Red Hat Enterprise Linux Release 9.2 Manual Pages on 'clear.1' command

$ man clear.1

clear(1)   General Commands Manual   clear(1)

NAME

 clear - clear the terminal screen

SYNOPSIS

 clear [-Ttype] [-V] [-x]

DESCRIPTION

 clear clears your screen if this is possible, including its scrollback

 buffer (if the extended ?E3? capability is defined).   clear looks in

 the environment for the terminal type given by the environment variable

 TERM, and then in the terminfo database to determine how to clear the

 screen.

 clear writes to the standard output. You can redirect the standard

 output to a file (which prevents clear from actually clearing the

 screen), and later cat the file to the screen, clearing it at that

 point.

OPTIONS

 -T type

  indicates the type of terminal. Normally this option is unneces?

  sary, because the default is taken from the environment variable

  TERM. If -T is specified, then the shell variables LINES and COL?

  UMNS will also be ignored.

 -V   reports the version of ncurses which was used in this program, and

  exits. The options are as follows:

-x   do not attempt to clear the terminal's scrollback buffer using the

    extended ?E3? capability.

HISTORY

    A clear command appeared in 2.79BSD dated February 24, 1979. Later

    that was provided in Unix 8th edition (1985).

    AT&T adapted a different BSD program (tset) to make a new command

    (tput), and used this to replace the clear command with a shell script

    which calls tput clear, e.g.,

      /usr/bin/tput ${1:+-T$1} clear 2> /dev/null

      exit

    In 1989, when Keith Bostic revised the BSD tput command to make it sim?

    ilar to the AT&T tput, he added a shell script for the clear command:

      exec tput clear

    The remainder of the script in each case is a copyright notice.

    The ncurses clear command began in 1995 by adapting the original BSD

    clear command (with terminfo, of course).

    The E3 extension came later:

    ?   In June 1999, xterm provided an extension to the standard control

      sequence for clearing the screen. Rather than clearing just the

      visible part of the screen using

        printf '\033[2J'

      one could clear the scrollback using

        printf '\033[3J'

      This is documented in XTerm Control Sequences as a feature origi?

      nating with xterm.

    ?   A few other terminal developers adopted the feature, e.g., PuTTY in

      2006.

    ?   In April 2011, a Red Hat developer submitted a patch to the Linux

      kernel, modifying its console driver to do the same thing. The

      Linux change, part of the 3.0 release, did not mention xterm, al?

      though it was cited in the Red Hat bug report (#683733) which led

      to the change.

    ?   Again, a few other terminal developers adopted the feature. But

the next relevant step was a change to the clear program in 2013 to incorporate this extension.

? In 2013, the E3 extension was overlooked in tput with the ?clear? parameter. That was addressed in 2016 by reorganizing tput to share its logic with clear and tset.

PORTABILITY

Neither IEEE Std 1003.1/The Open Group Base Specifications Issue 7 (POSIX.1-2008) nor X/Open Curses Issue 7 documents tset or reset. The latter documents tput, which could be used to replace this utility either via a shell script or by an alias (such as a symbolic link) to run tput as clear.

SEE ALSO

tput(1), terminfo(5)

This describes ncurses version 6.2 (patch 20210508).

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