NAME

col – reverse line-feeds filter

SYNOPSIS

col [–bfpx]

AVAILABILITY

SUNWesu

DESCRIPTION

The **col** utility reads from the standard input and writes to the standard output. It performs the line overlays implied by reverse line-feeds, and by forward and reverse half-line-feeds. Unless **–x** is used, all blank characters in the input will be converted to tab characters wherever possible. **col** is particularly useful for filtering multi-column output made with the **.rt** command of **nroff**(1) and output resulting from use of the **tbl**(1) preprocessor.

The ASCII control characters SO and SI are assumed by **col** to start and end text in an alternative character set. The character set to which each input character belongs is remembered, and on output SI and SO characters are generated as appropriate to ensure that each character is written in the correct character set.

On input, the only control characters accepted are space, backspace, tab, carriage-return and newline characters, SI, SO, VT, reverse line-feed, forward half-line-feed and reverse half-line-feed. The VT character is an alternative form of full reverse line-feed, included for compatibility with some earlier programs of this type. The only other characters to be copied to the output are those that are printable.

The ASCII codes for the control functions and line-motion sequences mentioned above are as given in the table below. ESC stands for the ASCII escape character, with the octal code 033; ESC– means a sequence of two characters, ESC followed by the character **x**.

reverse line-feed	ESC–7
reverse half-line-feed	ESC–8
forward half-line-feed	ESC–9
vertical-tab (VT)	013
start-of-text (SO)	016
end-of-text (SI)	017

OPTIONS

–b Assume that the output device in use is not capable of backspacing. In this case, if two or more characters are to appear in the same place, only the last one read will be output.

–f Although **col** accepts half-line motions in its input, it normally does not emit them on output. Instead, text that would appear between lines is moved to the next lower full-line boundary. This treatment can be suppressed by the **–f** (fine) option; in this case, the output from **col** may contain forward half-line-feeds (ESC-9), but will still never contain either kind of reverse line motion.

–p Normally, **col** will ignore any escape sequences unknown to it that are found in its input; the **–p** option may be used to cause **col** to output these sequences as regular characters, subject to overprinting from reverse line motions. The use of this option is highly discouraged unless the user is fully aware of the textual position of the escape sequences.

−x Prevent **col** from converting blank characters to tab characters on output wherever possible. Tab stops are considered to be at each column position *n* such that *n* modulo 8 equals 1.

ENVIRONMENT

See **environ**(5) for descriptions of the following environment variables that affect the execution of **col**: **LC_CTYPE**, **LC_MESSAGES**, and **NLSPATH**.

EXIT STATUS

The following error values are returned:

0 Successful completion.

>0 An error occurred.

SEE ALSO

nroff(1), **tbl**(1), **ascii**(5), **environ**(5)

NOTES

The input format accepted by **col** matches the output produced by **nroff** with either the −**T37** or −**Tlp** options. Use −**T37** (and the −**f** option of **col**) if the ultimate disposition of the output of **col** will be a device that can interpret half-line motions, and −**Tlp** otherwise.

col cannot back up more than 128 lines or handle more than 800 characters per line.

Local vertical motions that would result in backing up over the first line of the document are ignored. As a result, the first line must not have any superscripts.