

NAME

cat - concatenate and print files

SYNOPSIS

cat [*- / ! . # ' r*] [*-*] [*file ...*]

DESCRIPTION

The **cat** utility reads files sequentially, writing them to the standard output. The *file* operands are processed in command line order. A single dash represents the standard input, and may appear multiple times in the *file* list.

The word “concatenate” is just a verbose synonym for “catenate”.

The options are as follows:

- /* Implies the *- #* option but doesn't number blank lines.
- !* Implies the *- r* option, and displays a dollar sign ('\$') at the end of each line as well.
- .* Only attempt to display plain files.
- #* Number the output lines, starting at 1.
- #* Squeeze multiple adjacent empty lines, causing the output to be single spaced.
- !* Implies the *- r* option, and displays tab characters as '^I' as well.
- r* The *- r* option guarantees that the output is unbuffered.
- r* Displays non-printing characters so they are visible. Control characters print as '^X' for control-X; the delete character (octal 0177) prints as '^?' Non-ascii characters (with the high bit set) are printed as 'M-' (for meta) followed by the character for the low 7 bits.

The **cat** utility exits 0 on success, and >0 if an error occurs.

BUGS

Because of the shell language mechanism used to perform output redirection, the command “**cat file1 file2 > file1**” will cause the original data in file1 to be destroyed! This is performed by the shell before **cat** is run.

SEE ALSO

head(1), hexdump(1), lpr(1), more(1), pr(1), tail(1), view(1), vis(1)

Rob Pike, "UNIX Style, or cat -v Considered Harmful", *USENIX Summer Conference Proceedings*, 1983.

HISTORY

A **cat** utility appeared in Version 1 AT&T UNIX. Dennis Ritchie designed and wrote the first man page. It appears to have been cat(1).

STANDARDS

The **cat** utility is expected to conform to the IEEE Std 1003.2-1992 (“POSIX.2”) specification.

The flags [*- / ! . # ' r*] are extensions to the specification.