Remove *.pyc in clean
951d091f Make integer, real and string mutable
```

```
185e107d Don't use non-portable asprintf()
ca7703fb Merge branch '1.0'
12cd4e8c jansson 1.0.4
<etc...>
```

2.2.3 Conclusion

In this tutorial, we implemented a program that fetches the latest commits of a GitHub repository using the GitHub commits API. Jansson was used to decode the JSON response and to extract the commit data.

This tutorial only covered a small part of Jansson. For example, we did not create or manipulate JSON values at all. Proceed to *API Reference* to explore all features of Jansson.

2.3 RFC Conformance

JSON is specified in **RFC 4627**, *"The application/json Media Type for JavaScript Object Notation (JSON)"*. This chapter discusses Jansson's conformance to this specification.

2.3.1 Character Encoding

Jansson only supports UTF-8 encoded JSON texts. It does not support or auto-detect any of the other encodings mentioned in the RFC, namely UTF-16LE, UTF-16BE, UTF-32LE or UTF-32BE. Pure ASCII is supported, as it's a subset of UTF-8.

2.3.2 Strings

JSON strings are mapped to C-style null-terminated character arrays, and UTF-8 encoding is used internally. Strings may not contain embedded null characters, not even escaped ones.

For example, trying to decode the following JSON text leads to a parse error:

```
["this string contains the null character: \u0000"]
```

All other Unicode codepoints U+0001 through U+10FFFF are allowed.

2.3.3 Numbers

Real vs. Integer

JSON makes no distinction between real and integer numbers; Jansson does. Real numbers are mapped to the `double` type and integers to the `int` type.

A JSON number is considered to be a real number if its lexical representation includes one of `e`, `E`, or `.`; regardless if its actual numeric value is a true integer (e.g., all of `1E6`, `3.0`, `400E-2`, and `3.14E3` are mathematical integers, but will be treated as real values).

All other JSON numbers are considered integers.

When encoding to JSON, real values are always represented with a fractional part; e.g., the `double` value 3.0 will be represented in JSON as `3.0`, not `3`.

Overflow, Underflow & Precision

Real numbers whose absolute values are too small to be represented in a C double will be silently estimated with 0.0. Thus, depending on platform, JSON numbers very close to zero such as 1E-999 may result in 0.0.

Real numbers whose absolute values are too large to be represented in a C `double` type will result in an overflow error (a JSON decoding error). Thus, depending on platform, JSON numbers like 1E+999 or -1E+999 may result in a parsing error.

Likewise, integer numbers whose absolute values are too large to be represented in the `int` type will result in an overflow error (a JSON decoding error). Thus, depending on platform, JSON numbers like 1000000000000000 may result in parsing error.

Parsing JSON real numbers may result in a loss of precision. As long as overflow does not occur (i.e. a total loss of precision), the rounded approximate value is silently used. Thus the JSON number 1.000000000000000005 may, depending on platform, result in the `double` value 1.0.

Signed zeros

JSON makes no statement about what a number means; however Javascript (ECMAscript) does state that +0.0 and -0.0 must be treated as being distinct values, i.e. -0.0 0.0. Jansson relies on the underlying floating point library in the C environment in which it is compiled. Therefore it is platform-dependent whether 0.0 and -0.0 will be distinct values. Most platforms that use the IEEE 754 floating-point standard will support signed zeros.

Note that this only applies to floating-point; neither JSON, C, or IEEE support the concept of signed integer zeros.

Types

No support is provided in Jansson for any C numeric types other than `int` and `double`. This excludes things such as unsigned types, `long`, `long long`, `long double`, etc. Obviously, shorter types like `short` and `float` are implicitly handled via the ordinary C type coercion rules (subject to overflow semantics). Also, no support or hooks are provided for any supplemental "bignum" type add-on packages.

2.4 API Reference

2.4.1 Preliminaries

All declarations are in `jansson.h`, so it's enough to

