NAME

su − become privileged user

SYNOPSIS

su [name]

DESCRIPTION

Su allows one to become the super-user, who has all sorts of marvelous (and correspondingly dangerous) powers. In order fors*u* to do its magic, the user must supply a passw ord. If the password is correct, *su* will execute the Shell with the UID set to that of the super-user. To restore normal UID privileges, type an end-of-file to the super-user Shell.

The password demanded is that of the entry ‘‘root’’ in the system’s password file.

To remind the super-user of his responsibilities, the Shell substitutes ‘#’ for its usual prompt ‘%’. The ordinary user’s command path search sequence does not apply to the super-user. The super-users gets ‘‘/bin’’, ‘‘/etc’’, and ‘‘/’’ instead (no current directory).

The optional argument allows logging in as *name* without logging off as yourself. That is, you get the powers and privileges, if any, of the user whose *login* name is *name.* In this case, *su* asks for that user’s password, rather than the super-user password.

SEE ALSO

sh(I), pexec(III)

BUGS

Although the super-user has powers far beyond those of mortal users, the super-user does have one frailty that does not beset other users: namely, a sensitivity to ‘‘kryptonite’’ programs. As explained in *krypton*(VIII), a ‘‘kryptonite’’ program is any one extracted from a backup tape of the original UNIX system, which, unfortunately, exploded during its early development. While exposure to a ‘‘kryptonite’’ program can be fatal to a super-user, it more often causes the super-user to behave in a strange and irrational fashion, resulting in unexplained system crashes, scrambled file systems, missing files, etc.