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11. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
after processing the one or more software dependencies,
uninstalling the software associated with the one or
more software dependencies based on the database.

12. The method of claim 1 wherein the mixture of native
code components and platform-independent code compo-
nents are grouped together in a distribution unit.

13. A computer-readable storage medium comprising
computer-executable instructions for performing at least the
following to process one or more software dependencies in
a computer:

for one or more of the software dependencies, determin-
ing whether software associated with the software
dependency is present on the computer;

responsive to determining the software associated with
the software dependency is not present on the com-
puter, acquiring, by a software package manager run-
ning on the computer, the software associated with the
software dependency; and

after acquiring the software associated with the software
dependency, updating a database at the computer indi-
cating the software associated with the software depen-
dency is installed on the computer;

wherein at least one of the software dependencies speci-
fies a plurality of software items forming a software
package, wherein the software package comprises a
mixture of native code components and platform-inde-
pendent code components;

wherein at least one of the software dependencies refers
to a list comprising one or more other software depen-
dencies; and

wherein the acquiring the software associated with the
software dependency comprises recursively processing
the one or more other software dependencies.

14. In a computer, a method of specifying a software
dependency, the method comprising:

specifying a name of the software dependency, wherein
the name is operable to identify a list of one or more
other software dependencies;

specifying a version of the software dependency;
comparing the version for the software dependency
against a version of software installed at the computer;
and

responsive to determining the version installed at the
computer is not sufficient, acquiring and installing, by
a software package manager running on the computer,
the software dependency, wherein the acquiring and
installing the software dependency comprises recur-
sively specifying the one or more other software depen-
dencies;

wherein the name of the software dependency is associ-
ated with a software package comprising a plurality of
software components, wherein the plurality of software

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components comprises a mixture of native code com-
ponents and platform-independent code components.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein the software depen-
dency is associated with a software package depending on at
least one other software package.

16. In a computer, a method of processing a name
designating software, the method comprising:

consulting a database to see if software associated with
the name is already installed at the computer;

responsive to determining software associated with the
name is not already installed at the computer, acquiring,
by a software package manager running on the com-
puter, the specified software; and

responsive to determining software dependencies associ-
ated with the specified software are not already
installed at the computer, acquiring, by the software
package manager running on the computer, the soft-
ware dependencies;

wherein the name is operable to specify a plurality of
software components, wherein the name is associated
with a software package comprising the plurality of
software components, wherein the plurality of software
components comprises a mixture of native code com-
ponents and platform-independent code components,
and wherein acquiring the specified software comprises
recursively processing software dependencies associ-
ated with the name to find one or more other software
dependencies associated with names designating soft-
ware.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein the plurality of
software components is divided among a plurality of files.

18. The method of claim 16 wherein the plurality of
software components comprises a plurality of files.

19. The method of claim 16 wherein

the name is operable to specify a plurality of different
software components; and

different versions are associated with the different soft-
ware components.

20. The method of claim 16 wherein the name is operable
to specify a list of one or more software dependencies, the
method further comprising:

for at least one software dependencies, determining soft-
ware associated with the dependency is already
installed at the computer, wherein the dependency
specifies a plurality of software components.

21. The method of claim 16 wherein acquiring the speci-
fied software comprises identifying an other name associ-
ated with a plurality of software components, and acquiring
the plurality of software components associated with the
other name.

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