

HOWTO: Create or Modify a Message Catalog

Contributed by Michael Felt

Message Catalogs are used to separate the text messages from programs or applications. This simplifies the problem of supporting multiple languages and/or codesets. The AIX Message Facility calls the individual files - message catalogs.

A Message Catalog is one or more sets of message strings and is stored in a binary format.

Modifying Language Files

AIX messages are not stored in the programs, but are stored as a separate resource

(NLS - National Language Support). Each family of applications

has what is called a message catalog and the file name has .cat as its suffix.

For each translation there is a separate directory - /usr/lib/nls/msg/\${LANG}.

AIX supports multiple languages at run-time.

Unknown to most, catalogs can be modified. The most dangerous of modifying these system files is that your modification might get overwritten by a software update. However, if you either create a separate LANG directory, or just keep your modifications well documented, it should not be a problem.

For examining and modifying language files - or creating a new one for an application!

- the programs needed are:

dspmsg: display a single message, or a default message if it can't be found in a catalog

dspcat: display the entire catalog

gencat: create a binary message catalog from a textual message file

Messages catalogs consist of one or more sets of message strings:

Usage: dspmsg [-s SetNumber] CatalogName MessageNumber ['default' [Argument...]]

If there is only one set of messages the SetNumber argument can be omitted. If there is more than one message set, and the argument is not provided, the first set is displayed.

compare these commands:

```
dspmsg -s 1 smit 3 #display message 3 from set 1
```

```
dspmsg -s 3 smit 1 #display message 1 from set 3
```

```
dspmsg smit 1
```

```
dspmsg smit 3
```

Modifying existing catalogs.

The easiest way to accomplish this is to use dspcat to output the entire catalog to a textfile and edit that. I recommend editing a copy of that file, so you can easily compare differences (using diff for example).

For this example I am going to modify the tsm catalog to change the login and password messages of the login program.

1. dspcat tsm >tsm_orig.msg
2. cp tsm_orig.msg tsm_new.msg
3. vi tsm_new.msg
4. diff tsm_orig.msg tsm_new.msg
5. gencat tsm_new.msg >tsm.cat
6. cp tsm.cat /usr/lib/nls/msg/en_US

Output of the diff command shows I edited three of the messages in set 1

```
michael@x054:[/home/michael/messages]diff tsm_new.msg tsm_orig.msg
```

```
1,2c1,2
```

```
< 1 : 1 Identity:
```

```
< 1 : 2 %s's Authentication:
```

```
---
```

```
> 1 : 1 login:
```

```
> 1 : 2 %s's Password:
```

```
147,148c147
```

Authorized use only:

Identifier:

login:

176,177c175

Authorized Console use only:

Identifier:

Console login:

michael@x054:[/home/michael/msgs]