NAME

chown - change file owner and group

SYNOPSIS

chown [**-fhvx**] [**-R** [**-H** | **-L** | **-P**]] *owner*[:*group*] *file ...*
chown [**-fhvx**] [**-R** [**-H** | **-L** | **-P**]] :*group file ...*

DESCRIPTION

The **chown** utility changes the user ID and/or the group ID of the specified files. Symbolic links named by arguments are silently left unchanged unless **-h** is used.

The options are as follows:

-H If the **-R** option is specified, symbolic links on the command line are followed and hence unaffected by the command. (Symbolic links encountered during traversal are not followed.)

-L If the **-R** option is specified, all symbolic links are followed.

-P If the **-R** option is specified, no symbolic links are followed. This is the default.

-R Change the user ID and/or the group ID of the file hierarchies rooted in the files, instead of just the files themselves. Beware of unintentionally matching the ".." hard link to the parent directory when using wildcards like ".*".

-f Do not report any failure to change file owner or group, nor modify the exit status to reflect such failures.

-h If the file is a symbolic link, change the user ID and/or the group ID of the link itself.

-v Cause **chown** to be verbose, showing files as the owner is modified. If the **-v** flag is specified more than once, **chown** will print the filename, followed by the old and new numeric user/group ID.

-x File system mount points are not traversed.

The **-H**, **-L** and **-P** options are ignored unless the **-R** option is specified. In addition, these options override each other and the command's actions are determined by the last one specified.

The *owner* and *group* operands are both optional, however, one must be specified. If the *group* operand is specified, it must be preceded by a colon (‘‘:’’) character.

The *owner* may be either a numeric user ID or a user name. If a user name is also a numeric user ID, the operand is used as a user name. The *group* may be either a numeric group ID or a group name. If a group name is also a numeric group ID, the operand is used as a group name.

The ownership of a file may only be altered by a super-user for obvious security reasons.

If **chown** receives a SIGINFO signal (see the **status** argument for stty(1)), then the current filename as well as the old and new file owner and group are displayed.

EXIT STATUS

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

COMPATIBILITY

Previous versions of the **chown** utility used the dot (‘‘.’’) character to distinguish the group name. This has been changed to be a colon (‘‘:’’) character so that user and group names may contain the dot character.

On previous versions of this system, symbolic links did not have owners.

The **-v** and **-x** options are non-standard and their use in scripts is not recommended.

SEE ALSO

chgrp(1), chmod(1), find(1), chown(2), fts(3), symlink(7)

STANDARDS

The **chown** utility is expected to be IEEE Std 1003.2 ("POSIX.2") compliant.

HISTORY

A **chown** utility appeared in Version 1 AT&T UNIX.