NAME

malloc, free, realloc, calloc − main memory allocator

SYNOPSIS

char *malloc (size) unsigned size;

free (ptr)
char *ptr;

char *realloc (ptr, size)
char *ptr;
unsigned size;

char *calloc (nelem, elsize)
unsigned elem, elsize;

DESCRIPTION

Malloc and *free* provide a simple general-purpose memory allocation package. *Malloc* returns a pointer to a block of at least *size* bytes beginning on a word boundary.

The argument to *free* is a pointer to a block previously allocated by *malloc;* this space is made available for further allocation, but its contents are left undisturbed.

Needless to say, grave disorder will result if the space assigned by *malloc* is overrun or if some random number is handed to *free*.

Malloc allocates the first big enough contiguous reach of free space found in a circular search from the last block allocated or freed, coalescing adjacent free blocks as it searches. It calls *sbrk* (see *break*(2)) to get more memory from the system when there is no suitable space already free.

Realloc changes the size of the block pointed to by *ptr* to *size* bytes and returns a pointer to the (possibly moved) block. The contents will be unchanged up to the lesser of the new and old sizes.

Realloc also works if *ptr* points to a block freed since the last call of *malloc realloc,* or *calloc*; thus sequences of *free, malloc* and *realloc* can exploit the search strategy of *malloc* to do storage compaction.

Calloc allocates space for an array of *nelem* elements of size *elsize.* The space is initialized to zeros.

Each of the allocation routines returns a pointer to space suitably aligned (after possible pointer coercion) for storage of any type of object.

SEE ALSO

break(2)

DIAGNOSTICS

Malloc, realloc and *calloc* return a null pointer (0) if there is no available memory or if the arena has been detectably corrupted by storing outside the bounds of a block. When *realloc* returns 0, the block pointed to by *ptr* may be destroyed.