

**NAME**

`com_err` – common error display routine

**SYNOPSIS**

```
#include <et/com_err.h>
void (*proc) (const char *, long, const char *, va_list);

void com_err (const char *whoami, long code, const char *format, ...);

proc = set_com_err_hook (proc);
proc = reset_com_err_hook ();

void initialize_XXXX_error_table ();
```

**DESCRIPTION**

*Com\_err* displays an error message on the standard error stream *stderr* (see *stdio(3S)*) composed of the *whoami* string, which should specify the program name or some subportion of a program, followed by an error message generated from the *code* value (derived from *compile\_et(1)*), and a string produced using the *format* string and any following arguments, in the same style as *fprintf(3)*.

The behavior of *com\_err* can be modified using *set\_com\_err\_hook*; this defines a procedure which is called with the arguments passed to *com\_err*, instead of the default internal procedure which sends the formatted text to error output. Thus the error messages from a program can all easily be diverted to another form of diagnostic logging, such as *syslog(3)*. *Reset\_com\_err\_hook* may be used to restore the behavior of *com\_err* to its default form. Both procedures return the previous “hook” value. These “hook” procedures must have the declaration given for *proc* above in the synopsis.

The *initialize\_XXXX\_error\_table* routine is generated mechanically by *compile\_et(1)* from a source file containing names and associated strings. Each table has a name of up to four characters, which is used in place of the **XXXX** in the name of the routine. These routines should be called before any of the corresponding error codes are used, so that the *com\_err* library will recognize error codes from these tables when they are used.

The **com\_err.h** header file should be included in any source file that uses routines from the *com\_err* library; executable files must be linked using “*-lcom\_err*” in order to cause the *com\_err* library to be included.

**SEE ALSO**

*compile\_et(1)*, *syslog(3)*.

Ken Raeburn, "A Common Error Description Library for UNIX".