

RuleLifeCycle

Rule Life Cycle

The life-cycle of a rule goes like this.

- A rule starts off in a developer's sandbox as an experimental rule, one that he doesn't want to publish just yet.
- Alternatively, it may be a non-experimental, but still in-sandbox, testing rule. These need to be marked by the developer with "tflags publish".
- The developer may decide to switch the rule back and forth between those two states.
- Non-experimental rules' promotability is measured (see [SaUpdateBackend](#)).
- If it's good enough, it's published to the "active set".
- A good rule may be manually copied from the sandbox to the "rules" directory.
- Eventually, it stops being good enough, through the normal attrition process for antispam rules, and it stops meeting the promotion criteria.

List Of Rule States

Rules in sandbox:

- **experimental** – don't promote me. "T_" prefix in the rulesrc source file, "tflags nopublish", or the absence of a "tflags publish", implies this. These rules are compiled, by the "build/mkrules" compiler at "make" time, to "rules/70_sandbox.cf".
- **s_poor** – promotable, listed with "tflags publish", but not meeting promotion criteria. Compiled to "rules/70_sandbox.cf". "T_" is prefixed to the rule name.
- **s_good** – promotable, listed with "tflags publish", and meeting criteria. Rules in this state are copied into the "active set". Compiled to "rules/72_active.cf".

Rules in the engine tarball:

- **core** – no promotion criteria are needed; this is part of the core ruleset. Often tied closely to the distributed `Mail::SpamAssassin` perl modules. These are not compiled at all by "build/mkrules", and are always distributed. (new as of bug 5123.)

Deleted rules:

- **gone** – rule has been deleted. If a rule scores badly in core for "an extended period of time", it goes here. (Right now, this has to be done manually.)

(History: [mailing list message](#), bug 5123)

State Transitions

The permitted transitions for those rule states, therefore, are as follows:

- **experimental** <--> **s_poor**
- **experimental** <--> **s_good**
- (hand copy) **s_good** <--> **core**
- (hand copy) **core** <--> **gone**

List Of Build States

Some rules are only used from certain build states. Here are the list of states that [SpamAssassin](#) goes through, or that rules are packaged as, during various parts of its build process.

- **builddir**: `./spamassassin`, or similar, run from inside build dir
- **make_test**: "make test"
- **mass_check**: [MassCheck](#) run from inside "masses" dir
- **bbtest**: the testing buildbot
- **bbmass**: the bbmass buildbot
- **nightly**: the [NightlyMassCheck](#)
- **make_install**: what's installed via "make install"
- **tarball**: what's put in distributed tarballs (by make dist, make disttest)
- **sa_update**: what's delivered via sa-update

Build States vs. Rule States Matrix

And here's the table listing what rules are usable, where. 🟡 indicates that a rule in that state is indeed usable from the listed build state.

	experimental	s_poor	s_good	core
builddir	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡
make_test	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡
mass_check	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡

bbtest				
bbmass				
nightly				
make_install				
tarball				
sa_update				