

cowsay

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cowsay is a program that generates ASCII pictures of a cow with a message.^[2] It can also generate pictures using pre-made images of other animals, such as Tux the Penguin, the Linux mascot. It is written in Perl. There is also a related program called **cowthink**, with cows with thought bubbles rather than speech bubbles. .cow files for cowsay exist which are able to produce different variants of "cows", with different kinds of "eyes", and so forth.^[3] It is sometimes used on IRC, desktop screenshots, and in software documentation. It is more or less a joke within hacker culture, but has been around long enough that its use is rather widespread. In 2007, it was highlighted as a Debian package of the day.^[4]

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Example

The Unix command fortune can also be piped into the cowsay command:

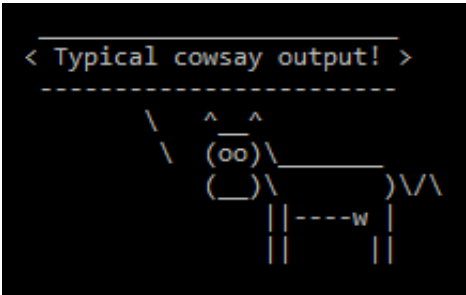
```
[user@linuxbox ~]$ fortune | cowsay
/ You have Egyptian flu: you're going to \
\ be a mummy. /

      ^ ^
      (oo)\_____/
      (_____)\\
           ||----w |
           ||     ||
```

And using the parameter -f followed by tux, one can replace the cow with other beings, such as Tux, the Linux mascot:

```
[user@linuxbox ~]$ fortune | cowsay -f tux
/ You are only young once, but you can \
\ stay immature indefinitely. /
```

cowsay



Original author(s)	Tony Monroe
Stable release	3.03 / May 28, 1999 ^[1]
Written in	Perl
Operating system	Cross-platform
Available in	English
License	Artistic License / GNU General Public License
Website	www.nog.net/~tony/warez/ (http://www.nog.net/~tony/warez/)

```

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  |:~|
 //~\
(|   |)
/'\   ^\
 \___) (= (___/

```

Or other things:

```
[user@linuxbox ~]$ fortune | cowsay -f head-in
```

```
< Don't get to bragging. >
```

```

\
 \
 ^__^
(oo)\_____/
(____)\_____)=(_____|_____|_____|
      ||----w |
      ||     ||

```

Using the parameter `-l` shows all available cowfiles:

```
[user@linuxbox ~]$ cowsay -l
```

```
Cow files in /usr/share/cowsay/cows:
```

```

apt beavis.zen bong bud-frogs bunny calvin cheese cock cower daemon default
dragon dragon-and-cow duck elephant elephant-in-snake eyes flaming-sheep
ghostbusters gnu head-in hellokitty kiss kitty koala kosh luke-koala
mech-and-cow meow milk moofasa moose mutilated pony pony-smaller ren sheep
skeleton snowman sodomized-sheep stegosaurus stimpy suse three-eyes turkey
turtle tux unipony unipony-smaller vader vader-koala www

```

If you want to show examples of all the different cowfiles you can run this command:

```
[user@linuxbox ~]$ for i in $(cowsay -l); do cowsay -f $i "$i"; done
```

Once you have this output you can either pipe:

```
[user@linuxbox ~]$ ls | cowsay -f tux
```

```

/ ChangeLog cows cowsay cowsay.1 INSTALL \
| install.pl install.sh LICENSE MANIFEST |
\ pgp_public_key.txt README Wrap.pm.diff /

```

```

\
 \
  .--.
  |o_o|
  |:~|
 //~\
(|   |)
/'\   ^\
 \___) (= (___/

```

```
[user@linuxbox ~]$ cowsay -f tux "This is my text."

  _____
< This is my text. >
  -----
  \
  \
    .--.
   |o_o|
   |:_|
  //  \ \
 (|    |)
/ '\_  _/\'
 \___)=(___/
```

Option	Purpose
-n	Disables word wrap, allowing the cow to speak FIGlet or to display other embedded ASCII art. Width in columns becomes that of the longest line, ignoring any value of -w .
-w	Specifies width of the speech balloon in columns, i.e. characters in a monospace font. Default value is 40.
-b	“Borg mode”, uses == in place of oo for the cow’s eyes.
-d	“Dead”, uses xx, plus a descending u to represent an extruded tongue, also used on Linux kernel oops.
-g	“Greedy”, uses \$\$.
-p	“Paranoid”, uses @@.
-s	“Stoned”, uses ** to represent bloodshot eyes, plus a descending u to represent an extruded tongue.
-t	“Tired”, uses --.
-w	“Wired”, uses oo.
-y	“Youthful”, uses .. to represent smaller eyes.
-e eye_string	Manually specifies the cow’s eye-type, e.g. cowsay -e ^^ (see Eastern-style emoticon). ^[5]
-T tongue_string	Manually specifies the cow’s tongue shape, e.g. cowsay -T \(\) for a pair of parentheses. ^[5]
-f cowfile	Specifies a .cow file from which to load alternative ASCII art. Accepts both absolute file-paths and those relative to the environment variable COWPATH.
-l	Lists the names of available cow-files in the COWPATH directory instead of displaying a quote.

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1. Monroe, Tony. "cowsay source code, CHANGELOG". Retrieved 2012-04-24.
2. Orr, Mike (June 2001). "cowsay--ASCII Art for Your Screen". *Linux Gazette*. Retrieved 2012-04-24.
3. Newborough, Philip (2007-10-05). "A Virtual Richard Stallman for Cowsay Hack". Archived from the original on 2011-07-25.
4. Beshenov, Alexey (2007-10-28). "cowsay: a configurable talking and thinking cow". *Debian Package of the Day*. Archived from the original on 2007-10-30.
5. Characters other than printable in C0 controls and basic Latin (U+0021–U+007E) will not display properly as these parameters accept only the first two bytes of input value. Using a pre-defined cow-face will over-ride any value of **-e** and **-T**.

External links

- "Official website". Archived from the original on February 25, 2012. Retrieved December 25, 2004.
- Cowsay at textart.io (<http://textart.io/cowsay>)
- Cowsay in the Linux Kernel (<https://web.archive.org/web/20071222155743/http://lxr.linux.no/linux-bk+v2.6.11/arch/parisc/kernel/traps.c>) at the Wayback Machine (archived December 22, 2007)
- CGI frontend to Cowsay (<http://www.linuxbox.co.uk/cowsay.php>)
- Graphical cowsay for X Window system (<http://www.doof.me.uk/xcowsay/>)
- Cowsay for Android (<https://market.android.com/details?id=ch.fixme.cowsay>)
- *Cowsay* (<https://f-droid.org/app/ch.fixme.cowsay>) Android package at the F-Droid repository
- Pony wrapper for cowsay (<https://github.com/erkin/ponysay>)
- cowsay in JavaScript (<http://lunicode.com/cowsay>)
- cowsay in R (<https://github.com/sckott/cowsay>)
- pysay: cowsay in Python (<https://github.com/nicolamacchia/pysay>)
- cowsay for SailfishOS (<https://github.com/zeburon/sailfish-cowsay>)
- Collection of additional cow files (<https://github.com/paulkafer/cowsay-files>)

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Categories: ASCII art | Free software programmed in Perl | Free and open-source Android software

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