

## IEEE Standards Interpretation for IEEE Std 1003.1™-2001 IEEE Standard Standard for Information Technology -- Portable Operating System Interface (POSIX®)

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### Interpretation Request #93

**Topic:** pr, sh, + operand **Relevant Sections:** XCU pr, sh

The standard is unclear whether the utilities “pr” and “sh” must accept first operands that begin with “+”. For example, must an implementation accept this command:

```
pr +file
```

as specifying an operand pathname “+file”, or is the implementation allowed to reject “+file” as an invalid option, so that a portable application must use “pr -- +file” instead? Similarly, must an implementation accept this command:

```
sh ++
```

as specifying an operand command\_file “++”, or is it allowed to reject the “++” as an invalid option, so that a portable application must use “sh -- ++” instead?

Common practice is to reject such usages, which suggests that conforming applications should be cautious, and the standard should not be strict about what behaviors are required of implementations.

Please note that this problem description is limited to the first operand. A later Aardvark will take up the issue of operands after the first operand.

Add the following text to pr OPERANDS (after XCU page 739 line 28780):

The first operand, if any, shall not begin with “+” unless the operand is preceded by a

"--" delimiter.

Add the following text to sh OPERANDS (after XCU page 852 line 33051):

The first operand, if any, shall not begin with "+" unless the operand is preceded by a "--" delimiter.

### **Interpretation Response**

The standard is clear, the + character has no meaning as the first character of an operand for the pr utility, it is only allowed as the +page option case, so implementations are allowed to treat +x as an invalid page number or an operand. Portable applications should use pr -- +x to avoid this problem.

For sh, no change is needed. See the APPLICATION USAGE section.

### **Rationale for Interpretation**

None.