

**NAME**

runuser - run a command with substitute user and group ID

**SYNOPSIS**

**runuser** [options] **-u** *user* [--] *command* [*argument...*]

**runuser** [options] [-] [*user* [*argument...*]]

**DESCRIPTION**

**runuser** allows to run commands with a substitute user and group ID. If the option **-u** is not given, it falls back to **su**-compatible semantics and a shell is executed. The difference between the commands **runuser** and **su** is that **runuser** does not ask for a password (because it may be executed by the root user only) and it uses a different PAM configuration. The command **runuser** does not have to be installed with set-user-ID permissions.

If the PAM session is not required then recommended solution is to use **setpriv(1)** command.

When called without arguments, **runuser** defaults to running an interactive shell as *root*.

For backward compatibility, **runuser** defaults to not change the current directory and to only set the environment variables **HOME** and **SHELL** (plus **USER** and **LOGNAME** if the target *user* is not root). This version of **runuser** uses PAM for session management.

**OPTIONS**

**-c, --command=command**

Pass *command* to the shell with the **-c** option.

**-f, --fast**

Pass **-f** to the shell, which may or may not be useful depending on the shell.

**-g, --group=group**

The primary group to be used. This option is allowed for the root user only.

**-G, --supp-group=group**

Specify a supplemental group. This option is available to the root user only. The first specified supplementary group is also used as a primary group if the option **--group** is unspecified.

**-, -l, --login**

Start the shell as a login shell with an environment similar to a real login:

- o clears all the environment variables except for **TERM**
- o initializes the environment variables **HOME**, **SHELL**, **USER**, **LOGNAME**, **PATH**
- o changes to the target user's home directory
- o sets argv[0] of the shell to '-' in order to make the shell a login shell

**-m, -p, --preserve-environment**

Preserve the entire environment, i.e. it does not set **HOME**, **SHELL**, **USER** nor **LOGNAME**. The option is ignored if the option **--login** is specified.

**-s, --shell=shell**

Run the specified *shell* instead of the default. The shell to run is selected according to the following rules, in order:

- o the shell specified with **--shell**
- o the shell specified in the environment variable **SHELL** if the **--preserve-environment** option is used
- o the shell listed in the passwd entry of the target user
- o /bin/sh

If the target user has a restricted shell (i.e. not listed in /etc/shells) the **--shell** option and the **SHELL** environment variables are ignored unless the calling user is root.

- session-command=command**  
Same as **-c**, but do not create a new session. (Discouraged.)
- V, --version**  
Display version information and exit.
- h, --help**  
Display help text and exit.

## CONFIG FILES

**runuser** reads the */etc/default/runuser* and */etc/login.defs* configuration files. The following configuration items are relevant for **runuser**:

**ENV\_PATH** (string)

Defines the **PATH** environment variable for a regular user. The default value is */usr/local/bin:/bin:/usr/bin*.

**ENV\_ROOTPATH** (string)

**ENV\_SUPATH** (string)

Defines the **PATH** environment variable for root. The default value is */usr/local/sbin:/usr/local/bin:/sbin:/bin:/usr/sbin:/usr/bin*.

**ALWAYS\_SET\_PATH** (boolean)

If set to *yes* and **--login** and **--preserve-environment** were not specified **runuser** initializes **PATH**.

## EXIT STATUS

**runuser** normally returns the exit status of the command it executed. If the command was killed by a signal, **runuser** returns the number of the signal plus 128.

Exit status generated by **runuser** itself:

1	Generic error before executing the requested command
126	The requested command could not be executed
127	The requested command was not found

## FILES

<i>/etc/pam.d/runuser</i>	default PAM configuration file
<i>/etc/pam.d/runuser-l</i>	PAM configuration file if <b>--login</b> is specified
<i>/etc/default/runuser</i>	<b>runuser</b> specific logindef config file
<i>/etc/login.defs</i>	global logindef config file

## SEE ALSO

**setpriv(1)**, **su(1)**, **login.defs(5)**, **shells(5)**, **pam(8)**

## HISTORY

This **runuser** command was derived from coreutils' **su**, which was based on an implementation by David MacKenzie, and the Fedora **runuser** command by Dan Walsh.

## AVAILABILITY

The **runuser** command is part of the **util-linux** package and is available from [Linux Kernel Archive](#).