

# Amalasoft Printf

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## Introduction

The Amalasoft printf is part of the Amalasoft Eiffel Library (AEL). It is a collection of classes that provides a printf facility for the Eiffel language. It depends on the Eiffel base libraries (available in open source or commercial form from Eiffel Software) and is, like other Eiffel code, portable across platforms.

In use, the AEL printf routines are quite simple and are very reminiscent of the `printf` function in C and its close relatives.

Here is an example using AEL `printf` that prints a table-row-like line including a number and 3 strings (right, center and left justified).

```
printf ("|%%3d|%%10s|%%=10s|%%-10s|N", <<1, "right", "center", "left">>)
```

This call produces the following output

```
| 1|      right|  center |left      |
```

Unlike classic C `printf`, AEL printf routines are resilient. For example, a mismatched or empty argument list will not cause an illegal memory access, as C `printf` often can.

There is no option to omit the argument list, as there is in C. Doing so would be a syntax error, caught by the Eiffel compiler. If for some reason you feel the need to call one of the AEL printf routines without an argument list, you must provide an empty manifest [ARRAY](#) ("`<<>>`"), an empty [TUPLE](#) ("`[]`") or an explicit [Void](#).

A mismatched *format-to-argument* pair will not cause an exception or even the ever-popular segmentation fault that often happens with C `printf`. It will instead produce an output that is readily detectable and therefore debug-able. It will not be what you wanted, but it will be what you requested.

If there are too many arguments, AEL `printf` will consume the available arguments as needed, in sequence, and ignore the rest. An error condition will be recorded, but the output will not show it. Your application can check on the error after the fact, or can register an agent to be called whenever an error occurs within the AEL printf code.

If there are too few arguments, AEL `printf` will insert a literal "Void" (the string, not a Void reference) in place of the missing argument.

The Amalasoft printf cluster does not include an equivalent to `scanf` at this time.

## Incorporating AEL Printf in Your Project

The AEL printf cluster uses the standard Eiffel base libraries. To incorporate AEL printf, simply add the AEL printf cluster or library to your configuration file.

Any classes that wish to use the printf routines must either inherit `AEL_PRINTF` or instantiate it (using default creation).

The cluster includes several classes, but only the `AEL_PRINTF` class offers a client interface. Following is the contract view of the `AEL_PRINTF` class.

```
class interface
  AEL_PRINTF
create
  default_create

feature -- Convenience function

  print_line (some_text: detachable ANY)
    -- Print terse external representation of 'some_text'
    -- on standard output, followed by a newline character
    -- Was declared in AEL_PRINTF as synonym of printline.

  printline (some_text: detachable ANY)
    -- Print terse external representation of 'some_text'
    -- on standard output, followed by a newline character
    -- Was declared in AEL_PRINTF as synonym of print_line.

feature -- Debug assistance

  set_client_log_proc (v: PROCEDURE [ANY, TUPLE [STRING_8]])
    -- Set the procedure to call to log a message for the client
    -- For debugging support only

feature -- Error Status

  last_printf_error: detachable AEL_PF_FORMAT_ERROR
    -- Most recent error, from most recent operation
    -- Void if no errors occurred

  last_printf_error_out: STRING_8
    -- Description from most recent error (if any)
  ensure
    exists: Result /= Void

  Last_printf_errors: LINKED_LIST [AEL_PF_FORMAT_ERROR]

  last_printf_successful: BOOLEAN
    -- Was the most recent printf operation a success?
  ensure
    no_false_positive: Result implies Last_printf_errors.is_empty
```

```
no_misses: (not Result) implies not Last_printf_errors.is_empty
positive_inverse: (not Last_printf_errors.is_empty) implies not Result
negative_inverse: Last_printf_errors.is_empty implies Result
```

```
Pf_fmt_constants: AEL_PF_FORMATTING_CONSTANTS
```

```
Printf_fmt_funcs: AEL_PF_FORMATTING_ROUTINES
```

**feature** -- Formatting

```
aprintf (fmt: STRING_8; args: detachable ANY): STRING_8
```

```
-- A new string object formatted according to
-- the given format 'fmt' and arguments 'args'
-- 'args' can be a TUPLE, a data structure conforming to
-- FINITE, or, if no arguments are needed, simply Void
```

**require**

```
format_string_exists: fmt /= Void
```

**ensure**

```
exists: Result /= Void
```

```
fprintf (f: FILE; fmt: STRING_8; args: detachable ANY)
```

```
-- Write to the end of given open FILE a string formatted
-- according to the given format 'fmt' and arguments 'args'
-- 'args' can be a TUPLE, a data structure conforming to
-- FINITE, or, if no arguments are needed, simply Void
```

