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

$ 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

-d, --differences[=permanent]

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

-n, --interval seconds

Specify update interval. The command will not allow quicker than 0.1 second interval, in which the smaller values are con? verted. Both '.' and ',' work for any locales. The WATCH_INTER? VAL 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 ntptime (if present) and notice how the fractional sec?

onds stays (nearly) the same, as opposed to normal mode where

they continuously increase.

-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.

-b, --beep

Beep if command has a non-zero exit.

-e, --errexit

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

-g, --chgexit

Exit when the output of command changes.

-c, --color

Interpret ANSI color and style sequences.

-x, --exec

Pass command to exec(2) instead of sh -c which reduces the need

to use extra quoting to get the desired effect.

-w, --no-linewrap

Turn off line wrapping. Long lines will be truncated instead of

wrapped to the next line.

-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 behaviour of watch is affected by the following environment vari? ables.

WATCH_INTERVAL

Update interval, follows the same rules as the --interval com? mand 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.

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 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 mecha? nisms)