```
#include <jansson.h>
```

in each source file.

All constants are prefixed `JSON_` and other identifiers with `json_`. Type names are suffixed with `_t` and `typedef`'d so that the `struct` keyword need not be used.

2.4.2 Value Representation

The JSON specification (**RFC 4627**) defines the following data types: *object*, *array*, *string*, *number*, *boolean*, and *null*. JSON types are used dynamically; arrays and objects can hold any other data type, including themselves. For this reason, Jansson's type system is also dynamic in nature. There's one C type to represent all JSON values, and this structure knows the type of the JSON value it holds.

json_t
This data structure is used throughout the library to represent all JSON values. It always contains the type of the JSON value it holds and the value's reference count. The rest depends on the type of the value.

Objects of `json_t` are always used through a pointer. There are APIs for querying the type, manipulating the reference count, and for constructing and manipulating values of different types.

Unless noted otherwise, all API functions return an error value if an error occurs. Depending on the function's signature, the error value is either *NULL* or -1. Invalid arguments or invalid input are apparent sources for errors. Memory allocation and I/O operations may also cause errors.

Type

The type of a JSON value is queried and tested using the following functions:

enum **json_type**
The type of a JSON value. The following members are defined:

JSON_OBJECT
JSON_ARRAY
JSON_STRING
JSON_INTEGER
JSON_REAL
JSON_TRUE
JSON_FALSE
JSON_NULL

These correspond to JSON object, array, string, number, boolean and null. A number is represented by either a value of the type `JSON_INTEGER` or of the type `JSON_REAL`. A true boolean value is represented by a value of the type `JSON_TRUE` and false by a value of the type `JSON_FALSE`.

int **json_typeof**(const json_t **json*)
Return the type of the JSON value (a `json_type` cast to `int`). *json* MUST NOT be *NULL*. This function is actually implemented as a macro for speed.

json_is_object(const json_t **json*)
json_is_array(const json_t **json*)
json_is_string(const json_t **json*)
json_is_integer(const json_t **json*)
json_is_real(const json_t **json*)
json_is_true(const json_t **json*)
json_is_false(const json_t **json*)
json_is_null(const json_t **json*)
These functions (actually macros) return true (non-zero) for values of the given type, and false (zero) for values of other types and for *NULL*.

json_is_number(const json_t **json*)
Returns true for values of types `JSON_INTEGER` and `JSON_REAL`, and false for other types and for *NULL*.

json_is_boolean(const json_t **json*)
Returns true for types `JSON_TRUE` and `JSON_FALSE`, and false for values of other types and for *NULL*.

Reference Count

The reference count is used to track whether a value is still in use or not. When a value is created, it's reference count is set to 1. If a reference to a value is kept (e.g. a value is stored somewhere for later use), its reference count is

incremented, and when the value is no longer needed, the reference count is decremented. When the reference count drops to zero, there are no references left, and the value can be destroyed.

The following functions are used to manipulate the reference count.

json_t ***json_incref**(json_t **json*)
Increment the reference count of *json* if it's not non-*NULL*. Returns *json*.

void **json_decref**(json_t **json*)
Decrement the reference count of *json*. As soon as a call to `json_decref()` drops the reference count to zero, the value is destroyed and it can no longer be used.

Functions creating new JSON values set the reference count to 1. These functions are said to return a **new reference**. Other functions returning (existing) JSON values do not normally increase the reference count. These functions are said to return a **borrowed reference**. So, if the user will hold a reference to a value returned as a borrowed reference, he must call `json_incref()`. As soon as the value is no longer needed, `json_decref()` should be called to release the reference.

Normally, all functions accepting a JSON value as an argument will manage the reference, i.e. increase and decrease the reference count as needed. However, some functions **steal** the reference, i.e. they have the same result as if the user called `json_decref()` on the argument right after calling the function. These functions are suffixed with `_new` or have `_new_` somewhere in their name.

For example, the following code creates a new JSON array and appends an integer to it:

