NAME

GNU diff − compare files line by line

SYNOPSIS

diff [*OPTION*]... *FILES*

DESCRIPTION

Compare FILES line by line.

Mandatory arguments to long options are mandatory for short options too.

−−normal
> output a normal diff (the default)

−q, **−−brief**
> report only when files differ

−s, **−−report−identical−files**
> report when two files are the same

−c, **−C** NUM, **−−context**[=*NUM*]
> output NUM (default 3) lines of copied context

−u, **−U** NUM, **−−unified**[=*NUM*]
> output NUM (default 3) lines of unified context

−e, **−−ed**
> output an ed script

−n, **−−rcs**
> output an RCS format diff

−y, **−−side−by−side**
> output in two columns

−W, **−−width=**ptNUM
> output at most NUM (default 130) print columns

−−left−column
> output only the left column of common lines

−−suppress−common−lines
> do not output common lines

−p, **−−show−c−function**
> show which C function each change is in

−F, **−−show−function−line=**RE
> show the most recent line matching RE

−−label LABEL
> use LABEL instead of file name and timestamp (can be repeated)

−t, **−−expand−tabs**
> expand tabs to spaces in output

−T, **−−initial−tab**
> make tabs line up by prepending a tab

−−tabsize=NUM
> tab stops every NUM (default 8) print columns

−−suppress−blank−empty
> suppress space or tab before empty output lines

−l, **−−paginate**
> pass output through ’pr’ to paginate it

−r, **−−recursive**
       recursively compare any subdirectories found

−−no−dereference
       don't follow symbolic links

−N, **−−new−file**
       treat absent files as empty

−−unidirectional−new−file
       treat absent first files as empty

−−ignore−file−name−case
       ignore case when comparing file names

−−no−ignore−file−name−case
       consider case when comparing file names

−x, **−−exclude**=*PAT*
       exclude files that match PAT

−X, **−−exclude−from**=*FILE*
       exclude files that match any pattern in FILE

−S, **−−starting−file**=*FILE*
       start with FILE when comparing directories

−−from−file=*FILE1*
       compare FILE1 to all operands; FILE1 can be a directory

−−to−file=*FILE2*
       compare all operands to FILE2; FILE2 can be a directory

−i, **−−ignore−case**
       ignore case differences in file contents

−E, **−−ignore−tab−expansion**
       ignore changes due to tab expansion

−Z, **−−ignore−trailing−space**
       ignore white space at line end

−b, **−−ignore−space−change**
       ignore changes in the amount of white space

−w, **−−ignore−all−space**
       ignore all white space

−B, **−−ignore−blank−lines**
       ignore changes where lines are all blank

−I, **−−ignore−matching−lines**=*RE*
       ignore changes where all lines match RE

−a, **−−text**
       treat all files as text

−−strip−trailing−cr
       strip trailing carriage return on input

−D, **−−ifdef**=*NAME*
       output merged file with '#ifdef NAME' diffs

−−GTYPE−group−format=*GFMT*
       format GTYPE input groups with GFMT

−−line−format=_LFMT_
> format all input lines with LFMT

−−LTYPE−line−format=_LFMT_
> format LTYPE input lines with LFMT

> These format options provide fine−grained control over the output

> of diff, generalizing **−D/−−**ifdef.

LTYPE is 'old', 'new', or 'unchanged'.
> GTYPE is LTYPE or 'changed'.

> GFMT (only) may contain:

%<   lines from FILE1

%>   lines from FILE2

%=   lines common to FILE1 and FILE2

%[−][WIDTH][.[PREC]]{doxX}LETTER
> printf−style spec for LETTER

> LETTERs are as follows for new group, lower case for old group:

F   first line number

L   last line number

N   number of lines = L−F+1

E   F−1

M   L+1

%(A=B?T:E)
> if A equals B then T else E

> LFMT (only) may contain:

%L   contents of line

%l   contents of line, excluding any trailing newline

%[−][WIDTH][.[PREC]]{doxX}n
> printf−style spec for input line number

> Both GFMT and LFMT may contain:

_%%_   _%_

%c'C'   the single character C

%c'\OOO'
> the character with octal code OOO

C   the character C (other characters represent themselves)

−d, **−−minimal**
> try hard to find a smaller set of changes

−−horizon−lines=_NUM_
> keep NUM lines of the common prefix and suffix

−−speed−large−files
> assume large files and many scattered small changes

−−color[=_WHEN_]
> colorize the output; WHEN can be 'never', 'always', or 'auto' (the default)

−−palette=*PALETTE*

the colors to use when **−−color** is active; PALETTE is a colon−separated list of terminfo capabilities

−−help   display this help and exit

−v, **−−version**

output version information and exit

FILES are 'FILE1 FILE2' or 'DIR1 DIR2' or 'DIR FILE' or 'FILE DIR'. If **−−from−file** or **−−to−file** is given, there are no restrictions on FILE(s). If a FILE is '−', read standard input. Exit status is 0 if inputs are the same, 1 if different, 2 if trouble.

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REPORTING BUGS

Report bugs to: bug−diffutils@gnu.org
GNU diffutils home page: <https://www.gnu.org/software/diffutils/>
General help using GNU software: <https://www.gnu.org/gethelp/>

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SEE ALSO

wdiff(1), cmp(1), diff3(1), sdiff(1), patch(1)

The full documentation for **GNU** is maintained as a Texinfo manual. If the **info** and **GNU** programs are properly installed at your site, the command

info GNU

should give you access to the complete manual.