

NAME

gethostid, sethostid - get or set the unique identifier of the current host

SYNOPSIS

```
#include <unistd.h>

long gethostid(void);
int sethostid(long hostid);
```

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

```
gethostid():
    _BSD_SOURCE || _XOPEN_SOURCE >= 500 ||
    _XOPEN_SOURCE && _XOPEN_SOURCE_EXTENDED
sethostid():
    _BSD_SOURCE || (_XOPEN_SOURCE && _XOPEN_SOURCE < 500)
```

DESCRIPTION

gethostid() and **sethostid()** respectively get or set a unique 32-bit identifier for the current machine. The 32-bit identifier is intended to be unique among all UNIX systems in existence. This normally resembles the Internet address for the local machine, as returned by [gethostbyname\(3\)](#), and thus usually never needs to be set.

The **sethostid()** call is restricted to the superuser.

RETURN VALUE

gethostid() returns the 32-bit identifier for the current host as set by **sethostid()**.

On success, **sethostid()** returns 0; on error, -1 is returned, and *errno* is set to indicate the error.

ERRORS

sethostid() can fail with the following errors:

EACCES

The caller did not have permission to write to the file used to store the host ID.

EPERM

The calling process's effective user or group ID is not the same as its corresponding real ID.

CONFORMING TO

4.2BSD; these functions were dropped in 4.4BSD. SVr4 includes **gethostid()** but not **sethostid()**. POSIX.1-2001 specifies **gethostid()** but not **sethostid()**.

NOTES

In the glibc implementation, the *hostid* is stored in the file */etc/hostid*. (In glibc versions before 2.2, the file */var/adm/hostid* was used.)

In the glibc implementation, if **gethostid()** cannot open the file containing the host ID, then it obtains the hostname using [gethostname\(2\)](#), passes that hostname to [gethostbyname_r\(3\)](#) in order to obtain the host's IPv4 address, and returns a value obtained by bit-twiddling the IPv4 address. (This value may not be unique.)

BUGS

It is impossible to ensure that the identifier is globally unique.

SEE ALSO

[hostid\(1\)](#), [gethostbyname\(3\)](#)

COLOPHON

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