

NAME

group - format of the group permissions file

DESCRIPTION

The **group** file is the local source of group information. It can be used in conjunction with the Hesiod domain 'group', and the NIS maps 'group.byname' and 'group.bygid', as controlled by `nsswitch.conf(5)`.

The file **group** consists of newline separated ASCII records, one per group, containing four colon ':' separated fields. These fields are as follows:

group	Name of the group.
passwd	Group's <i>encrypted</i> password.
gid	The group's decimal ID.
member	Group members.

Lines whose first non-whitespace character is a pound-sign (#) are comments, and are ignored. Blank lines that consist only of spaces, tabs or newlines are also ignored.

The *group* field is the group name used for granting file access to users who are members of the group. The *gid* field is the number associated with the group name. They should both be unique across the system (and often across a group of systems) since they control file access. The *passwd* field is an optional *encrypted* password. This field is rarely used and an asterisk is normally placed in it rather than leaving it blank. The *member* field contains the names of users granted the privileges of *group*. The member names are separated by commas without spaces or newlines. A user is automatically in a group if that group was specified in their `/etc/passwd` entry and does not need to be added to that group in the **group** file.

IMPLEMENTATION NOTES

The `passwd(1)` command does not change the **group** passwords. The `pw(8)` utility's **groupmod** command should be used instead.

LIMITS

There are various limitations which are explained in the function where they occur; see section *SEE ALSO*.

In older implementations, a group cannot have more than 200 members. The maximum line length of `/etc/group` is 1024 characters. Longer lines will be skipped. This limitation disappeared in FreeBSD 3.0. Older binaries that are statically linked, depend on old shared libraries, or non-FreeBSD binaries in compatibility mode may still have this limit.

FILES

/etc/group

SEE ALSO

newgrp(1), passwd(1), setgroups(2), crypt(3), getgrent(3), initgroups(3), nsswitch.conf(5), passwd(5),
chkgrp(8), pw(8), yp(8)

HISTORY

A **group** file format appeared in Version 6 AT&T UNIX. Support for comments first appeared in FreeBSD 3.0.