

C-string and C-time functions banned by git

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C++ FFFE, March 2021

<https://github.com/git/git/blame/master/banned.h> bans

- `strcpy`
- `strcat`
- `sprintf` and `vsprintf`
- and a bunch of time functions:
  - `gmtime`
  - `localtime`
  - `ctime` and `ctime_r`
  - `asctime` and `asctime_r`

...but why?

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# strcpy (and later strncpy)

- `strcpy (char* target, const char* source)`
- **may overflow target**
- `strncpy (char* target, const char* source, size_t num)`
- **does not append NUL automatically**
- **clang** warns against using both of these.

Solution: use **snprintf** instead.

## strcat (and later strncat)

- `strcat (char* target, const char* source)`

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- `strcat (char* target, const char* source)`
- **may overflow target**
- `strncat (char* target, const char* source, size_t num)`
- **fixed: appends NUL automatically, even for truncated entries**

`strncat()` has the same quadratic behavior as `strcat()` and is difficult-to-read and bug-prone. While it hasn't yet been a problem in git itself, `strncat()` found it's way into 'master' of `cg` and caused segfaults on my system.

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Solution: **use `snprintf` instead.**

# sprintf (and later vsprintf)

- `sprintf (char* target, const char* format, ...)`
- `vsprintf (char* target, const char* format, va_list arg)`

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- **Scott Meyers, ages ago**

Solution: use **snprintf** instead.

What's wrong with:

```
gmtime  
localtime  
ctime  
asctime
```

What's wrong with:

|                        |   |                          |
|------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| <code>gmtime</code>    |   | <code>gmtime_r</code>    |
| <code>localtime</code> | → | <code>localtime_r</code> |
| <code>ctime</code>     |   | <code>ctime_r</code>     |
| <code>asctime</code>   |   | <code>asctime_r</code>   |

Return pointers to static storage (not thread-safe)

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| <code>asctime</code>   |   | <code>asctime_r</code>   |

Return pointers to static storage (not thread-safe)

...when suddenly! →



## **banned.h: mark ctime\_r() and asctime\_r() as banned**

The ctime\_r() and asctime\_r() functions are reentrant, but have no check that the buffer we pass in is long enough (the manpage says it "should have room for at least 26 bytes"). Since this is such an easy-to-get-wrong interface, and since we have the much safer strftime() as well as its more convenient strbuf\_addftime() wrapper, let's ban both of those.

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...just use **strftime**.

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- C-time is **easy to do wrong** too.

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Thank you!