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tar(C) cannot save files with a path longer than 100 characters.

Keywords

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Problem

the [tar\(C\)](#) utility cannot back up a file with a pathname longer than 100 characters. Attempting to create a tar archive with input files having pathnames exceeding 100 characters results in an error:

```
tar: <long pathname> : pathname too long
```

Solution

One possible workaround is to create symbolic links for a portion of the pathname so that tar actually sees less than 100 total characters in the full path. For example, to include this file in the archive:

```
/<30 char dir name>/<40 char dir name>/<40 char filename>
```

you can create a symbolic link in the root directory:

```
ln -s /<30 char dir name>/<40 char dir name> /short_name
```

This effectively reduces the number of characters seen by tar in the first two pathname components from 72 to 11.

Thus, while in the root directory, you can create an archive of all **files** (including the 40-character long filename) in the 72-character long pathname by simply specifying the symlink instead:

```
tar cvLf archive short_name
```

Note the use of the "L" option to tar, which specifies to tar to actually follow the symlink to point to the actual **files** that are intended to be archived; by default, tar simply **backs up** the symlink without following it to the **file** actually pointed to. See the [tar\(C\)](#) man page for more details.

Note

This issue is not known to apply to other backup utilities, such as [cpio\(C\)](#). Hence, another workaround is to use cpio or some other **utility** to create the desired backup archives.

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