



Linux Ubuntu 26.04 Manual Pages on command 'watch.1'

\$ man watch.1

WATCH(1)

User Commands

WATCH(1)

NAME

watch - execute a program periodically, showing output fullscreen

SYNOPSIS

watch [options] command

DESCRIPTION

watch runs command repeatedly, displaying its output and errors (the first screenfull).

This allows you to watch the program output change over time. By default, command is run every 2 seconds and watch will run until interrupted.

OPTIONS

-b, --beep

Beep if command has a non-zero exit.

-c, --color

Interpret ANSI color and style sequences.

-C, --no-color

Do not interpret ANSI color and style sequences.

-d, --differences[=permanent]

Highlight the differences between successive updates. If the optional permanent argument is specified then watch will show all changes since the first iteration.

-e, --errexit

Freeze updates on command error, and exit after a key press.

-g, --chgexit

Exit when the visible output of command changes. Changes that are off the screen due

to small screen size or large output will not cause watch to exit.

-n, --interval seconds

Specify update interval. The command will not allow quicker than 0.1 second interval, in which the smaller values are converted. Both '.' and ',' work for any locales. The WATCH_INTERVAL environment can be used to persistently set a non-default interval (following the same rules and formatting).

-p, --precise

Make watch attempt to run command every --interval seconds. Try it with ntpdate (if present) and notice how the fractional seconds stays (nearly) the same, as opposed to normal mode where they continuously increase.

-q, --equexit <cycles>

Exit when output of command does not change for the given number of cycles.

-r, --no-rerun

Do not run the program on terminal resize, the output of the program will re-appear at the next regular run time.

-t, --no-title

Turn off the header showing the interval, command, and current time at the top of the display, as well as the following blank line.

-w, --no-wrap

Turn off line wrapping. Long lines will be truncated instead of wrapped to the next line.

-x, --exec

Pass command to exec(2) instead of sh -c which reduces the need to use extra quoting to get the desired effect.

-h, --help

Display help text and exit.

-v, --version

Display version information and exit.

EXIT STATUS

- 0 Success.
- 1 Various failures.
- 2 Forking the process to watch failed.
- 3 Replacing child process stdout with write side pipe failed.

- 4 Command execution failed.
- 5 Closing child process write pipe failed.
- 7 IPC pipe creation failed.
- 8 Getting child process return value with waitpid(2) failed, or command exited up on error.

other The watch will propagate command exit status as child exit status.

ENVIRONMENT

The behavior of watch is affected by the following environment variables.

WATCH_INTERVAL

Update interval, follows the same rules as the --interval command line option.

NOTES

POSIX option processing is used (i.e., option processing stops at the first non-option argument). This means that flags after command don't get interpreted by watch itself.

BUGS

Upon terminal resize, the screen will not be correctly repainted until the next scheduled update. All --differences highlighting is lost on that update as well. When using the --no-rerun option, no output will be visible.

Non-printing characters are stripped from program output. Use cat -v as part of the command pipeline if you want to see them.

Combining Characters that are supposed to display on the character at the last column on the screen may display one column early, or they may not display at all.

Combining Characters never count as different in --differences mode. Only the base character counts.

Blank lines directly after a line which ends in the last column do not display.

--precise mode doesn't yet have advanced temporal distortion technology to compensate for a command that takes more than --interval seconds to execute. watch also can get into a state where it rapid-fires as many executions of command as it can to catch up from a previous executions running longer than --interval (for example, netstat(8) taking ages on a DNS lookup).

EXAMPLES

To watch for mail, you might do

```
watch -n 60 from
```

To watch the contents of a directory change, you could use

```
watch -d ls -l
```

If you're only interested in files owned by user joe, you might use

```
watch -d 'ls -l | fgrep joe'
```

To see the effects of quoting, try these out

```
watch echo $$
```

```
watch echo '$$'
```

```
watch echo ""$$""
```

To see the effect of precision time keeping, try adding -p to

```
watch -n 10 sleep 1
```

You can watch for your administrator to install the latest kernel with

```
watch uname -r
```

(Note that -p isn't guaranteed to work across reboots, especially in the face of ntpdate (if present) or other bootup time-changing mechanisms)

REPORTING BUGS

Please send bug reports to procps@freelists.org

procps-ng

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