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Rocky Enterprise Linux 9.2 Manual Pages on command 'regex.3'

\$ man regex.3

REGEX(3)

Linux Programmer's Manual

REGEX(3)

NAME

`regcomp`, `regexec`, `regerror`, `regfree` - POSIX regex functions

SYNOPSIS

```
#include <regex.h>

int regcomp(regex_t *preg, const char *regex, int cflags);

int regexec(const regex_t *preg, const char *string, size_t nmatch,
            regmatch_t pmatch[], int eflags);

size_t regerror(int errcode, const regex_t *preg, char *errbuf,
                size_t errbuf_size);

void regfree(regex_t *preg);
```

DESCRIPTION

POSIX regex compiling

regcomp() is used to compile a regular expression into a form that is suitable for subsequent regexec() searches.

regcomp() is supplied with preg, a pointer to a pattern buffer storage area; regex, a pointer to the null-terminated string and cflags, flags used to determine the type of compilation.

All regular expression searching must be done via a compiled pattern buffer, thus `regexec()` must always be supplied with the address of a `regcomp()` initialized pattern buffer.

`cflags` is the bitwise-or of zero or more of the following:

`REG_EXTENDED`

Use POSIX Extended Regular Expression syntax when interpreting regex. If not set, POSIX Basic Regular Expression syntax is used.

`REG_ICASE`

Do not differentiate case. Subsequent `regexec()` searches using this pattern buffer will be case insensitive.

`REG_NOSUB`

Do not report position of matches. The `nmatch` and `pmatch` arguments to `regexec()` are ignored if the pattern buffer supplied was compiled with this flag set.

`REG_NEWLINE`

Match-any-character operators don't match a newline.

A nonmatching list (`[^...]`) not containing a newline does not match a newline.

Match-beginning-of-line operator (`^`) matches the empty string immediately after a newline, regardless of whether `eflags`, the execution flags of `regexec()`, contains `REG_NOTEOL`.

Match-end-of-line operator (`$`) matches the empty string immediately before a newline, regardless of whether `eflags` contains `REG_NOTEOL`.

POSIX regex matching

`regexec()` is used to match a null-terminated string against the precompiled pattern buffer, `preg`. `nmatch` and `pmatch` are used to provide information regarding the location of any matches. `eflags` is the bitwise-or of zero or more of the following flags:

`REG_NOTEOL`

The match-beginning-of-line operator always fails to match (but see the compilation flag `REG_NEWLINE` above). This flag may be

used when different portions of a string are passed to `regexec()` and the beginning of the string should not be interpreted as the beginning of the line.

REG_NOTEOL

The `match-end-of-line` operator always fails to match (but see the compilation flag `REG_NEWLINE` above).

REG_STARTEND

Use `pmatch[0]` on the input string, starting at byte `pmatch[0].rm_so` and ending before byte `pmatch[0].rm_eo`. This allows matching embedded NUL bytes and avoids a `strlen(3)` on large strings. It does not use `nmatch` on input, and does not change `REG_NOTBOL` or `REG_NEWLINE` processing. This flag is a BSD extension, not present in POSIX.

Byte offsets

Unless `REG_NOSUB` was set for the compilation of the pattern buffer, it is possible to obtain match addressing information. `pmatch` must be dimensioned to have at least `nmatch` elements. These are filled in by `regexec()` with substring match addresses. The offsets of the subexpression starting at the *i*th open parenthesis are stored in `pmatch[i]`. The entire regular expression's match addresses are stored in `pmatch[0]`. (Note that to return the offsets of *N* subexpression matches, `nmatch` must be at least *N*+1.) Any unused structure elements will contain the value -1.

The `regmatch_t` structure which is the type of `pmatch` is defined in `<regex.h>`.

```
typedef struct {  
    regoff_t rm_so;  
    regoff_t rm_eo;  
} regmatch_t;
```

Each `rm_so` element that is not -1 indicates the start offset of the next largest substring match within the string. The relative `rm_eo` element indicates the end offset of the match, which is the offset of the first character after the matching text.

