UNIX® System V/386 Release 3.2

Form and Menu Language Interpreter Release Notes

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UNIX SYSTEM V/386
RELEASE 3.2
FMLI
RELEASE NOTES

FMLI Software Notes

These release notes provide some tips and workarounds that enhance the usability of the FMLI package.

Loss of Terminal Attributes

Some applications executed with the `run` command of FMLI change the terminal attributes and then do not correctly restore them when exiting. This can cause the FMLI screen to behave improperly on remote terminals of a 6386 system. For example, when the Simul-Task 386 command `dos` is executed by the FMLI `run` command to make MS-DOS applications available, it fails to restore the terminal attributes correctly on exit and the borders on FMLI frames created after that will be garbled.

The UNIX system utility `tput`, with the `init` argument, will restore terminal attributes. The current work-around for this problem is to ensure that the FMLI application causes the command `tput init` to be executed after the `run` command has finished. For example, consider this menu item definition:

```
name="Invoke MS-DOS"
action='message "Entering MS-DOS..."
      run sh -c "dos; tput init";
      message "Done with MS-DOS."'nop
```

This coding of the `action` descriptor ensures that the terminal attributes will be restored when control has returned to FMLI on the menu that involved Simul-Task 386.

Truncation of Long Menu Items on Short Menus

If a menu has 10 or fewer items and the longest item is more than *Columns-4* (where *Columns* is the width of the screen, i.e., the value of the `COLUMNS` environment variable) characters long, FMLI will not post the menu and will issue the message

```
Object can not be displayed, frame may be too large
for the screen.
```

To avoid this problem, either

- shorten the length of the menu item text, or
- use the `fmlcut` built-in command or the shell's `cut` command to ensure that the length of the menu items posted is less than *Columns-4*.

Color and Underlining for Form Fields on Color Monitors

FMLI uses underline characters to show fields in a form, even on color monitors. However, some color display monitors do not support color attributes in combination with certain video attributes, such as underline. Thus, if (and only if) a given color monitor does not support both color attributes and underlining, FMLI will, by default, highlight form fields using the reverse of the `window_text` color and the `screen` color (`window_text` and `screen` are color descriptors found in the FMLI initialization file).

If an application wishes to change this default behavior, the new descriptors `field_text` and `field_bar` can be used (where `field_text` is the foreground color and `field_bar` is the background color of the field).

Unreadable "Wall Messages"

Wall messages received while running FMLI can sometimes be unreadable, depending on the frames currently displayed, on terminals that support simple line graphics (e.g., the AT&T 4425). Messages sent from root or other users executing the `write` command may be interspersed with extraneous characters. Sending a CTRL-o at the beginning of the `wall` or `write` message eliminates this problem.

Default X Windows Terminal Emulator Window and FMLI

The default size of the initial `xterm` window is 24x80 (`xterm` is the terminal emulator that is available under XWIN, the AT&T version of the X Window system). The function key labels in a `curses` application, such as FMLI, take up one of these rows. Therefore, frames of some applications, though displayable on the 6386 console when XWIN is not running, are too large to be displayed in an `xterm` window, since they have a smaller screen to work with. The current workaround is to ensure that FMLI frames not exceed 17 lines when they are to be run in an `xterm` window in XWIN.

Special Character Input in a Form Field

Certain special characters input to a field in a form will be ignored unless they are "escaped." The following characters must be preceded with the backslash character at the time they are input to a form: backslash (\), dollar ($), ampersand (&), backquote (`), single quote ('), double quote ("), semicolon (;).

menu_del

The **menu_del** commands removes three lines from the menu file. The three lines are: name=, action=, and itemmsg= title lines. If you add an item to an fmli menu file, and the total number of lines is fewer than three, portions of the next menu item may be deleted.

Appendix A: Installation Diskette Files

FMLI Utility Package, Diskette 1 of 1

/Size
/Files
/Name
/Install
/Remove
/fmli
/vsig