convert_units

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`convert_units` performs unit conversions, providing a command-line interface to the `Units` module that accompanies `rxntoarb` (`lib/units.rb` in the `rxntoarb` root directory). `convert_units` requires Ruby 1.9 or newer.

Contents

1 Invocation and commmand-line options

`convert_units` is invoked as follows:

```
convert_units [options_list] <input_string> [output_units].
```

`input_string` should consist of an optional numerical value (assumed to be `1.0` if not specified) and a list of unit abbreviations, all of which should be separated by spaces. Accepted unit abbreviations may be accessed by calling `convert_units` with the `-l` flag, but there shouldn't be too many surprises; of note are `degC`, `degF`, and `degR` for °C, °F, and °R, respectively. Any valid SI prefix (see Table 1) may immediately precede the unit name; note that `u` is used for the 'micro' prefix. Exponents on units should immediately follow the unit name, optionally preceded by the `^` character. Use of a solidus (`/`) to indicate reciprocal units is not supported; use negative exponents instead.

The optional `output_units` should contain the units into which the input is to be converted, following the same conventions described above. If `output_units` is present then it must have the same dimensions as `input_string`. If `output_units` is omitted (or an empty string) then conversion to SI base units will be performed.

The optional `options_list` may include any of the following:

Table 1 SI prefixes. Note that `convert_units` uses `u` (instead of µ) for the 'micro' prefix.

name	prefix	factor	name	prefix	factor
yotta	Y	10^{24}	deci	d	10^{-1}
zetta	Z	10^{21}	centi	c	10^{-2}
exa	E	10^{18}	milli	m	10^{-3}
peta	P	10^{15}	micro	u	10^{-6}
tera	T	10^{12}	nano	n	10^{-9}
giga	G	10^{9}	pico	p	10^{-12}
mega	M	10^{6}	femto	f	10^{-15}
kilo	k	10^{3}	atto	a	10^{-18}
hecto	h	10^{2}	zepto	z	10^{-21}
deka	da	10^{1}	yocto	y	10^{-24}

`-a|--arb` Output in *arb* format, i.e. with units in square brackets before the numerical value. Implies `-d`.

`-d|--double-precision` Output is formatted using the letter `d` for exponents (Fortran double precision copy-and-paste mode).

`-f|--format <format>` Output is formatted using the specified format string. Any format string recognised by Ruby's `Kernel#sprintf` method is valid.

`-l|--list` List all recognised units and their abbreviations.

`-s|--sig-figs` Output with the same number of significant figures as the input. Overrides `-f`.

`-t|--tdiff` Specifies that input temperatures should be interpreted as temperature differences rather than references to absolute temperatures. See § 2 for examples.

`-v|--version` Print version information.

2 Examples

```
> convert_units 'nM'
1e-06 mol m-3
> convert_units '0.84 pmol cm-2 min-1'
1.4e-10 mol m-2 s-1
> convert_units '11.893 mile h-1' 'ft s-1'
17.4431 ft s-1
```

arb *format:*

```
> convert_units -a '0.84 pmol cm-2 min-1'
[mol m-2 s-1] 1.4d-10
```

Double precision mode:

```
> convert_units -d ‘0.84 pmol cm-2 min-1’
1.4d-10 mol m-2 s-1
> convert_units -d ‘11.893 mile h-1’ ‘ft s-1’
17.4431d0 ft s-1
```

Custom output formats:

```
> convert_units -f ‘%.3e’ ‘1478.5 kJ kg-1 K-1’ ‘BTU lb-1 degF-1’
3.531e+02 BTU lb-1 degF-1
> convert_units -f ‘%.3f’ ‘1478.5 kJ kg-1 K-1’ ‘BTU lb-1 degF-1’
353.132 BTU lb-1 degF-1
> convert_units -f ‘%.3g’ ‘1478.5 kJ kg-1 K-1’ ‘BTU lb-1 degF-1’
353 BTU lb-1 degF-1
```

Significant figures mode:

```
> convert_units ‘10 atm’ ‘Pa’
1.01325e+06 Pa
> convert_units -s ‘10 atm’ ‘Pa’
1.0e+06 Pa
```

Temperature conversions:

```
> convert_units ‘100 degC’
373.15 K
> convert_units -t ‘100 degC’
100 K
> convert_units -- ‘-40 degC’ ‘degF’
-40 degF
> convert_units -t -- ‘-40 degC’ ‘degF’
-72 degF
```

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