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Red Hat Enterprise Linux Release 9.2 Manual Pages on 'whatis.man-db.1' command

\$ man whatis.man-db.1

WHATIS(1) Manual pager utils WHATIS(1)

NAME

whatis - display one-line manual page descriptions

SYNOPSIS

```
whatis [-dlv?V] [-r|-w] [-s list] [-m system[,...]] [-M path] [-L lo?
cale] [-C file] name ...
```

DESCRIPTION

Each manual page has a short description available within it. `whatis` searches the manual page names and displays the manual page descriptions of any name matched.

`name` may contain wildcards (`-w`) or be a regular expression (`-r`). Using these options, it may be necessary to quote the name or escape (`\`) the special characters to stop the shell from interpreting them.

index databases are used during the search, and are updated by the `mandb` program. Depending on your installation, this may be run by a periodic cron job, or may need to be run manually after new manual pages have been installed. To produce an old style text `whatis` data?

base from the relative index database, issue the command:

```
whatis -M manpath -w '*' | sort > manpath/whatis
```

where `manpath` is a manual page hierarchy such as `/usr/man`.

OPTIONS

`-d, --debug`

Print debugging information.

`-v, --verbose`

Print verbose warning messages.

`-r, --regex`

Interpret each name as a regular expression. If a name matches any part of a page name, a match will be made. This option causes whatis to be somewhat slower due to the nature of database searches.

`-w, --wildcard`

Interpret each name as a pattern containing shell style wildcards. For a match to be made, an expanded name must match the entire page name. This option causes whatis to be somewhat slower due to the nature of database searches.

`-l, --long`

Do not trim output to the terminal width. Normally, output will be truncated to the terminal width to avoid ugly results from poorly-written NAME sections.

`-s list, --sections=list, --section=list`

Search only the given manual sections. list is a colon- or comma-separated list of sections. If an entry in list is a simple section, for example "3", then the displayed list of descriptions will include pages in sections "3", "3perl", "3x", and so on; while if an entry in list has an extension, for example "3perl", then the list will only include pages in that exact part of the manual section.

`-m system[,...], --systems=system[,...]`

If this system has access to other operating system's manual page names, they can be accessed using this option. To search NewOS's manual page names, use the option `-m NewOS`.

The system specified can be a combination of comma delimited operating system names. To include a search of the native operating system's manual page names, include the system name in the argument string. This option will override the `$SYSTEM` environment variable.

`-M path, --manpath=path`

Specify an alternate set of colon-delimited manual page hierarchies to search. By default, `whatis` uses the `$MANPATH` environment variable, unless it is empty or unset, in which case it will determine an appropriate `manpath` based on your `$PATH` environment variable. This option overrides the contents of `$MANPATH`.

`-L locale, --locale=locale`

`whatis` will normally determine your current locale by a call to the C function `setlocale(3)` which interrogates various environment variables, possibly including `$LC_MESSAGES` and `$LANG`. To temporarily override the determined value, use this option to supply a locale string directly to `whatis`. Note that it will not take effect until the search for pages actually begins. Output such as the help message will always be displayed in the initially determined locale.

`-C file, --config-file=file`

Use this user configuration file rather than the default of `~/.manpath`.

`-?, --help`

Print a help message and exit.

`--usage`

Print a short usage message and exit.

`-V, --version`

Display version information.

EXIT STATUS

- 0 Successful program execution.
- 1 Usage, syntax or configuration file error.
- 2 Operational error.
- 16 Nothing was found that matched the criteria specified.

ENVIRONMENT

`SYSTEM` If `$SYSTEM` is set, it will have the same effect as if it had been specified as the argument to the `-m` option.

MANPATH

If \$MANPATH is set, its value is interpreted as the colon-delimited manual page hierarchy search path to use.

MANWIDTH

If \$MANWIDTH is set, its value is used as the terminal width (see the --long option). If it is not set, the terminal width will be calculated using the value of \$COLUMNS, and ioctl(2) if available, or falling back to 80 characters if all else fails.

FILES

/usr/share/man/index.(bt|db|dir|pag)

A traditional global index database cache.

/var/cache/man/index.(bt|db|dir|pag)

An FHS compliant global index database cache.

/usr/share/man/.../whatis

A traditional whatis text database.

SEE ALSO

apropos(1), man(1), mandb(8)

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BUGS

<https://savannah.nongnu.org/bugs/?group=man-db>

2.9.3

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