NAME

xmotd − message-of-the-day browser for X (and dumb terminals, VT100, etc.)

SYNOPSIS

/usr/local/bin/xmotd [**X-toolkit options**] [**xmotd-options**] *file* [*file2* ...]

/usr/local/bin/xmotd [**X-toolkit options**] [**xmotd-options**] *directory*

or (in text-mode)

/usr/local/bin/xmotd [**-stampfile** *stamp-file*] [**-wakeup** *sleep-period*] *file* [*file2* ...]

DESCRIPTION

xmotd is a utility program (for X11 and dumb terminals) that can be executed during the login process to display pertinent messages (i.e. the message of the day) or to periodically check, while the user is logged in, whether one or more message files have been modified and display them if they have. Under X11, it displays a customizable bitmap in the top-left corner. It provides for up to 3 lines of title-text (the length of the text depends on the size of the font chosen). It has a "*Dismiss*" button below the bitmap and a read-only text-widget that displays the message (or messages) of the day. The date of the message (and optionally, the filename) is displayed just above the text.

xmotd can be configured to run in various modes: to always pop-up after login or to pop-up only when the motd changes; to pop-down automatically (without user-intervention) after a specified delay; to run in the background and periodically check if the motd has changed and display it. By default, **xmotd** displays a message only if the file(s) was updated since the last time the user read it.

If **xmotd** has to display more than one file, the user is obliged to press the "*Next Message*" button to view subsequent messages; the text of the button changes to "*Dismiss*" when the last message is displayed.

xmotd defaults to text-only mode (output to **stdout** when it cannot connect to an X display. This mode is useful for running **xmotd** from user's *~/.login* file in cases where they can also login via dialup.

xmotd can display messages marked-up with HTML and xpm colour pixmap logos. Support for these must be configured at compile-time.

OPERATION

xmotd is usually run from the system *Xsession* file via xdm(1), CDE login and/or from the user's *~/.login* file. At sites where xdm is not used, **xmotd** may be run from the user's *~/.xinitrc* where a (possibly) malicious user may intentionally or accidently remove the **xmotd** invocation from the file.

When **xmotd** first runs, it creates a timestamp file (by default called *.xmotd*) in the user's home-directory. On subsequent invocations, **xmotd** uses the date of this file to decide whether or not the message-of-the-day (motd) files have been updated. If the date of the motd file is later than the date on the *~/.xmotd* file, then **xmotd** will display the motd file; otherwise it will silently exit (if there are no more files to be displayed and if **-wakeup** was not used). When invoked with **-wakeup**, xmotd daemonizes itself and goes to sleep for the specified sleep-period, periodically waking-up to see if the motds have changed and then displaying them.

By default, **xmotd** pops-down only when the "*Dismiss*" button is clicked; the rest of the login-procedure then continues. This interactive behaviour can be overriden so **xmotd** will pop-down without user intervention, after a specified timeout period.

OPTIONS

All the standard **X** options are valid. In addition, the following options, which may also be set as resources in the app-defaults file (See RESOURCES), are available:

−**always**

overrides **xmotd** default behavior; the *~/.xmotd* time-stamp is ignored and the message (or messages) is always displayed. Zero-length (empty) files are displayed when this option is specified.

−**atom** *atom-name*

register **xmotd** with name *atom-name*. By default, only one **xmotd** is allowed to run (per user). You can permit multiple instances of **xmotd** to run by giving each instance an unique name. **xmotd** will intern an atom with the X server, that combines the atom-name and the user's login-id (e.g. "*xmotd.elf*" ; the default atom name is "*xmotd*"); subsequent invocations of **xmotd** will check if this atom exists and exit if it does.

−**bitmaplogo** *bitmap-filename*

specifies that the bitmap *bitmap-filename* is to be displayed in place of the default bitmap, the "X" logo. Ideally, the specified bitmap should have a width and height of 100 pixels. If xpm support is compiled-in, xpm colour pixmaps may be substituted instead. See NOTES for additional details.

−**browser** *web-browser*

specifies the path and filename of a web-browser to be used when an URL is clicked (HTML version only). By default, *web-browser* is

"*/usr/local/bin/netscape*". See NOTES for additional details.

−help displays command-line options usage.

−paranoid

(used with **-warnfile**) displays the warning message unconditionally at every login (even when there are no messages to be displayed).

