

NAME

`rcs` – change RCS file attributes

SYNOPSIS

`rcs options file ...`

DESCRIPTION

`rcs` creates new RCS files or changes attributes of existing ones. An RCS file contains multiple revisions of text, an access list, a change log, descriptive text, and some control attributes. For `rcs` to work, the caller's login name must be on the access list, except if the access list is empty, the caller is the owner of the file or the superuser, or the `-i` option is present.

Pathnames matching an RCS suffix denote RCS files; all others denote working files. Names are paired as explained in `ci(1)`. Revision numbers use the syntax described in `ci(1)`.

OPTIONS

- i** Create and initialize a new RCS file, but do not deposit any revision. If the RCS file has no path prefix, try to place it first into the subdirectory `./RCS`, and then into the current directory. If the RCS file already exists, print an error message.
- alogins** Append the login names appearing in the comma-separated list *logins* to the access list of the RCS file.
- Aoldfile** Append the access list of *oldfile* to the access list of the RCS file.
- e[logins]** Erase the login names appearing in the comma-separated list *logins* from the access list of the RCS file. If *logins* is omitted, erase the entire access list.
- b[rev]** Set the default branch to *rev*. If *rev* is omitted, the default branch is reset to the (dynamically) highest branch on the trunk.
- cstring** Set the comment leader to *string*. An initial `ci`, or an `rcs -i` without `-c`, guesses the comment leader from the suffix of the working filename.

This option is obsolescent, since RCS normally uses the preceding `Log` line's prefix when inserting log lines during checkout (see `co(1)`). However, older versions of RCS use the comment leader instead of the `Log` line's prefix, so if you plan to access a file with both old and new versions of RCS, make sure its comment leader matches its `Log` line prefix.
- ksubst** Set the default keyword substitution to *subst*. The effect of keyword substitution is described in `co(1)`. Giving an explicit `-k` option to `co`, `rcsdiff`, and `rcsmerge` overrides this default. Beware `rcs -kv`, because `-kv` is incompatible with `co -l`. Use `rcs -kkv` to restore the normal default keyword substitution.
- l[rev]** Lock the revision with number *rev*. If a branch is given, lock the latest revision on that branch. If *rev* is omitted, lock the latest revision on the default branch. Locking prevents overlapping changes. If someone else already holds the lock, the lock is broken as with `rcs -u` (see below).
- u[rev]** Unlock the revision with number *rev*. If a branch is given, unlock the latest revision on that branch. If *rev* is omitted, remove the latest lock held by the caller. Normally, only the locker of a revision can unlock it. Somebody else unlocking a revision breaks the lock. This causes a mail message to be sent to the original locker. The message contains a commentary solicited from the breaker. The commentary is terminated by end-of-file or by a line containing `.` by itself.
- L** Set locking to *strict*. Strict locking means that the owner of an RCS file is not exempt from locking for checkin. This option should be used for files that are shared.