**require**

```
exists: f /= Void
```

```
file_exists: f.exists
```

```
file_is_open: f.is_open_write or f.is_open_append
```

```
format_string_exists: fmt /= Void
```

```
printf (fmt: STRING_8; args: detachable ANY)
```

```
-- Write to the standard output a string formatted
-- according to the given format 'fmt' and arguments 'args'
-- 'args' can be a TUPLE, a data structure conforming to
-- FINITE, or, if no arguments are needed, simply Void
```

**require**

```
format_string_exists: fmt /= Void
```

```
sprintf (buf, fmt: STRING_8; args: detachable ANY)
```

```
-- Replace the given STRING 'buf''s contents
-- with a string formatted according to
-- the format 'fmt' and arguments 'args'
-- 'args' can be a TUPLE, a data structure conforming to
-- FINITE, or, if no arguments are needed, simply Void
```

**require**

```

    buffer_exists: buf /= Void
    format_string_exists: fmt /= Void

end -- class AEL_PRINTF

```

## Using AEL Printf Routines

The printf routines provide a means by which to format strings for output or other purposes in a manner reminiscent of the traditional printf functions in C and similar languages.

Format string construction (in order):

```

%
[<decoration_flag>]
[<alignment_flag>]
[<fill_specifier>]
[<field_width>]
<field_type>

```

Where:

The '%' character denotes a format specifier, as it does in C printf.

*The '%' character is also Eiffel's escape character. As such, when creating a format string, be sure either to use a verbatim string, or to add another '%' character before each format specifier, lest Eiffel treat it as an escape character.*

*For example "name=%s", if not a verbatim string, will be interpreted by Eiffel as an attempt to use 's' as a character code, and because 's' is not an Eiffel character code, the compiler will flag it as a syntax error.*

*To compensate, simply double up the '%' characters. The successful form would then be "name=%s".*

*When using verbatim strings, Eiffel does not interpret the '%' character, and so only a single '%' is needed in that case.*

```

"{
name=%s
}"

```

<decoration\_flag> ::= '#'

Decoration consumes part of the field width

Decoration is applied as follows:

```

"0x" preceding hexadecimal values
"0" preceding octal values
"b" following binary values

```

Decimal values show delimiters at thousands (commas by default)

<alignment\_flag> ::= '-' | '+' | '='

(left right centered)

`<fill_specifier> ::= <character>`

Fills remainder of field width with given character (default is blank)

`<field_width> ::= <simple_width> | <complex_width>`

`<field_type> ::= <character>`

Field type can be at least one of the following:

**B** denotes a BOOLEAN expression

This shows as "True" or "False"

**b** denotes a Binary INTEGER expression

This shows as ones and zeroes.

If no field width is specified, the field width will be the smallest whole integer size (8, 16, 32, 64) that can hold the value of the argument. Values from 0 through 255 have an implicit field width of 8, values between 256 and 65535 have 16, values between 65536 and 4294967295 have 32, and larger values have an implicit field width of 64.

When a field width is specified, the default padding character is blank.

A zero padding character can also be specified (as with other integral types) for positive values, but when the value begin rendered is negative, the pad character used is a '1'.

**c** denotes a single CHARACTER

**d** denotes a Decimal INTEGER expression

Type specifier can be preceded by a delimiter character with which to separate groups of 3 adjacent digits (thousands).

Alignment characters cannot be used as delimiters.

**f** denotes a REAL or DOUBLE expression

Field width for floating point values are given in the form:

`<overall_width>". "<right_width>`

Where overall\_width is the minimum width of the entire representation, and <right\_width> is the width for the fractional part (a.k.a. precision).

A precision of 0 results in a whole number representation, without decimal point (effectively rounding to integer)

**L** denotes a list-like expression (any FINITE container)

Argument can be any descendent of FINITE [ANY].

Output is a delimited list, where the default delimiter is a single blank. A different delimiter can be specified by preceding the 'L' with a single non-digit, non-percent character as in "%%,L".

To concatenate, without delimiters, precede the 'L' with the decoration flag ('#'), as in "%%#L". Alignment characters cannot be used as delimiters.

**o** denotes an Octal INTEGER expression

**s** denotes character STRING

- u** denotes a NATURAL (unsigned Decimal integer) expression
- x** denotes a Hexadecimal INTEGER expression

In use, a class calls one of the printf routines with at least a format string and an argument list.

The argument list can be of any type, but for expected behavior, there are a few restrictions.

- When the format string has no format specifiers, then the argument list can be an empty manifest [ARRAY](#), and empty [TUPLE](#), or an explicit **Void**.

Example: `printf ("This has no format specifiers%N", Void)`

Example: `printf ("This has no format specifiers%N", <<>>)`

Example: `printf ("This has no format specifiers%N", [])`

- When the format string contains a single format specifier, then the argument list can be either a container with a single item of a type conforming to the single format specifier, or an object of a type conforming to the single format specifier.

