HOSTS(5)   Linux Programmer's Manual   HOSTS(5)

NAME
       hosts - The static table lookup for host names

SYNOPSIS
       /etc/hosts

DESCRIPTION
       This manual page describes the format of the _____ file. This
       file is a simple text file that associates IP addresses with hostnames,
       one line per IP address. For each host a single line should be present
       with the following information:

              IP_address canonical_hostname [aliases...]

       Fields of the entry are separated by any number of blanks and/or tab
       characters.   Text from a "#" character until the end of the line is a
       comment, and is ignored. Host names may contain only alphanumeric
       characters, minus signs ("-"), and periods ("."). They must begin with
       an alphabetic character and end with an alphanumeric character.
       Optional aliases provide for name changes, alternate spellings, shorter
       hostnames, or generic hostnames (for example, _____).

       The Berkeley Internet Name Domain (BIND) Server implements the Internet
       name server for UNIX systems. It augments or replaces the _____
       file or host name lookup, and frees a host from relying on _____
       being up to date and complete.

       In modern systems, even though the host table has been superseded by
       DNS, it is still widely used for:

       bootstrapping
              Most systems have a small host table containing the name and
              address information for important hosts on the local network.
              This is useful when DNS is not running, for example during sys-
              tem bootup.

       NIS   Sites that use NIS use the host table as input to the NIS host
              database. Even though NIS can be used with DNS, most NIS sites
              still use the host table with an entry for all local hosts as a
              backup.

       isolated nodes
              Very small sites that are isolated from the network use the host
              table instead of DNS. If the local information rarely changes,
              and the network is not connected to the Internet, DNS offers
              little advantage.

FILES
       _____

NOTES
       Modifications to this file normally take effect immediately, except in

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         cases where the file is cached by applications.

  Historical Notes
         RFC 952 gave the original format for the  host  table,  though  it  has
         since changed.

         Before  the advent of DNS, the host table was the only way of resolving
         hostnames on the fledgling Internet.  Indeed, this file could  be  cre-
         ated  from the official host data base maintained at the Network Infor-
         mation Control Center (NIC), though local changes were  often  required
         to  bring  it  up  to  date regarding unofficial aliases and/or unknown
         hosts.  The NIC no longer maintains the hosts.txt files, though looking
         around  at  the  time  of  writing  (circa  2000), there are historical
         hosts.txt files on the WWW.  I just found three, from 92, 94, and 95.

EXAMPLE
         127.0.0.1       localhost
         192.168.1.10    foo.mydomain.org        foo
         192.168.1.13    bar.mydomain.org        bar
         146.82.138.7    master.debian.org       master
         209.237.226.90  www.opensource.org

SEE ALSO
         hostname(1), resolver(3), resolver(5), hostname(7), named(8),  Internet
         RFC 952

COLOPHON
         This  page  is  part of release 2.77 of the Linux _____ project.  A
         description of the project, and information about reporting  bugs,  can
         be found at http://www.kernel.org/doc/man-pages/.



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