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### ***Rocky Enterprise Linux 9.2 Manual Pages on command 'random.3'***

#### ***\$ man random.3***

RANDOM(3)                      Linux Programmer's Manual                      RANDOM(3)

#### NAME

random, srandom, initstate, setstate - random number generator

#### SYNOPSIS

```
#include <stdlib.h>

long random(void);

void srandom(unsigned seed);

char *initstate(unsigned seed, char *state, size_t n);

char *setstate(char *state);
```

Feature Test Macro Requirements for glibc (see feature\_test\_macros(7)):

```
random(), srandom(), initstate(), setstate():

_XOPEN_SOURCE >= 500

    /* Glibc since 2.19: */ _DEFAULT_SOURCE

    /* Glibc versions <= 2.19: */ _SVID_SOURCE || _BSD_SOURCE
```

#### DESCRIPTION

The random() function uses a nonlinear additive feedback random number generator employing a default table of size 31 long integers to return successive pseudo-random numbers in the range from 0 to  $2^{31} - 1$ . The period of this random number generator is very large, approximately  $16 * ((2^{31}) - 1)$ .

The srandom() function sets its argument as the seed for a new sequence of pseudo-random integers to be returned by random(). These sequences are repeatable by calling srandom() with the same seed value. If no seed value is provided, the random() function is automatically seeded with a value of 1.

The `initstate()` function allows a state array `state` to be initialized for use by `random()`.

The size of the state array `n` is used by `initstate()` to decide how sophisticated a random number generator it should use?the larger the state array, the better the random numbers will be. Current "optimal" values for the size of the state array `n` are 8, 32, 64, 128, and 256 bytes; other amounts will be rounded down to the nearest known amount. Using less than 8 bytes results in an error. `seed` is the seed for the initialization, which specifies a starting point for the random number sequence, and provides for restarting at the same point.

The `setstate()` function changes the state array used by the `random()` function. The state array `state` is used for random number generation until the next call to `initstate()` or `setstate()`. `state` must first have been initialized using `initstate()` or be the result of a previous call of `setstate()`.

#### RETURN VALUE

The `random()` function returns a value between 0 and  $(2^{31}) - 1$ . The `srandom()` function returns no value.

The `initstate()` function returns a pointer to the previous state array. On error, `errno` is set to indicate the cause.

On success, `setstate()` returns a pointer to the previous state array. On error, it returns `NULL`, with `errno` set to indicate the cause of the error.

#### ERRORS

`EINVAL` The state argument given to `setstate()` was `NULL`.

`EINVAL` A state array of less than 8 bytes was specified to `initstate()`.

#### ATTRIBUTES

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

??

?Interface            ? Attribute   ? Value   ?

??

?`random()`, `srandom()`,   ? Thread safety ? MT-Safe ?

?`initstate()`, `setstate()` ?            ?            ?

??

#### CONFORMING TO

POSIX.1-2001, POSIX.1-2008, 4.3BSD.

#### NOTES

The `random()` function should not be used in multithreaded programs where reproducible behavior is required. Use `random_r(3)` for that purpose.

Random-number generation is a complex topic. *Numerical Recipes in C: The Art of Scientific Computing* (William H. Press, Brian P. Flannery, Saul A. Teukolsky, William T. Vetterling; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007, 3rd ed.) provides an excellent discussion of practical random-number generation issues in Chapter 7 (Random Numbers). For a more theoretical discussion which also covers many practical issues in depth, see Chapter 3 (Random Numbers) in Donald E. Knuth's *The Art of Computer Programming, volume 2 (Seminumerical Algorithms)*, 2nd ed.; Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1981.

## BUGS

According to POSIX, `initstate()` should return `NULL` on error. In the glibc implementation, `errno` is (as specified) set on error, but the function does not return `NULL`.

## SEE ALSO

`getrandom(2)`, `drand48(3)`, `rand(3)`, `random_r(3)`, `srand(3)`

## 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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