−popdown *timeout*

exit or pop-down without user intervention, *timeout* seconds after being invoked. The user can dismiss **xmotd** at any time before the timeout, by clicking on the "*Dismiss*" button. This option is only valid at the initial login; it is ignored on subsequent pop-ups when **xmotd** is invoked with **-wakeup**.

−showfilename

displays the filename of the file currently being viewed (as it appears on the command-line), alongside the date.

−stampfile *stamp-filename*

overrides the default timestamp filename, *~/.xmotd*, and uses *stamp-filename* instead.

−tail display the end of a file; the text is automatically scrolled so the end of the file is visible.

−usedomains

uses local domain-name based time-stamping in cases where user's home-directories are shared (NFS mounted) across various domains. Time-stamps are created (and checked) with appropriate domain-names appended.

−warnfile *warning-filename*

specifies a file containing a standard message used to warn users of the consequences of deviance and sundry unlawful things they should not even *think* of doing on your network; your network's rules of use, information about disk quotas, modem charges and printer accounting fees (used with **-paranoid**).

−wakeup *sleep-period*

causes *xmotd* to run in the background and wakeup periodically every *sleep-period* hours to check whether the files have been modified and therefore need to be (re-)displayed. The sleep period is specified as a floating point number where the fractional portion indicates the number of minutes. For example, a sleep-period of 0.25 indicates 15 minutes (one quarter of an hour) and a sleep-period of 1.5 indicates one and one-half hours; the minimum (enforced) sleep-period is 1 minute. The **-wakeup** option is useful at sites where users with personal workstations never log-out. See NOTES for additional details.

file [file2 ...]

one or more files to be displayed may be specified. The file(s) contain the text of the message(s) of the day. If HTML support is compiled-in the motd files should be marked-up with HTML.

directory Instead of supplying one or more files on the command-line, **xmotd** may be supplied a *directory* containing file(s) to be displayed. **xmotd** will scan the directory and display all the files contained therein, that need to be displayed. This feature is useful when used with the **-wakeup** option; upon waking-up, **xmotd** will re-scan the directory for any files (including new files that have been subsequently added) that need to be displayed.

EXAMPLES

Give **xmotd** a geometry option to tell it to pop-up at a location other than 0,0 and read-in the message-of-the-day from the file */usr/local/motd*:

```
xmotd -geometry +20+20 /usr/local/motd
```

Use a bigger window (900x600) and automatically position it (at top-left corner at 20,20), always pop-up **xmotd** displaying the contents of */usr/local/motd*, ignoring the user's *~/.xmotd* timestamp-file and pop-down after 20 seconds:

```
xmotd -geom 900x600+20+20 -always -popdown 20 /usr/local/motd
```

Use a custom bitmap in the file */usr/local/xmotd.bm*:

```
xmotd -geom +5+5 -bitmaplogo /usr/local/xmotd.bm /usr/local/motd
```

In the following example, all the files in */usr/local/messages/* will be checked for modification times greater than the time-stamp and only those files will be displayed and every eight and a half hours, **xmotd** will check if any files have changed (or new ones added) and display them if necessary:

```
xmotd -geom +5+5 -wakeup 8.5 /usr/local/messages/
```

To display a warning-message every time the user logs-in (even when no messages need to be displayed), and to display the filenames of the files being viewed, use:

```
xmotd -geom +5+5 -warnfile /usr/local/WARNING -paranoid \
   -showfilename /usr/local/motds/
```

X resources may be changed from the command-line using the **-xrm** option. This example (typed as a single line) illustrates how **xmotd** can be customized exclusively from the command-line:

```
/usr/local/bin/xmotd -always \
   -xrm "*title.label: Top 10 Disk Hogs0s of midnight0 \
   -xrm "*title.foreground: yellow" \
   -xrm "*form.background: red" \
   -xrm "*title.background: red" \
   -xrm "*logo.background: pink" \
   -xrm "*text*font: -adobe-times-bold-*-normal-*-*-180-*" \
   -geometry 500x650-1-1 \
   -bitmaplogo /usr/common/choke.xbm
   -popdown 10 \
   /usr/common/accounting/top &
```

RESOURCES

editres(1) may be used to edit resources. The application class-name is *XMotd*.

The resource: **XMotd*Always** (set to either **True** or **False**) is equivalent to the **-always** command-line option.

The resource: *XMotd*Atom* (set to the name of the atom **xmotd** is registered with) is equivalent to the **-atom** command-line option.