Example: `printf ("This has %%d format specifier%N", 1)`

Example: `printf ("This has %%d format specifier%N", <<1>>)`

- When the format string contains multiple format specifiers, then the argument list must be a container that is a proper descendent of [FINITE \[ANY\]](#), in which each item, related by position to its corresponding format specifier, has a type conforming to its corresponding format specifier.

Example: `printf ("This has %%s (%%d) format specifiers%N", <<"multiple", 2>>)`

## Shared Settings

The AEL printf cluster supports shared (i.e. *once-per-thread*) settings to control or modify certain behaviors.

*These are once-per-thread, rather than once-per-process to be as flexible as possible.*

## Error Reporting

AEL printf lets you define an agent to be called when an error is encountered in the printf routines. To define the agent, call the following function.

```
set_printf_client_error_agent (  
  v: detachable PROCEDURE [ANY, TUPLE [AEL_PF_FORMAT_ERROR]])  
  -- Set the procedure to call upon encountering a format error
```

## Padding Characters and Delimiters

### Default Fill Character

The default padding/fill character is a blank (ASCII 32). If so desired, the default padding character can be changed, for all calls to AEL printf routines, to a different character. To change the default padding/fill character, call the following function.

```
set_default_printf_fill_character (v: CHARACTER)  
  -- Change the fill character from blank to  
  -- the given new value for ALL subsequent  
  -- printf calls in this thread space
```

To reset the default padding/fill character to blank, call:

```
reset_default_printf_fill_character  
  -- Reset the default fill character to blank
```

### Default Decimal Separator

The default decimal separator (aka radix point), as used in floating point formats, is a period (ASCII 46). ). If so desired, the default decimal separator can be changed, for all calls to AEL printf routines, to a different character. To change the default decimal separator, call the following function.

```
set_default_printf_decimal_separator (v: CHARACTER)  
  -- Change the character used to denote the decimal point  
  -- to 'v' for ALL subsequent printf calls in this thread space
```

To reset the default decimal separator to a period, call:

```
reset_default_printf_decimal_separator  
  -- Reset the character used to denote the decimal point
```

### Default List Item Delimiter

The default list delimiter, as used between items in list/container formats, is a single blank (ASCII 32). ). If so desired, the default list item delimiter can be changed, for all calls to AEL

printf routines, to a different *string*. To change the default list delimiter, call the following function.

```
set_default_printf_list_delimiter (v: STRING)
    -- Change the default list delimiter string from a single
    -- blank character to the given string for ALL subsequent
    -- printf calls in this thread space
```

To reset the default list delimiter to a single space, call:

```
reset_default_printf_list_delimiter
    -- Reset the default list delimiter string
```

## Default Thousands Delimiter

The default delimiter, as used between groups of three adjacent digits (thousands) in decimal integer formats, is a comma (ASCII 44). Decimal integers are rendered without thousands separators unless the decoration flag is set.

If so desired, the default thousands delimiter can be changed, for all calls to AEL printf routines, to a different character. To change the default thousands delimiter, call the following function.

```
set_default_printf_thousands_delimiter (v: CHARACTER)
    -- Change the default thousands delimiter string from an
    -- empty string to the given string for ALL subsequent
    -- printf calls (in this thread space)
```

To reset the default thousands delimiter to a single space, call:

```
reset_default_printf_thousands_delimiter
    -- Reset the default thousands delimiter string
```

## Examples

### Strings

```
printf ("I'm a little %s, short and stout%N", "teapot")
```

I'm a little teapot, short and stout
--------------------------------------

```
printf ("Here is my %s. Here is my %s.%N", <<"handle", "spout">>)
```

Here is my handle. Here is my spout.
--------------------------------------

```
printf ("The string is right aligned in 16 spaces ->%16s<-%N", "string")
```

The string is right aligned in 16 spaces ->	string<-%
---	-----------

```
printf ("The string is right aligned in 16 spaces ->%+16s<-%N", "string")
```

The string is right aligned in 16 spaces ->	string<-%
---	-----------

```
printf ("The string is left aligned in 16 spaces ->%-16s<-%N", "string")
```

The string is left aligned in 16 spaces ->string	<-%
--	-----



```
printf ("The string is centered in 16 spaces ->%=16s<-%N", "string")
```

```
The string is centered in 16 spaces ->      string      <-%
```

