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 *encrypted* 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.