



Linux Ubuntu 26.04 Manual Pages on command 'getlogin_r.3'

\$ man getlogin_r.3

getlogin(3) Library Functions Manual getlogin(3)

NAME

getlogin, getlogin_r, cuserid - get username

LIBRARY

Standard C library (libc, -lc)

SYNOPSIS

```
#include <unistd.h>

char *getlogin(void);

int getlogin_r(size_t bufsize;
               char buf[bufsize], size_t bufsize);

#include <stdio.h>

char *cuserid(char *string);
```

Feature Test Macro Requirements for glibc (see feature_test_macros(7)):

getlogin_r():

 _POSIX_C_SOURCE >= 199506L

cuserid():

 Since glibc 2.24:

 (_XOPEN_SOURCE && ! (_POSIX_C_SOURCE >= 200112L)

 || _GNU_SOURCE

 Up to and including glibc 2.23:

 _XOPEN_SOURCE

DESCRIPTION

getlogin() returns a pointer to a string containing the name of the user logged in on the

controlling terminal of the process, or a null pointer if this information cannot be determined. The string is statically allocated and might be overwritten on subsequent calls to this function or to `cuserid()`.

`getlogin_r()` returns this same username in the array buf of size bufsize.

`cuserid()` returns a pointer to a string containing a username associated with the effective user ID of the process. If string is not a null pointer, it should be an array that can hold at least `L_cuserid` characters; the string is returned in this array. Otherwise, a pointer to a string in a static area is returned. This string is statically allocated and might be overwritten on subsequent calls to this function or to `getlogin()`.

The macro `L_cuserid` is an integer constant that indicates how long an array you might need to store a username. `L_cuserid` is declared in `<stdio.h>`.

These functions let your program identify positively the user who is running (`cuserid()`) or the user who logged in this session (`getlogin()`). (These can differ when set-user-ID programs are involved.)

For most purposes, it is more useful to use the environment variable `LOGNAME` to find out who the user is. This is more flexible precisely because the user can set `LOGNAME` arbitrarily.

RETURN VALUE

`getlogin()` returns a pointer to the username when successful, and `NULL` on failure, with `errno` set to indicate the error. `getlogin_r()` returns 0 when successful, and nonzero on failure.

ERRORS

POSIX specifies:

EMFILE The per-process limit on the number of open file descriptors has been reached.

ENFILE The system-wide limit on the total number of open files has been reached.

ENXIO The calling process has no controlling terminal.

ERANGE (`getlogin_r`) The length of the username, including the terminating null byte ('\0'), is larger than bufsize.

Linux/glibc also has:

ENOENT There was no corresponding entry in the utmp-file.

ENOMEM Insufficient memory to allocate passwd structure.

ENOTTY Standard input didn't refer to a terminal. (See BUGS.)

FILES

/etc/passwd

(traditionally /etc/utmp; some libc versions used /var/adm/utmp)

ATTRIBUTES

For an explanation of the terms used in this section, see `attributes(7)`.

[illegible]

In the above table, `race:utent` signifies that if any of the functions `setutent(3)`, `getutent(3)`, or `endutent(3)` are used in parallel in different threads of a program, then data races could occur. `getlogin()` and `getlogin_r()` call those functions, so we use `race:utent` to remind users.

VERSIONS

OpenBSD has `getlogin()` and `setlogin()`, and a username associated with a session, even if it has no controlling terminal.

STANDARDS

getlogin()
getlogin_r()
POSIX.1-2008.
cuserid()
None.

STANDARDS

```
getlogin()
getlogin_r():
    POSIX.1-2001.  OpenBSD.
cuserid()
```

System V has a `cuserid()` function which uses the real user ID rather than the effective user ID.

BUGS

Unfortunately, it is often rather easy to fool `getlogin()`. Sometimes it does not work at all, because some program messed up the `utmp` file. Often, it gives only the first 8 characters of the login name. The user currently logged in on the controlling terminal of our program need not be the user who started it. Avoid `getlogin()` for security-related purposes.

Note that `glibc` does not follow the POSIX specification and uses `stdin` instead of `/dev/tty`.

A bug. (Other recent systems, like SunOS 5.8 and HP-UX 11.11 and FreeBSD 4.8 all return the login name also when `stdin` is redirected.)

Nobody knows precisely what `cuserid()` does; avoid it in portable programs. Or avoid it altogether: use `getpwuid(geteuid())` instead, if that is what you meant. Do not use `cuserid()`.

SEE ALSO

`logname(1)`, `geteuid(2)`, `getuid(2)`, `utmp(5)`

Linux man-pages 6.17

2026-02-08

`getlogin(3)`