## Decimal Integers

```
printf ("You are %d in %d%N", << 1, 1000000 >>)
```

```
You are 1 in 1000000
```

```
printf ("You are %d in %#d%N", << 1, 1000000 >>)
```

```
You are 1 in 1,000,000
```

```
printf ("You are %d in %,d%N", << 1, 1000000 >>)
```

```
You are 1 in 1,000,000
```

```
printf ("You are %d in %_d%N", << 1, 1000000 >>)
```

```
You are 1 in 1_000_000
```

```
printf ("You are %d in -> %#17d<- (right)%N", << 1, 1000000 >>)
```

```
You are 1 in ->      1,000,000<-
```

```
printf ("You are %d in -> %#-17d<- (left)%N", << 1, 1000000 >>)
```

```
You are 1 in ->1,000,000      <-
```

```
printf ("You are %d in -> %#=17d<- (center)%N", << 1, 1000000 >>)
```

```
You are 1 in ->      1,000,000      <-
```

```
printf ("You are %d in -> %=17d<- (center)%N", << 1, 1000000 >>)
```

```
You are 1 in ->      1000000      <-
```

## Floating Point Numbers

```
printf ("A coin lands on heads %.2f%% of the time%N", << 50 >>)
```

```
A coin lands on heads 50% of the time
```

```
printf ("A coin lands on heads %.2f%% of the time (P=%.12f)%N", <<50, 0.5>>)
```

```
A coin lands on heads 50% of the time
```

```
printf ("The sqrt of 2 is %.14f to 4 places%N", {MATH_CONST}.sqrt2)
```

```
The sqrt of 2 is 1.4142 to 4 places
```

```
printf ("The sqrt of 2 is %.18f to 8 places%N", {MATH_CONST}.sqrt2)
```

```
The sqrt of 2 is 1.41421356 to 8 places
```

```
printf ("The sqrt of 2 is ->%%10.4f<- to 4 places, in 10 columns (right)%N",
        {MATH_CONST}.sqrt2)
```

```
The sqrt of 2 is ->    1.4142<- to 4 places, and in 10 columns
```

```
printf ("The sqrt of 2 is ->%%-10.4f<- to 4 places, in 10 columns (left)%N",
        {MATH_CONST}.sqrt2)
```

```
The sqrt of 2 is ->1.4142    <- to 4 places, and in 10 columns
```

```
printf ("The sqrt of 2 is ->%%=10.4f<- to 4 places, in 10 columns (center)%N",
        {MATH_CONST}.sqrt2)
```

```
The sqrt of 2 is -> 1.4142  <- to 4 places, and in 10 columns
```

## Containers

```
printf ("The value in this list are: %L%N",<< 1, 79, 2, 1492 >>)
```

```
The value in this list are: 1 79 2 1492
```

```
printf ("The value in this list are: %,L%N",<< 1, 79, 2, 1492 >>)
```

```
The value in this list are: 1,79,2,1492
```

```
printf ("The value in this list are: %:~L%N",<< 1, 79, 2, 1492 >>)
```

```
The value in this list are: 1:79:2:1492
```

## Binary Integers

```
printf ("The binary form of %d (%#x) is %%#b%N",<< 17, 17, 17 >>)
```

```
The binary form of 127 (0x7f) is 00010001b
```

```
printf ("The binary form of %d (%#x) is %%b%N",<< 17, 17, 17 >>)
```

```
The binary form of 127 (0x7f) is 00010001
```

```
printf ("The binary form of %d (%#x) is ->%%12b<-%N",<< 17, 17, 17 >>)
```

```
The binary form of 127 (0x7f) is ->    00010001<-
```

```
printf ("The binary form of %d (%#x) is ->%%012b<-%N",<< 17, 17, 17 >>)
```

```
The binary form of 127 (0x7f) is ->000000010001<-
```

```
printf ("The binary form of %d (%04x) is %%b%N",<< 127, 127, 127 >>)
```

```
The binary form of 127 (007f) is 01111111
```

```
printf ("The binary form of %d (%04x) is %%b%N",<< 65535, 65535, 65535>>)
```

```
The binary form of 65535 (ffff) is 1111111111111111
```

```
printf ("The binary form of %d (%%#04x) is %%b%N", << 65536, 65536, 65536 >>)
```

```
The binary form of 65536 (0x1000) is 00000000000000010000000000000000
```

```
printf ("The binary form of %d (%%#04x) is %%20b%N", << 65536, 65536, 65536 >>)
```

```
The binary form of 65536 (0x1000) is 000100000000000000000000
```

## Verbatim Strings for Formats

When using a verbatim string as a format string, there should be no escape characters preceding the format specifiers.

```
printf ("{\nThis is the first line, and has a quoted string ->\"%s\"<- here.\nThis is the second line, and has an integer ->%d<- here.\nThis is the third line and has no specifiers.\nThis is line %d, and we're at 100%.\n}\n", << "string", 42, 4 >>)
```

```
This is the first line, and has a quoted string ->"string"<- here.\nThis is the second line, and has an integer ->42<- here.\nThis is the third line and has no specifiers.\nThis is line 4, and we're at 100%.
```