```
json_t *array, *integer;

array = json_array();
integer = json_integer(42);

json_array_append(array, integer);
json_decref(integer);
```

Note how the caller has to release the reference to the integer value by calling `json_decref()`. By using a reference stealing function `json_array_append_new()` instead of `json_array_append()`, the code becomes much simpler:

```
json_t *array = json_array();
json_array_append_new(array, json_integer(42));
```

In this case, the user doesn't have to explicitly release the reference to the integer value, as `json_array_append_new()` steals the reference when appending the value to the array.

In the following sections it is clearly documented whether a function will return a new or borrowed reference or steal a reference to its argument.

Circular References

A circular reference is created when an object or an array is, directly or indirectly, inserted inside itself. The direct case is simple:

```
json_t *obj = json_object();
json_object_set(obj, "foo", obj);
```

Jansson will refuse to do this, and `json_object_set()` (and all the other such functions for objects and arrays) will return with an error status. The indirect case is the dangerous one:

```
json_t *arr1 = json_array(), *arr2 = json_array();
json_array_append(arr1, arr2);
json_array_append(arr2, arr1);
```

In this example, the array `arr2` is contained in the array `arr1`, and vice versa. Jansson cannot check for this kind of indirect circular references without a performance hit, so it's up to the user to avoid them.

If a circular reference is created, the memory consumed by the values cannot be freed by `json_decref()`. The reference counts never drops to zero because the values are keeping the circular reference to themselves. Moreover, trying to encode the values with any of the encoding functions will fail. The encoder detects circular references and returns an error status.

2.4.3 True, False and Null

These values are implemented as singletons, so each of these functions returns the same value each time.

json_t ***json_true**(void)
Return value: New reference. Returns the JSON true value.

json_t ***json_false**(void)
Return value: New reference. Returns the JSON false value.

json_t ***json_null**(void)
Return value: New reference. Returns the JSON null value.

2.4.4 String

json_t ***json_string**(const char **value*)
Return value: New reference. Returns a new JSON string, or *NULL* on error. *value* must be a valid UTF-8 encoded Unicode string.

json_t ***json_string_nocheck**(const char **value*)
Return value: New reference. Like `json_string()`, but doesn't check that *value* is valid UTF-8. Use this function only if you are certain that this really is the case (e.g. you have already checked it by other means). New in version 1.2.

const char ***json_string_value**(const json_t **string*)
Returns the associated value of *string* as a null terminated UTF-8 encoded string, or *NULL* if *string* is not a JSON string.

int **json_string_set**(const json_t **string*, const char **value*)
Sets the associated value of *string* to *value*. *value* must be a valid UTF-8 encoded Unicode string. Returns 0 on success and -1 on error. New in version 1.1.

int **json_string_set_nocheck**(const json_t **string*, const char **value*)
Like `json_string_set()`, but doesn't check that *value* is valid UTF-8. Use this function only if you are certain that this really is the case (e.g. you have already checked it by other means). New in version 1.2.

2.4.5 Number

json_t ***json_integer**(int *value*)
Return value: New reference. Returns a new JSON integer, or *NULL* on error.

int **json_integer_value**(const json_t **integer*)
Returns the associated value of *integer*, or 0 if *json* is not a JSON integer.

int **json_integer_set**(const json_t **integer*, int *value*)
Sets the associated value of *integer* to *value*. Returns 0 on success and -1 if *integer* is not a JSON integer. New in version 1.1.

json_t ***json_real**(double *value*)
Return value: New reference. Returns a new JSON real, or *NULL* on error.

double **json_real_value**(const json_t **real*)
Returns the associated value of *real*, or 0.0 if *real* is not a JSON real.

int **json_real_set**(const json_t **real*, double *value*)
Sets the associated value of *real* to *value*. Returns 0 on success and -1 if *real* is not a JSON real. New in version 1.1.

In addition to the functions above, there's a common query function for integers and reals:

double **json_number_value**(const json_t **json*)
Returns the associated value of the JSON integer or JSON real *json*, cast to double regardless of the actual type. If *json* is neither JSON real nor JSON integer, 0.0 is returned.

2.4.6 Array

A JSON array is an ordered collection of other JSON values.

json_t ***json_array**(void)
Return value: New reference. Returns a new JSON array, or *NULL* on error. Initially, the array is empty.

unsigned int **json_array_size**(const json_t **array*)
Returns the number of elements in *array*, or 0 if *array* is NULL or not a JSON array.

json_t ***json_array_get**(const json_t **array*, unsigned int *index*)