POSIX error reporting

regerror() is used to turn the error codes that can be returned by both regcomp() and regexec() into error message strings.

regerror() is passed the error code, errcode, the pattern buffer, preg, a pointer to a character string buffer, errbuf, and the size of the string buffer, errbuf_size. It returns the size of the errbuf required to contain the null-terminated error message string. If both errbuf and errbuf_size are nonzero, errbuf is filled in with the first errbuf_size - 1 characters of the error message and a terminating null byte ('\0').

POSIX pattern buffer freeing

Supplying regfree() with a precompiled pattern buffer, preg will free the memory allocated to the pattern buffer by the compiling process, regcomp().

RETURN VALUE

regcomp() returns zero for a successful compilation or an error code for failure.

regexec() returns zero for a successful match or REG_NOMATCH for failure.

ERRORS

The following errors can be returned by regcomp():

REG_BADBR

Invalid use of back reference operator.

REG_BADPAT

Invalid use of pattern operators such as group or list.

REG_BADRPT

Invalid use of repetition operators such as using '*' as the first character.

REG_EBRACE

Un-matched brace interval operators.

REG_EBRACK

Un-matched bracket list operators.

REG_ECOLLATE

Invalid collating element.

REG_ECTYPE

Unknown character class name.

REG_EEND

Nonspecific error. This is not defined by POSIX.2.

REG_EESCAPE

Trailing backslash.

REG_EPAREN

Un-matched parenthesis group operators.

REG_ERANGE

Invalid use of the range operator; for example, the ending point of the range occurs prior to the starting point.

REG_ESIZE

Compiled regular expression requires a pattern buffer larger than 64 kB. This is not defined by POSIX.2.

REG_ESPACE

The regex routines ran out of memory.

REG_ESUBREG

Invalid back reference to a subexpression.

ATTRIBUTES

For an explanation of the terms used in this section, see at?

tributes(7).

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?Interface ? Attribute ? Value ?

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?regcomp(), regexec() ? Thread safety ? MT-Safe locale ?

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?reerror() ? Thread safety ? MT-Safe env ?

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?regfree() ? Thread safety ? MT-Safe ?

??

CONFORMING TO

POSIX.1-2001, POSIX.1-2008.

EXAMPLES

```
#include <stdint.h>
#include <stdio.h>
#include <stdlib.h>
#include <regex.h>
#define ARRAY_SIZE(arr) (sizeof((arr)) / sizeof((arr)[0]))
static const char *const str =
    "1) John Driverhacker;\n2) John Doe;\n3) John Foo;\n";
static const char *const re = "John.*o";
int main(void)
{
    static const char *s = str;
    regex_t regex;
    regmatch_t pmatch[1];
    regoff_t off, len;
    if (regcomp(&regex, re, REG_NEWLINE))
        exit(EXIT_FAILURE);
    printf("String = \"%s\"\n", str);
    printf("Matches:\n");
    for (int i = 0; ; i++) {
        if (regexec(&regex, s, ARRAY_SIZE(pmatch), pmatch, 0))
            break;
        off = pmatch[0].rm_so + (s - str);
        len = pmatch[0].rm_eo - pmatch[0].rm_so;
        printf("#%d:\n", i);
        printf("offset = %jd; length = %jd\n", (intmax_t) off,
            (intmax_t) len);
        printf("substring = \"%.*s\"\n", len, s + pmatch[0].rm_so);
        s += pmatch[0].rm_eo;
    }
    exit(EXIT_SUCCESS);
}
```

grep(1), regex(7)

The glibc manual section, Regular Expressions

COLOPHON

This page is part of release 5.10 of the Linux man-pages project. A description of the project, information about reporting bugs, and the latest version of this page, can be found at <https://www.kernel.org/doc/man-pages/>.

GNU

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