

NAME

col – filter reverse line feeds from input

SYNOPSIS

col *options*

DESCRIPTION

col filters out reverse (and half–reverse) line feeds so the output is in the correct order, with only forward and half–forward line feeds. It also replaces any whitespace characters with tabs where possible. This can be useful in processing the output of **nroff**(1) and **tbl**(1).

col reads from standard input and writes to standard output.

OPTIONS

-b, --no-backspaces

Do not output any backspaces, printing only the last character written to each column position.

-f, --fine

Permit half–forward line feeds. Normally characters destined for a half–line boundary are printed on the following line.

-h, --tabs

Output tabs instead of multiple spaces.

-l, --lines *number*

Buffer at least *number* lines in memory. By default, 128 lines are buffered.

-p, --pass

Force unknown control sequences to be passed through unchanged. Normally **col** will filter out any control sequences other than those recognized and interpreted by itself, which are listed below.

-x, --spaces

Output multiple spaces instead of tabs.

-H, --help

Display help text and exit.

-V, --version

Display version and exit.

CONFORMING TO

The **col** utility conforms to the Single UNIX Specification, Version 2. The **-l** option is an extension to the standard.

NOTES

The control sequences for carriage motion that **col** understands and their decimal values are listed in the following table:

ESC–7

reverse line feed (escape then 7)

ESC–8

half reverse line feed (escape then 8)

ESC–9

half forward line feed (escape then 9)

backspace

moves back one column (8); ignored in the first column

newline

forward line feed (10); also does carriage return

carriage return

(13)

shift in

shift to normal character set (15)

shift out

shift to alternate character set (14)

space

moves forward one column (32)

tab

moves forward to next tab stop (9)

vertical tab

reverse line feed (11)

All unrecognized control characters and escape sequences are discarded.

col keeps track of the character set as characters are read and makes sure the character set is correct when they are output.

If the input attempts to back up to the last flushed line, **col** will display a warning message.

HISTORY

A **col** command appeared in Version 6 AT&T UNIX.

SEE ALSO

expand(1), **nroff(1)**, **tbl(1)**

REPORTING BUGS

For bug reports, use the issue tracker <<https://github.com/util-linux/util-linux/issues>>.

AVAILABILITY

The **col** command is part of the util-linux package which can be downloaded from Linux Kernel Archive <<https://www.kernel.org/pub/linux/utils/util-linux/>>.