Return value: Borrowed reference. Returns the element in *array* at position *index*. The valid range for *index* is from 0 to the return value of `json_array_size()` minus 1. If *array* is not a JSON array, if *array* is *NULL*, or if *index* is out of range, *NULL* is returned.

int **json_array_set**(json_t **array*, unsigned int *index*, json_t **value*)
Replaces the element in *array* at position *index* with *value*. The valid range for *index* is from 0 to the return value of `json_array_size()` minus 1. Returns 0 on success and -1 on error.

int **json_array_set_new**(json_t **array*, unsigned int *index*, json_t **value*)
Like `json_array_set()` but steals the reference to *value*. This is useful when *value* is newly created and not used after the call. New in version 1.1.

int **json_array_append**(json_t **array*, json_t **value*)
Appends *value* to the end of *array*, growing the size of *array* by 1. Returns 0 on success and -1 on error.

int **json_array_append_new**(json_t **array*, json_t **value*)
Like `json_array_append()` but steals the reference to *value*. This is useful when *value* is newly created and not used after the call. New in version 1.1.

int **json_array_insert**(json_t **array*, unsigned int *index*, json_t **value*)
Inserts *value* to *array* at position *index*, shifting the elements at *index* and after it one position towards the end of the array. Returns 0 on success and -1 on error. New in version 1.1.

int **json_array_insert_new**(json_t **array*, unsigned int *index*, json_t **value*)
Like `json_array_insert()` but steals the reference to *value*. This is useful when *value* is newly created and not used after the call. New in version 1.1.

int **json_array_remove**(json_t **array*, unsigned int *index*)
Removes the element in *array* at position *index*, shifting the elements after *index* one position towards the start of the array. Returns 0 on success and -1 on error. New in version 1.1.

int **json_array_clear**(json_t **array*)
Removes all elements from *array*. Returns 0 on sucess and -1 on error. New in version 1.1.

int **json_array_extend**(json_t *array, json_t *other_array)
Appends all elements in *other_array* to the end of *array*. Returns 0 on success and -1 on error. New in version 1.1.

2.4.7 Object

A JSON object is a dictionary of key-value pairs, where the key is a Unicode string and the value is any JSON value.

json_t ***json_object**(void)
Return value: New reference. Returns a new JSON object, or *NULL* on error. Initially, the object is empty.

unsigned int **json_object_size**(const json_t *object)
Returns the number of elements in *object*, or 0 if *object* is not a JSON object. New in version 1.1.

json_t ***json_object_get**(const json_t *object, const char *key)
Return value: Borrowed reference. Get a value corresponding to *key* from *object*. Returns *NULL* if *key* is not found and on error.

int **json_object_set**(json_t *object, const char *key, json_t *value)
Set the value of *key* to *value* in *object*. *key* must be a valid null terminated UTF-8 encoded Unicode string. If there already is a value for *key*, it is replaced by the new value. Returns 0 on success and -1 on error.

int **json_object_set_nocheck**(json_t *object, const char *key, json_t *value)
Like `json_object_set()`, but doesn't check that *key* is valid UTF-8. Use this function only if you are certain that this really is the case (e.g. you have already checked it by other means). New in version 1.2.

int **json_object_set_new**(json_t *object, const char *key, json_t *value)
Like `json_object_set()` but steals the reference to *value*. This is useful when *value* is newly created and not used after the call. New in version 1.1.

int **json_object_set_new_nocheck**(json_t *object, const char *key, json_t *value)
Like `json_object_set_new()`, but doesn't check that *key* is valid UTF-8. Use this function only if you are certain that this really is the case (e.g. you have already checked it by other means). New in version 1.2.

int **json_object_del**(json_t *object, const char *key)
Delete *key* from *object* if it exists. Returns 0 on success, or -1 if *key* was not found.

int **json_object_clear**(json_t *object)
Remove all elements from *object*. Returns 0 on success and -1 if *object* is not a JSON object. New in version 1.1.

int **json_object_update**(json_t *object, json_t *other)
Update *object* with the key-value pairs from *other*, overwriting existing keys. Returns 0 on success or -1 on error. New in version 1.1.

The following functions implement an iteration protocol for objects:

void ***json_object_iter**(json_t *object)
Returns an opaque iterator which can be used to iterate over all key-value pairs in *object*, or *NULL* if *object* is empty.

void ***json_object_iter_next**(json_t *object, void *iter)
Returns an iterator pointing to the next key-value pair in *object* after *iter*, or *NULL* if the whole object has been iterated through.

const char ***json_object_iter_key**(void *iter)
Extract the associated key from *iter*.

json_t ***json_object_iter_value**(void *iter)
Return value: Borrowed reference. Extract the associated value from *iter*.

The iteration protocol can be used for example as follows:

```
/* obj is a JSON object */
const char *key;
json_t *value;
void *iter = json_object_iter(obj);
while(iter)
{
    key = json_object_iter_key(iter);
    value = json_object_iter_value(iter);
    /* use key and value ... */
    iter = json_object_iter_next(obj, iter);
}
```

2.4.8 Encoding

This sections describes the functions that can be used to encode values to JSON. Only objects and arrays can be encoded, since they are the only valid "root" values of a JSON text.

By default, the output has no newlines, and spaces are used between array and object elements for a readable output. This behavior can be altered by using the `JSON_INDENT` and `JSON_COMPACT` flags described below. A newline is never appended to the end of the encoded JSON data.

Each function takes a *flags* parameter that controls some aspects of how the data is encoded. Its default value is 0. The following macros can be ORed together to obtain *flags*.

`JSON_INDENT(n)` Pretty-print the result, using newlines between array and object items, and indenting with *n* spaces. The valid range for *n* is between 0 and 255, other values result in an undefined output. If `JSON_INDENT` is not used or *n* is 0, no newlines are inserted between array and object items.

`JSON_COMPACT` This flag enables a compact representation, i.e. sets the separator between array and object items to `","` and between object keys and values to `":"`. Without this flag, the corresponding separators are `", "` and `": "` for more readable output. New in version 1.2.

`JSON_ENSURE_ASCII` If this flag is used, the output is guaranteed to consist only of ASCII characters. This is achived by escaping all Unicode characters outside the ASCII range. New in version 1.2.

`JSON_SORT_KEYS` If this flag is used, all the objects in output are sorted by key. This is useful e.g. if two JSON texts are diffed or visually compared. New in version 1.2.

The following functions perform the actual JSON encoding. The result is in UTF-8.

char *__`json_dumps`__(const json_t **root*, unsigned long *flags*)
Returns the JSON representation of *root* as a string, or *NULL* on error. *flags* is described above. The return value must be freed by the caller using `free()`.

int __`json_dumpf`__(const json_t **root*, FILE **output*, unsigned long *flags*)
Write the JSON representation of *root* to the stream *output*. *flags* is described above. Returns 0 on success and -1 on error. If an error occurs, something may have already been written to *output*. In this case, the output is undefined and most likely not valid JSON.

int __`json_dump_file`__(const json_t **json*, const char **path*, unsigned long *flags*)
Write the JSON representation of *root* to the file *path*. If *path* already exists, it is overwritten. *flags* is described above. Returns 0 on success and -1 on error.

2.4.9 Decoding

This sections describes the functions that can be used to decode JSON text to the Jansson representation of JSON data. The JSON specification requires that a JSON text is either a serialized array or object, and this requirement is also enforced with the following functions.

The only supported character encoding is UTF-8 (which ASCII is a subset of).

json_error_t

This data structure is used to return information on decoding errors from the decoding functions. Its definition is repeated here:

```
#define JSON_ERROR_TEXT_LENGTH  160

typedef struct {
    char text[JSON_ERROR_TEXT_LENGTH];
    int line;
} json_error_t;
```

line is the line number on which the error occurred, or -1 if this information is not available. *text* contains the error message (in UTF-8), or an empty string if a message is not available.

The normal usef of `json_error_t` is to allocate it normally on the stack, and pass a pointer to a decoding function. Example:

```
int main() {
    json_t *json;
    json_error_t error;

    json = json_load_file("/path/to/file.json", &error);
    if(!json) {
        /* the error variable contains error information */
    }
    ...
}
```

Also note that if the decoding succeeded (`json != NULL` in the above example), the contents of `error` are unspecified.

All decoding functions also accept *NULL* as the `json_error_t` pointer, in which case no error information is returned to the caller.

The following functions perform the actual JSON decoding.

json_t ***json_loads**(const char **input*, json_error_t **error*)

Return value: New reference. Decodes the JSON string *input* and returns the array or object it contains, or *NULL* on error, in which case *error* is filled with information about the error. See above for discussion on the *error* parameter.

json_t ***json_loadf**(FILE **input*, json_error_t **error*)

Return value: New reference. Decodes the JSON text in stream *input* and returns the array or object it contains, or *NULL* on error, in which case *error* is filled with information about the error. See above for discussion on the *error* parameter.

json_t ***json_load_file**(const char **path*, json_error_t **error*)

Return value: New reference. Decodes the JSON text in file *path* and returns the array or object it contains, or *NULL* on error, in which case *error* is filled with information about the error. See above for discussion on the *error* parameter.

2.4.10 Equality

Testing for equality of two JSON values cannot, in general, be achieved using the == operator. Equality in the terms of the == operator states that the two `json_t` pointers point to exactly the same JSON value. However, two JSON values can be equal not only if they are exactly the same value, but also if they have equal "contents":

- Two integer or real values are equal if their contained numeric values are equal. An integer value is never equal to a real value, though.
- Two strings are equal if their contained UTF-8 strings are equal.
- Two arrays are equal if they have the same number of elements and each element in the first array is equal to the corresponding element in the second array.
- Two objects are equal if they have exactly the same keys and the value for each key in the first object is equal to the value of the corresponding key in the second object.
- Two true, false or null values have no "contents", so they are equal if their types are equal. (Because these values are singletons, their equality can actually be tested with ==.)

The following function can be used to test whether two JSON values are equal.

int **json_equal**(json_t **value1*, json_t **value2*)
Returns 1 if *value1* and *value2* are equal, as defined above. Returns 0 if they are inequal or one or both of the pointers are *NULL*. New in version 1.2.

2.4.11 Copying

Because of reference counting, passing JSON values around doesn't require copying them. But sometimes a fresh copy of a JSON value is needed. For example, if you need to modify an array, but still want to use the original afterwards, you should take a copy of it first.

Jansson supports two kinds of copying: shallow and deep. There is a difference between these methods only for arrays and objects. Shallow copying only copies the first level value (array or object) and uses the same child values in the copied value. Deep copying makes a fresh copy of the child values, too. Moreover, all the child values are deep copied in a recursive fashion.

json_t ***json_copy**(json_t **value*)
Return value: New reference. Returns a shallow copy of *value*, or *NULL* on error. New in version 1.2.

json_t ***json_deep_copy**(json_t **value*)
