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How Do I Update The Root Hints Data File for BIND Named Server?

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Q. My local nameserver root zone file is outdated. It has no information about IPv6 and recently changed root server IP address. How do I update my root hints data file under Debian and Red Hat Bind 9 server?

A. Besides your local information, the nameserver also needs to know where the nameservers for the root zone are.

[1]

You can retrieve root zone file by visiting <ftp://ftp.rs.internic.net>. Login as anonymous user and get db.cache file from domain subdirectory.

Sample Old Outdated Root Hints File

```
; <<>> DiG 9.2.3 <<>> ns . @a.root-servers.net.
;; global options: printcmd
;; Got answer:
;; ->>HEADER<<- opcode: QUERY, status: NOERROR, id: 18944
;; flags: qr aa rd; QUERY: 1, ANSWER: 13, AUTHORITY: 0, ADDITIONAL: 13

;; QUESTION SECTION:
;.                IN          NS

;; ANSWER SECTION:
.                 518400 IN        NS        A.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
.                 518400 IN        NS        B.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
.                 518400 IN        NS        C.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
.                 518400 IN        NS        D.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
.                 518400 IN        NS        E.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
.                 518400 IN        NS        F.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
.                 518400 IN        NS        G.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
.                 518400 IN        NS        H.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
.                 518400 IN        NS        I.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
.                 518400 IN        NS        J.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
.                 518400 IN        NS        K.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
.                 518400 IN        NS        L.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
.                 518400 IN        NS        M.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.

;; ADDITIONAL SECTION:
A.ROOT-SERVERS.NET. 3600000 IN      A         198.41.0.4
B.ROOT-SERVERS.NET. 3600000 IN      A         192.228.79.201
C.ROOT-SERVERS.NET. 3600000 IN      A         192.33.4.12
D.ROOT-SERVERS.NET. 3600000 IN      A         128.8.10.90
E.ROOT-SERVERS.NET. 3600000 IN      A         192.203.230.10
F.ROOT-SERVERS.NET. 3600000 IN      A         192.5.5.241
G.ROOT-SERVERS.NET. 3600000 IN      A         192.112.36.4
H.ROOT-SERVERS.NET. 3600000 IN      A         128.63.2.53
I.ROOT-SERVERS.NET. 3600000 IN      A         192.36.148.17
J.ROOT-SERVERS.NET. 3600000 IN      A         192.58.128.30
K.ROOT-SERVERS.NET. 3600000 IN      A         193.0.14.129
L.ROOT-SERVERS.NET. 3600000 IN      A         198.32.64.12
M.ROOT-SERVERS.NET. 3600000 IN      A         202.12.27.33

;; Query time: 81 msec
;; SERVER: 198.41.0.4#53(a.root-servers.net.)
;; WHEN: Sun Feb 1 11:27:14 2004
;; MSG SIZE rcvd: 436
```

Use [wget command to retrieve file](#) ^[2] and store to /etc/bind/db.root (Debian / Ubuntu Linux), enter:

```
# wget --user=ftp --password=ftp ftp://ftp.rs.internic.net/domain/db.cache -O
/etc/bind/db.root
```

Under Red Hat / CentOS / Fedora Linux, default location is /var/named/named.root, enter:

```
# wget --user=ftp --password=ftp ftp://ftp.rs.internic.net/domain/db.cache -O
/var/named/named.root
```

Reload rndc to update information, enter:

```
# rndc reload
```

Another option is run dig command to fetch information:

```
# dig +bufsize=1200 +norec NS . @a.root-servers.net > /var/named/named.root
```

The root zone's nameservers change over time, don't assume this list is current. Always download a new version of db.cache once or twice year is sufficient. You can also schedule cron job to update file. The best place to get update about this file is bind-users mailing list.

Sample updated root hints data file

```
; This file holds the information on root name servers needed to
; initialize cache of Internet domain name servers
; (e.g. reference this file in the "cache . "
; configuration file of BIND domain name servers).
;
; This file is made available by InterNIC
; under anonymous FTP as
; file /domain/db.cache
; on server FTP.INTERNIC.NET
; -OR- RS.INTERNIC.NET
;
; last update: Feb 04, 2008
; related version of root zone: 2008020400
;
; formerly NS.INTERNIC.NET
;
. 3600000 IN NS A.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
A.ROOT-SERVERS.NET. 3600000 A 198.41.0.4
A.ROOT-SERVERS.NET. 3600000 AAAA 2001:503:BA3E::2:30
;
; formerly NS1.ISI.EDU
;
. 3600000 NS B.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
B.ROOT-SERVERS.NET. 3600000 A 192.228.79.201
;
; formerly C.PSI.NET
;
. 3600000 NS C.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
C.ROOT-SERVERS.NET. 3600000 A 192.33.4.12
;
; formerly TERP.UMD.EDU
;
. 3600000 NS D.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
D.ROOT-SERVERS.NET. 3600000 A 128.8.10.90
;
; formerly NS.NASA.GOV
;
. 3600000 NS E.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
E.ROOT-SERVERS.NET. 3600000 A 192.203.230.10
;
; formerly NS.ISC.ORG
;
. 3600000 NS F.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
```

```
F.ROOT-SERVERS.NET. 3600000 A 192.5.5.241
F.ROOT-SERVERS.NET. 3600000 AAAA 2001:500:2f::f
;
; formerly NS.NIC.DDN.MIL
;
. 3600000 NS G.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
G.ROOT-SERVERS.NET. 3600000 A 192.112.36.4
;
; formerly AOS.ARL.ARMY.MIL
;
. 3600000 NS H.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
H.ROOT-SERVERS.NET. 3600000 A 128.63.2.53
H.ROOT-SERVERS.NET. 3600000 AAAA 2001:500:1::803f:235
;
; formerly NIC.NORDU.NET
;
. 3600000 NS I.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
I.ROOT-SERVERS.NET. 3600000 A 192.36.148.17
;
; operated by VeriSign, Inc.
;
. 3600000 NS J.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
J.ROOT-SERVERS.NET. 3600000 A 192.58.128.30
J.ROOT-SERVERS.NET. 3600000 AAAA 2001:503:C27::2:30
;
; operated by RIPE NCC
;
. 3600000 NS K.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
K.ROOT-SERVERS.NET. 3600000 A 193.0.14.129
K.ROOT-SERVERS.NET. 3600000 AAAA 2001:7fd::1
;
; operated by ICANN
;
. 3600000 NS L.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
L.ROOT-SERVERS.NET. 3600000 A 199.7.83.42
;
; operated by WIDE
;
. 3600000 NS M.ROOT-SERVERS.NET.
M.ROOT-SERVERS.NET. 3600000 A 202.12.27.33
M.ROOT-SERVERS.NET. 3600000 AAAA 2001:dc3::35
; End of File
```

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URLs in this post:

[1] Image: <http://www.cyberciti.biz/faq/faq/category/unix/>

[2] wget command to retrieve file: <http://www.cyberciti.biz/faq/wget-command-with-username-password/>