The resource: *XMotd*BitmapLogo* (set to the path and filename of the bitmap/pixmap-file) is equivalent to the **-bitmaplogo** command-line option.

The resource: *XMotd*Browser* (set to the path and filename of the browser to be used when users click on an URL (HTML version only)) is equivalent to the **-browser** command-line option.

The resource: *XMotd*Paranoid* (set to **True/False**) is equivalent to the **-paranoid** command-line option.

The resource: *XMotd*Popdown* (set to the number of seconds) is equivalent to the **-popdown** command-line option.

The resource: *XMotd*UseDomains* (set to **True/False**) is equivalent to the **-usedomains** command-line option.

The resource: *XMotd*ShowFilename* (set to **True/False**) is equivalent to the **-showfilename** command-line option.

The resource: *XMotd*Warnfile* (set to the path and filename of the warning-file) is equivalent to the **-warnfile** command-line option.

The resource: *XMotd*Tail* (set to **True/False**) is equivalent to the **-tail** command-line option.

The resource: *XMotd*Wakeup* (set to an floating-point number representing hours) is equivalent to the **-wakeup** command-line option.

The resource: *XMotd*title.label* (set to a possibly multi-line string) may be used to customize the title.

By default, the title is the single line:"*Message Of The Day\n\n\n*" (the 2-character sequence, "*\n*", indicates a carriage-return).

For example, if you want a 2 line title that reads:

```
   This is the
Message of the Day
```

the resource can be specified as:

```
*title.label: \     This is the\nMessage of the Day\n\n
```

Note that the first backslash quotes the leading spaces that indent the words, "**This is the**".

WIDGET HIERARCHY

The widget hierarchy is as follows (Class-name & object-name):

```
XMotd xmotd
    Form form
        Label logo
        Label title
        Label hline
```

Label info
Command quit
Text text **OR** Html text

FILES

$ProjectRoot/lib/X11/xdm/Xsession

(where **$ProjectRoot** is **/usr/X11R6** or, perhaps **/usr/X11**).

For systems running CDE put a script that invokes *xmotd* in */etc/dt/config/Xsession.d/*

$HOME/.xmotd (default timestamp filename)

$HOME/.login

SEE ALSO

X(1), xdm(1), editres(1), login(1), xv(l), gimp(l), xpaint(l), cat(1), less(l)

NOTES

The **-always** option is considered fascist; it is provided merely for completeness and for testing purposes.

If xpm support is compiled-in, **xmotd -help** will print the words "*bitmap/pixmap*" for the **-bitmaplogo** description instead of just "*bitmap*".

Under dumb-terminal mode, all command-line options are ignored with the exception of **-stampfile** and **-wakeup**; the **-always** option is equivalent to cat'ing the motd from the *~/.login* file; and **-popdown** is not really relevant. Both **-warnfile** and **-paranoid** may be simulated with appropriate cat(1) and more(1) commands.

xmotd processes invoked with **-wakeup** will continue sleeping, "S" in the ps(1) status field, after the user has logged-out until the sleep timeout expires. Only when **xmotd** wakes-up, will it detect that the user has logged-out and exit. **xmotd**'s logout-detection routine relies on the xdm(1) support scripts **GiveConsole** and **TakeConsole** setting the correct permissions and ownership on **/dev/console**. When **xmotd** wakes-up, it attempts to open(2) **/dev/console** for reading; if this open fails, it is an indication that the user has logged out because **TakeConsole** has changed ownership of the console.

The **-browser** option was originally called **-netscape**; it was renamed to be more generic. When initially run, the browser is invoked as:

```
/usr/local/bin/netscape %s
```

where **%s** is replaced by the selected URL. Subsequent URLs will be displayed in the already running browser using the syntax:

/usr/local/bin/netscape -remote openURL(%s)

You may substitute a browser of your choice for **netscape**, if it supports this syntax.

BUGS

At least one.

Also, there are no provisions for displaying embedded images in the HTML version of **xmotd** (until a stable XmHTML widget is available).

QUOTES

...and our lives are forever changed
we will never be the same
the more you change the less you feel

--**Tonight, tonight**,
"Mellon Collie And The Infinite Sadness"
Billy Corgan, The Smashing Pumpkins

Omnia mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis.
(All things change, and we change with them).

--Matthias Borbonius:
Deliciae Poetarum Germanorum, i. 685

To everything there is a season,
And a time to every purpose under heaven.

--Ecclesiastes 3:1-4

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