Return value: New reference. Returns a deep copy of *value*, or *NULL* on error. New in version 1.2.

2.5 Changes in Jansson

2.5.1 Version 1.2.1

Released 2010-04-03

- Bug fixes:
  - Fix reference counting on `true`, `false` and `null`
  - Estimate real number underflows in decoder with 0.0 instead of issuing an error
- Portability:
  - Make `int32_t` available on all systems

  - Support compilers that don't have the `inline` keyword
  - Require Autoconf 2.60 (for `int32_t`)
- Tests:
  - Print test names correctly when `VERBOSE=1`
  - `test/suites/api`: Fail when a test fails
  - Enhance tests for iterators
  - Enhance tests for decoding texts that contain null bytes
- Documentation:
  - Don't remove `changes.rst` in `make clean`
  - Add a chapter on RFC conformance

2.5.2 Version 1.2

Released 2010-01-21

- New functions:
  - `json_equal()`: Test whether two JSON values are equal
  - `json_copy()` and `json_deep_copy()`: Make shallow and deep copies of JSON values
  - Add a version of all functions taking a string argument that doesn't check for valid UTF-8: `json_string_nocheck()`, `json_string_set_nocheck()`, `json_object_set_nocheck()`, `json_object_set_new_nocheck()`
- New encoding flags:
  - `JSON_SORT_KEYS`: Sort objects by key
  - `JSON_ENSURE_ASCII`: Escape all non-ASCII Unicode characters
  - `JSON_COMPACT`: Use a compact representation with all unneeded whitespace stripped
- Bug fixes:
  - Revise and unify whitespace usage in encoder: Add spaces between array and object items, never append newline to output.
  - Remove const qualifier from the `json_t` parameter in `json_string_set()`, `json_integer_set()` and `json_real_set()`.
  - Use `int32_t` internally for representing Unicode code points (int is not enough on all platforms)
- Other changes:
  - Convert `CHANGES` (this file) to reStructured text and add it to HTML documentation
  - The test system has been refactored. Python is no longer required to run the tests.
  - Documentation can now be built by invoking `make html`
  - Support for pkg-config

2.5.3 Version 1.1.3

Released 2009-12-18

- Encode reals correctly, so that first encoding and then decoding a real always produces the same value
- Don't export private symbols in `libjansson.so`

2.5.4 Version 1.1.2

Released 2009-11-08

- Fix a bug where an error message was not produced if the input file could not be opened in `json_load_file()`
- Fix an assertion failure in decoder caused by a minus sign without a digit after it
- Remove an unneeded include of `stdint.h` in `jansson.h`

2.5.5 Version 1.1.1

Released 2009-10-26

- All documentation files were not distributed with v1.1; build documentation in make distcheck to prevent this in the future
- Fix v1.1 release date in `CHANGES`

2.5.6 Version 1.1

Released 2009-10-20

- API additions and improvements:
  - Extend array and object APIs
  - Add functions to modify integer, real and string values
  - Improve argument validation
  - Use unsigned int instead of `uint32_t` for encoding flags
- Enhance documentation
  - Add getting started guide and tutorial
  - Fix some typos
  - General clarifications and cleanup
- Check for integer and real overflows and underflows in decoder
- Make singleton values thread-safe (`true`, `false` and `null`)
- Enhance circular reference handling
- Don't define `-std=c99` in `AM_CFLAGS`
- Add C++ guards to `jansson.h`
- Minor performance and portability improvements
- Expand test coverage

2.5.7 Version 1.0.4

Released 2009-10-11

- Relax Autoconf version requirement to 2.59
- Make Jansson compile on platforms where plain `char` is unsigned
- Fix API tests for object

2.5.8 Version 1.0.3

Released 2009-09-14

- Check for integer and real overflows and underflows in decoder
- Use the Python json module for tests, or simplejson if the json module is not found
- Distribute changelog (this file)

2.5.9 Version 1.0.2

Released 2009-09-08

- Handle EOF correctly in decoder

2.5.10 Version 1.0.1

Released 2009-09-04

- Fixed broken `json_is_boolean()`

2.5.11 Version 1.0

Released 2009-08-25

- Initial release

CHAPTER

THREE

INDICES AND TABLES

- *genindex*
- *search*