- U** Set locking to non-strict. Non-strict locking means that the owner of a file need not lock a revision for checkin. This option should *not* be used for files that are shared. Whether default locking is strict is determined by your system administrator, but it is normally strict.
- mrev:msg**
Replace revision *rev*'s log message with *msg*.
- M** Do not send mail when breaking somebody else's lock. This option is not meant for casual use; it is meant for programs that warn users by other means, and invoke **rcs -u** only as a low-level lock-breaking operation.
- nname[:[rev]]**
Associate the symbolic name *name* with the branch or revision *rev*. Delete the symbolic name if both **:** and *rev* are omitted; otherwise, print an error message if *name* is already associated with another number. If *rev* is symbolic, it is expanded before association. A *rev* consisting of a branch number followed by a **.** stands for the current latest revision in the branch. A **:** with an empty *rev* stands for the current latest revision on the default branch, normally the trunk. For example, **rcs -nname: RCS/*** associates *name* with the current latest revision of all the named RCS files; this contrasts with **rcs -nname:\$ RCS/*** which associates *name* with the revision numbers extracted from keyword strings in the corresponding working files.
- Nname[:[rev]]**
Act like **-n**, except override any previous assignment of *name*.
- orange**
deletes ("outdates") the revisions given by *range*. A range consisting of a single revision number means that revision. A range consisting of a branch number means the latest revision on that branch. A range of the form *rev1:rev2* means revisions *rev1* to *rev2* on the same branch, **:rev** means from the beginning of the branch containing *rev* up to and including *rev*, and *rev:* means from revision *rev* to the end of the branch containing *rev*. None of the outdated revisions can have branches or locks.
- q** Run quietly; do not print diagnostics.
- I** Run interactively, even if the standard input is not a terminal.
- sstate[:rev]**
Set the state attribute of the revision *rev* to *state*. If *rev* is a branch number, assume the latest revision on that branch. If *rev* is omitted, assume the latest revision on the default branch. Any identifier is acceptable for *state*. A useful set of states is **Exp** (for experimental), **Stab** (for stable), and **Rel** (for released). By default, **ci(1)** sets the state of a revision to **Exp**.
- t[file]** Write descriptive text from the contents of the named *file* into the RCS file, deleting the existing text. The *file* pathname cannot begin with **-**. If *file* is omitted, obtain the text from standard input, terminated by end-of-file or by a line containing **.** by itself. Prompt for the text if interaction is possible; see **-I**. With **-i**, descriptive text is obtained even if **-t** is not given.
- t-string**
Write descriptive text from the *string* into the RCS file, deleting the existing text.
- T** Preserve the modification time on the RCS file unless a revision is removed. This option can suppress extensive recompilation caused by a **make(1)** dependency of some copy of the working file on the RCS file. Use this option with care; it can suppress recompilation even when it is needed, i.e. when a change to the RCS file would mean a change to keyword strings in the working file.
- V** Print RCS's version number.
- Vn** Emulate RCS version *n*. See **co(1)** for details.
- xsuffixes**
Use *suffixes* to characterize RCS files. See **ci(1)** for details.

-zzone Use *zone* as the default time zone. This option has no effect; it is present for compatibility with other RCS commands.

At least one explicit option must be given, to ensure compatibility with future planned extensions to the **rcs** command.

COMPATIBILITY

The **-brev** option generates an RCS file that cannot be parsed by RCS version 3 or earlier.

The **-ksubst** options (except **-kkv**) generate an RCS file that cannot be parsed by RCS version 4 or earlier.

Use **rcs -Vn** to make an RCS file acceptable to RCS version *n* by discarding information that would confuse version *n*.

RCS version 5.5 and earlier does not support the **-x** option, and requires a **,v** suffix on an RCS pathname.

FILES

rcs accesses files much as **ci(1)** does, except that it uses the effective user for all accesses, it does not write the working file or its directory, and it does not even read the working file unless a revision number of **\$** is specified.

ENVIRONMENT

RCSINIT

options prepended to the argument list, separated by spaces. See **ci(1)** for details.

DIAGNOSTICS

The RCS pathname and the revisions outdated are written to the diagnostic output. The exit status is zero if and only if all operations were successful.

IDENTIFICATION

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SEE ALSO

rcsintro(1), **co(1)**, **ci(1)**, **ident(1)**, **rcsclean(1)**, **rcsdiff(1)**, **rcsmerge(1)**, **rlog(1)**, **rcsfile(5)**

Walter F. Tichy, RCS—A System for Version Control, *Software—Practice & Experience* **15**, 7 (July 1985), 637-654.

BUGS

A catastrophe (e.g. a system crash) can cause RCS to leave behind a semaphore file that causes later invocations of RCS to claim that the RCS file is in use. To fix this, remove the semaphore file. A semaphore file's name typically begins with **,** or ends with **_**.

The separator for revision ranges in the **-o** option used to be **-** instead of **:**, but this leads to confusion when symbolic names contain **-**. For backwards compatibility **rcs -o** still supports the old **-** separator, but it warns about this obsolete use.

Symbolic names need not refer to existing revisions or branches. For example, the **-o** option does not remove symbolic names for the outdated revisions; you must use **-n** to remove the names.