

NAME

ditroff - classical device independent roff

DESCRIPTION

The name *ditroff* once marked a development level of the *troff* text processing system. In actual [roff\(7\)](#) systems, the name *troff* is used as a synonym for *ditroff*.

The first roff system was written by Joe Ossanna around 1973. It supported only two output devices, the **nroff** program produced text oriented tty output, while the **troff** program generated graphical output for exactly one output device, the Wang *Graphic Systems CAT* typesetter.

In 1979, Brian Kernighan rewrote troff to support more devices by creating an intermediate output format for troff that can be fed into postprocessor programs which actually do the printout on the device. Kernighans version marks what is known as *classical troff* today. In order to distinguish it from Ossannas original mono-device version, it was called *ditroff* (*device independent troff*) on some systems, though this naming isnt mentioned in the classical documentation.

Today, any existing roff system is based on Kernighans multi-device troff. The distinction between *troff* and *ditroff* isnt necessary any longer, for each modern *troff* provides already the complete functionality of *ditroff*. On most systems, the nametr *off* is used to denote *ditroff*.

The easiest way to use ditroff is the GNU roff system, *groff*. The [groff\(1\)](#) program is a wrapper around (*di*)*troff* that automatically handles postprocessing.

SEE ALSO

[[CSTR #54](#)]

The 1992 revision of the *Nroff/Troff Users Manual* by *J. F. Ossanna* and *Brian Kernighan*, see [Bell Labs CSTR #54](#).

[[CSTR #97](#)]

A Typesetter-independent TROFF by *Brian Kernighan* is the original documentation of the first multi-device troff (*ditroff*), see [Bell Labs CSTR #97](#).

[roff\(7\)](#) This document gives details on the history and concepts of roff.

[troff\(1\)](#) The actual implementation of *ditroff*.

[groff\(1\)](#) The GNU roff program and pointers to all documentation around groff.

[groff_out\(5\)](#) The groff version of the intermediate output language, the basis for multi-devicing.

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