How to ignore lines starting with a string with diff?

Asked 14 years, 7 months ago   Modified 7 months ago

Viewed 18k times

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How can I diff two files and ignore lines starting with a sequence.

E.g

```
File1:
abc
def
time:123

File2:
igh
def
time:345
```

With unix diff it will report

```
<time:123
>time:345
```

I want to ignore this diff. Any ideas?

unix   diff

edited Mar 21, 2015 at 22:49

kenorb
166k ● 94 ● 706 ● 773

asked Apr 30, 2010 at 19:26

kal
29.3k ● 49 ● 132 ● 149

3 Answers

Sorted by: Highest score (default) ⬍

How about: `diff -I '^time.*' file1 file2` ?

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Please note it [doesn't always work as expected](#) as per `diffutils` manual:

> However, `-I` only ignores the insertion or deletion of lines that contain the regular expression if every changed line in the hunk (every insertion and every deletion) matches the regular expression.
>
> In other words, for each non-ignorable change, `diff` prints the complete set of changes in its vicinity, including the ignorable ones. You can specify more than one regular expression for lines to ignore by using more than one `-I` option. `diff` tries to match each line against each regular expression, starting with the last one given.

edited Sep 28, 2021 at 4:40

user2052436
4,745 ● 1 ● 29 ● 52

answered Apr 30, 2010 at 19:32

nc3b
16.2k ● 5 ● 53 ● 63

What about this?

```
diff <(grep -v '^time:' file1) <(grep -v '^time:' file2)
```

answered May 29, 2020 at 10:00

Nick Andrik
141 ● 2

Tagging onto nc3b's answer, you can also specify `-I` multiple times like:

```
diff -I time -I version file1 file2
```

answered Apr 29 at 20:20

krubo
6,376 ● 5 ● 38 ● 49