

NAME

mtrace, muntrace – malloc tracing

LIBRARY

Standard C library (*libc*, *-lc*)

SYNOPSIS

```
#include <mcheck.h>
```

```
void mtrace(void);
```

```
void muntrace(void);
```

DESCRIPTION

The **mtrace()** function installs hook functions for the memory-allocation functions (**malloc(3)**, **realloc(3)**, **memalign(3)**, **free(3)**). These hook functions record tracing information about memory allocation and deallocation. The tracing information can be used to discover memory leaks and attempts to free nonallocated memory in a program.

The **muntrace()** function disables the hook functions installed by **mtrace()**, so that tracing information is no longer recorded for the memory-allocation functions. If no hook functions were successfully installed by **mtrace()**, **muntrace()** does nothing.

When **mtrace()** is called, it checks the value of the environment variable **MALLOC_TRACE**, which should contain the pathname of a file in which the tracing information is to be recorded. If the pathname is successfully opened, it is truncated to zero length.

If **MALLOC_TRACE** is not set, or the pathname it specifies is invalid or not writable, then no hook functions are installed, and **mtrace()** has no effect. In set-user-ID and set-group-ID programs, **MALLOC_TRACE** is ignored, and **mtrace()** has no effect.

ATTRIBUTES

For an explanation of the terms used in this section, see **attributes(7)**.

| Interface | Attribute | Value |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|-----------|
| mtrace() , muntrace() | Thread safety | MT-Unsafe |

STANDARDS

These functions are GNU extensions.

NOTES

In normal usage, **mtrace()** is called once at the start of execution of a program, and **muntrace()** is never called.

The tracing output produced after a call to **mtrace()** is textual, but not designed to be human readable. The GNU C library provides a Perl script, **mtrace(1)**, that interprets the trace log and produces human-readable output. For best results, the traced program should be compiled with debugging enabled, so that line-number information is recorded in the executable.

The tracing performed by **mtrace()** incurs a performance penalty (if **MALLOC_TRACE** points to a valid, writable pathname).

BUGS

The line-number information produced by **mtrace(1)** is not always precise: the line number references may refer to the previous or following (nonblank) line of the source code.

EXAMPLES

The shell session below demonstrates the use of the **mtrace()** function and the **mtrace(1)** command in a program that has memory leaks at two different locations. The demonstration uses the following program:

```
$ cat t_mtrace.c
#include <mcheck.h>
#include <stdio.h>
#include <stdlib.h>
```

```

int
main(void)
{
    mtrace();

    for (unsigned int j = 0; j < 2; j++)
        malloc(100);           /* Never freed--a memory leak */

    calloc(16, 16);            /* Never freed--a memory leak */
    exit(EXIT_SUCCESS);
}

```

When we run the program as follows, we see that **mtrace()** diagnosed memory leaks at two different locations in the program:

```

$ cc -g t_mtrace.c -o t_mtrace
$ export MALLOC_TRACE=/tmp/t
$ ./t_mtrace
$ mtrace ./t_mtrace $MALLOC_TRACE
Memory not freed:
-----
      Address      Size      Caller
0x084c9378         0x64   at /home/cecilia/t_mtrace.c:12
0x084c93e0         0x64   at /home/cecilia/t_mtrace.c:12
0x084c9448        0x100   at /home/cecilia/t_mtrace.c:16

```

The first two messages about unfreed memory correspond to the two **malloc(3)** calls inside the *for* loop. The final message corresponds to the call to **calloc(3)** (which in turn calls **malloc(3)**).

SEE ALSO

mtrace(1), **malloc(3)**, **malloc_hook(3)**, **mcheck(3)**