

NAME

link, linkat – make a new name for a file

SYNOPSIS

```
#include <unistd.h>

int link(const char *oldpath, const char *newpath);

#include <fcntl.h>      /* Definition of AT_* constants */
#include <unistd.h>

int linkat(int olddirfd, const char *oldpath,
           int newdirfd, const char *newpath, int flags);
```

Feature Test Macro Requirements for glibc (see [feature_test_macros\(7\)](#)):

```
linkat():
    Since glibc 2.10:
        _POSIX_C_SOURCE >= 200809L
    Before glibc 2.10:
        _ATFILE_SOURCE
```

DESCRIPTION

link() creates a new link (also known as a hard link) to an existing file.

If *newpath* exists, it will *not* be overwritten.

This new name may be used exactly as the old one for any operation; both names refer to the same file (and so have the same permissions and ownership) and it is impossible to tell which name was the "original".

linkat()

The **linkat()** system call operates in exactly the same way as **link()**, except for the differences described here.

If the pathname given in *oldpath* is relative, then it is interpreted relative to the directory referred to by the file descriptor *olddirfd* (rather than relative to the current working directory of the calling process, as is done by **link()** for a relative pathname).

If *oldpath* is relative and *olddirfd* is the special value **AT_FDCWD**, then *oldpath* is interpreted relative to the current working directory of the calling process (like **link()**).

If *oldpath* is absolute, then *olddirfd* is ignored.

The interpretation of *newpath* is as for *oldpath*, except that a relative pathname is interpreted relative to the directory referred to by the file descriptor *newdirfd*.

The following values can be bitwise ORed in *flags*:

AT_EMPTY_PATH (since Linux 2.6.39)

If *oldpath* is an empty string, create a link to the file referenced by *olddirfd* (which may have been obtained using the [open\(2\)](#) **O_PATH** flag). In this case, *olddirfd* can refer to any type of file except a directory. This will generally not work if the file has a link count of zero (files created with **O_TMPFILE** and without **O_EXCL** are an exception). The caller must have the **CAP_DAC_READ_SEARCH** capability in order to use this flag. This flag is Linux-specific; define **_GNU_SOURCE** to obtain its definition.

AT_SYMLINK_FOLLOW (since Linux 2.6.18)

By default, **linkat()**, does not dereference *oldpath* if it is a symbolic link (like **link()**). The flag **AT_SYMLINK_FOLLOW** can be specified in *flags* to cause *oldpath* to be dereferenced if it is a symbolic link. If *procfs* is mounted, this can be used as an alternative to **AT_EMPTY_PATH**, like this:

```
linkat(AT_FDCWD, "/proc/self/fd/<fd>", newdirfd,
      newname, AT_SYMLINK_FOLLOW);
```

Before kernel 2.6.18, the *flags* argument was unused, and had to be specified as 0.

See [openat\(2\)](#) for an explanation of the need for **linkat()**.

RETURN VALUE

On success, zero is returned. On error, `-1` is returned, and *errno* is set appropriately.

ERRORS

EACCES

Write access to the directory containing *newpath* is denied, or search permission is denied for one of the directories in the path prefix of *oldpath* or *newpath*. (See also [path_resolution\(7\)](#).)

EDQUOT

The user's quota of disk blocks on the filesystem has been exhausted.

EEXIST

newpath already exists.

EFAULT

oldpath or *newpath* points outside your accessible address space.

EIO

An I/O error occurred.

ELOOP

Too many symbolic links were encountered in resolving *oldpath* or *newpath*.

EMLINK

The file referred to by *oldpath* already has the maximum number of links to it. For example, on an [ext4\(5\)](#) filesystem that does not employ the *dir_index* feature, the limit on the number of hard links to a file is 65,000; on [btrfs\(5\)](#), the limit is 65,535 links.

ENAMETOOLONG

oldpath or *newpath* was too long.

ENOENT

A directory component in *oldpath* or *newpath* does not exist or is a dangling symbolic link.

ENOMEM

Insufficient kernel memory was available.

ENOSPC

The device containing the file has no room for the new directory entry.

ENOTDIR

A component used as a directory in *oldpath* or *newpath* is not, in fact, a directory.

EPERM

oldpath is a directory.

EPERM

The filesystem containing *oldpath* and *newpath* does not support the creation of hard links.

EPERM (since Linux 3.6)

The caller does not have permission to create a hard link to this file (see the description of */proc/sys/fs/protected_hardlinks* in [proc\(5\)](#)).

EPERM

oldpath is marked immutable or append-only. (See [ioctl_iflags\(2\)](#).)

EROFS

The file is on a read-only filesystem.

EXDEV

oldpath and *newpath* are not on the same mounted filesystem. (Linux permits a filesystem to be mounted at multiple points, but **link()** does not work across different mount points, even if the same filesystem is mounted on both.)

The following additional errors can occur for **linkat()**:

EBADF

olddirfd or *newdirfd* is not a valid file descriptor.

EINVAL

An invalid flag value was specified in *flags*.

ENOENT

AT_EMPTY_PATH was specified in *flags*, but the caller did not have the **CAP_DAC_READ_SEARCH** capability.

ENOENT

An attempt was made to link to the */proc/self/fd/NN* file corresponding to a file descriptor created with

```
open(path, O_TMPFILE | O_EXCL, mode);
```

See [open\(2\)](#).

ENOENT

oldpath is a relative pathname and *olddirfd* refers to a directory that has been deleted, or *newpath* is a relative pathname and *newdirfd* refers to a directory that has been deleted.

ENOTDIR

oldpath is relative and *olddirfd* is a file descriptor referring to a file other than a directory; or similar for *newpath* and *newdirfd*

EPERM

AT_EMPTY_PATH was specified in *flags*, *oldpath* is an empty string, and *olddirfd* refers to a directory.

VERSIONS

linkat() was added to Linux in kernel 2.6.16; library support was added to glibc in version 2.4.

CONFORMING TO

link(): SVr4, 4.3BSD, POSIX.1-2001 (but see NOTES), POSIX.1-2008.

linkat(): POSIX.1-2008.

NOTES

Hard links, as created by **link()**, cannot span filesystems. Use [symlink\(2\)](#) if this is required.

POSIX.1-2001 says that **link()** should dereference *oldpath* if it is a symbolic link. However, since kernel 2.0, Linux does not do so: if *oldpath* is a symbolic link, then *newpath* is created as a (hard) link to the same symbolic link file (i.e., *newpath* becomes a symbolic link to the same file that *oldpath* refers to). Some other implementations behave in the same manner as Linux. POSIX.1-2008 changes the specification of **link()**, making it implementation-dependent whether or not *oldpath* is dereferenced if it is a symbolic link. For precise control over the treatment of symbolic links when creating a link, use **linkat()**.

Glibc notes

On older kernels where **linkat()** is unavailable, the glibc wrapper function falls back to the use of **link()**, unless the **AT_SYMLINK_FOLLOW** is specified. When *oldpath* and *newpath* are relative pathnames, glibc constructs pathnames based on the symbolic links in */proc/self/fd* that correspond to the *olddirfd* and *newdirfd* arguments.

BUGS

On NFS filesystems, the return code may be wrong in case the NFS server performs the link creation and dies before it can say so. Use [stat\(2\)](#) to find out if the link got created.

SEE ALSO

[ln\(1\)](#), [open\(2\)](#), [rename\(2\)](#), [stat\(2\)](#), [symlink\(2\)](#), [unlink\(2\)](#), [path_resolution\(7\)](#), [symlink\(7\)](#)

COLOPHON

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