

## Chapter 9

# The Info Object

Many of the routines in MPI take an argument `info`. `info` is an opaque object with a handle of type `MPI_Info` in C, `MPI::Info` in C++, and `INTEGER` in Fortran. It stores an unordered set of (key,value) pairs (both key and value are strings). A key can have only one value. MPI reserves several keys and requires that if an implementation uses a reserved key, it must provide the specified functionality. An implementation is not required to support these keys and may support any others not reserved by MPI.

An implementation must support info objects as caches for arbitrary (key, value) pairs, regardless of whether it recognizes the key. Each function that takes hints in the form of an `MPI_Info` must be prepared to ignore any key it does not recognize. This description of info objects does not attempt to define how a particular function should react if it recognizes a key but not the associated value. `MPI_INFO_GET_NKEYS`, `MPI_INFO_GET_NTHKEY`, `MPI_INFO_GET_VALUELEN`, and `MPI_INFO_GET` must retain all (key,value) pairs so that layered functionality can also use the `Info` object.

Keys have an implementation-defined maximum length of `MPI_MAX_INFO_KEY`, which is at least 32 and at most 255. Values have an implementation-defined maximum length of `MPI_MAX_INFO_VAL`. In Fortran, leading and trailing spaces are stripped from both. Returned values will never be larger than these maximum lengths. Both key and value are case sensitive.

*Rationale.* Keys have a maximum length because the set of known keys will always be finite and known to the implementation and because there is no reason for keys to be complex. The small maximum size allows applications to declare keys of size `MPI_MAX_INFO_KEY`. The limitation on value sizes is so that an implementation is not forced to deal with arbitrarily long strings. (*End of rationale.*)

*Advice to users.* `MPI_MAX_INFO_VAL` might be very large, so it might not be wise to declare a string of that size. (*End of advice to users.*)

When it is an argument to a **nonblocking** routine, `info` is parsed before that routine returns, so that it may be modified or freed immediately after return.

When the descriptions refer to a key or value as being a boolean, an integer, or a list, they mean the string representation of these types. An implementation may define its own rules for how info value strings are converted to other types, but to ensure portability, every implementation must support the following representations. Legal values for a boolean must include the strings “true” and “false” (all lowercase). For integers, legal values must include