

**NAME**

**cat** – concatenate and print files

**SYNOPSIS**

**cat** [ **-befnstuv** ] [ **-** ] [*file* ...]

**DESCRIPTION**

The **cat** utility reads files sequentially, writing them to the standard output. The *file* operands are processed in command line order. A single dash represents the standard input, and may appear multiple times in the *file* list.

The word “concatenate” is just a verbose synonym for “catenate”.

The options are as follows:

- b**     Implies the **-n** option but doesn't number blank lines.
- e**     Implies the **-v** option, and displays a dollar sign ( '\$' ) at the end of each line as well.
- f**     Only attempt to display plain files.
- n**     Number the output lines, starting at 1.
- s**     Squeeze multiple adjacent empty lines, causing the output to be single spaced.
- t**     Implies the **-v** option, and displays tab characters as '^I' as well.
- u**     The **-u** option guarantees that the output is unbuffered.
- v**     Displays non-printing characters so they are visible. Control characters print as '^X' for control-X; the delete character (octal 0177) prints as '^?' Non-ascii characters (with the high bit set) are printed as 'M-' (for meta) followed by the character for the low 7 bits.

The **cat** utility exits 0 on success, and >0 if an error occurs.

**BUGS**

Because of the shell language mechanism used to perform output redirection, the command “**cat file1 file2 > file1**” will cause the original data in file1 to be destroyed! This is performed by the shell before **cat** is run.

**SEE ALSO**

**head(1)**, **hexdump(1)**, **lpr(1)**, **more(1)**, **pr(1)**, **tail(1)**, **view(1)**, **vis(1)**

Rob Pike, "UNIX Style, or cat -v Considered Harmful", *USENIX Summer Conference Proceedings*, 1983.

**HISTORY**

A **cat** utility appeared in Version 1 AT&T UNIX. Dennis Ritchie designed and wrote the first man page. It appears to have been **cat(1)**.

**STANDARDS**

The **cat** utility is expected to conform to the IEEE Std 1003.2-1992 (“POSIX.2”) specification.

The flags [ **-benstv** ] are extensions to the specification.