

Erlang Interface

version 3.2

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Chapter 1

Erl_Interface User Guide

1.1 The Erl_Interface Library

The `erl_interface` library contains functions which help you integrate programs written in C and Erlang. The functions in `erl_interface` support the following:

- manipulation of data represented as Erlang data types
- conversion of data between C and Erlang formats
- encoding and decoding of Erlang data types for transmission or storage
- communication between C nodes and Erlang processes
- backup and restore of C node state to and from Mnesia

In the following sections, these topics are described:

- compiling your code for use with `erl_interface`
- initializing `erl_interface`
- encoding, decoding, and sending Erlang terms
- building terms and patterns
- pattern matching
- connecting to a distributed Erlang node
- using EPMD
- sending and receiving Erlang messages
- remote procedure calls
- global names
- the registry

Compiling and Linking your code

In order to use any of the `erl_interface` functions, include the following lines in your code:

```
#include "erl_interface.h"
#include "ei.h"
```

Determine where the top directory of your OTP installation is. You can find this out by starting Erlang and entering the following command at the Eshell prompt:

```
Eshell V4.7.4 (abort with ^G)
1> code:root_dir().
/usr/local/otp
```

To compile your code, make sure that your C compiler knows where to find `erl_interface.h` by specifying an appropriate `-I` argument on the command line, or by adding it to the `CFLAGS` definition in your Makefile. The correct value for this path is `$OTPROOT/lib/ei-3.1/include`, where `$OTPROOT` is the path reported by `code:root_dir/0` in the above example.

```
$ cc -c -I/usr/local/otp/lib/ei-3.1/include myprog.c
```

When linking, you will need to specify the path to `liberl_interface.a` and `libei.a` with `-L$OTPROOT/lib/ei-3.1/lib`, and you will need to specify the name of the libraries with `-lerl_interface -lei`. You can do this on the command line or by adding the flags to the `LDFLAGS` definition in your Makefile.

```
$ ld -L/usr/local/otp/lib/ei-3.1/lib myprog.o -lerl_interface -lei -o myprog
```

Also, on some systems it may be necessary to link with some additional libraries (e.g. `libnsl.a` and `libsocket.a` on Solaris, or `wsock32.lib` on Windows) in order to use the communication facilities of `erl_interface`.

If you are using `erl_interface` functions in a threaded application based on POSIX threads or Solaris threads, then `erl_interface` needs access to some of the synchronization facilities in your threads package, and you will need to specify additional compiler flags in order to indicate which of the packages you are using. Define `_REENTRANT` and either `STHREADS` or `PTHREADS`. The default is to use POSIX threads if `_REENTRANT` is specified.

Initializing the erl_interface Library

Before calling any of the other `erl_interface` functions, you must call `erl_init()` exactly once to initialize the library. `erl_init()` takes two arguments, however the arguments are no longer used by `erl_interface`, and should therefore be specified as `erl_init(NULL,0)`.

Encoding, Decoding and Sending Erlang Terms

Data sent between distributed Erlang nodes is encoded in the Erlang external format. Consequently, you have to encode and decode Erlang terms into byte streams if you want to use the distribution protocol to communicate between a C program and Erlang.

The `erl_interface` library supports this activity. It has a number of C functions which create and manipulate Erlang data structures. The library also contains an encode and a decode function. The example below shows how to create and encode an Erlang tuple `{tobbe,3928}`:

```
ETERM *arr[2], *tuple;
char buf[BUFSIZ];
int i;

arr[0] = erl_mk_atom("tobbe");
arr[1] = erl_mk_integer(3928);
tuple = erl_mk_tuple(arr, 2);
i = erl_encode(tuple, buf);
```

Alternatively, you can use `erl_send()` and `erl_receive_msg`, which handle the encoding and decoding of messages transparently.

Refer to the Reference Manual for a complete description of the following modules:

- the `erl_eterm` module for creating Erlang terms
- the `erl_marshal` module for encoding and decoding routines.

Building Terms and Patterns

The previous example can be simplified by using `erl_format()` to create an Erlang term.

```
ETERM *ep;
ep = erl_format("{~a,~i}", "tobbe", 3928);
```

Refer to the Reference Manual, the `erl_format` module, for a full description of the different format directives. The following example is more complex:

```
ETERM *ep;
ep = erl_format("[{name,~a},{age,~i},{data,~w}]",
               "madonna",
               21,
               erl_format("[{adr,~s,~i}]", "E-street", 42));
erl_free_compound(ep);
```

As in previous examples, it is your responsibility to free the memory allocated for Erlang terms. In this example, `erl_free_compound()` ensures that the complete term pointed to by `ep` is released. This is necessary, because the pointer from the second call to `erl_format()` is lost.

The following example shows a slightly different solution:

```
ETERM *ep,*ep2;
ep2 = erl_format("[{adr,~s,~i}]", "E-street", 42);
ep = erl_format("[{name,~a},{age,~i},{data,~w}]",
               "madonna", 21, ep2);
erl_free_term(ep);
erl_free_term(ep2);
```

In this case, you free the two terms independently. The order in which you free the terms `ep` and `ep2` is not important, because the `erl_interface` library uses reference counting to determine when it is safe to actually remove objects.

If you are not sure whether you have freed the terms properly, you can use the following function to see the status of the fixed term allocator:

```
long allocated, freed;

erl_eterm_statistics(&allocated,&freed);
printf("currently allocated blocks: %ld\n",allocated);
printf("length of freelist: %ld\n",freed);

/* really free the freelist */
erl_eterm_release();
```

Refer to the Reference Manual, the `erl_malloc` module for more information.

Pattern Matching

An Erlang pattern is a term that may contain unbound variables or "do not care" symbols. Such a pattern can be matched against a term and, if the match is successful, any unbound variables in the pattern will be bound as a side effect. The content of a bound variable can then be retrieved.

```
ETERM *pattern;
pattern = erl_format("{madonna, Age, _}");
```

`erl_match()` is used to perform pattern matching. It takes a pattern and a term and tries to match them. As a side effect any unbound variables in the pattern will be bound. In the following example, we create a pattern with a variable *Age* which appears at two positions in the tuple. The pattern match is performed as follows:

1. `erl_match()` will bind the contents of *Age* to *21* the first time it reaches the variable
2. the second occurrence of *Age* will cause a test for equality between the terms since *Age* is already bound to *21*. Since *Age* is bound to *21*, the equality test will succeed and the match continues until the end of the pattern.
3. if the end of the pattern is reached, the match succeeds and you can retrieve the contents of the variable

```
ETERM *pattern, *term;
pattern = erl_format("{madonna, Age, Age}");
term    = erl_format("{madonna, 21, 21}");
if (erl_match(pattern, term)) {
    fprintf(stderr, "Yes, they matched: Age = ");
    ep = erl_var_content(pattern, "Age");
    erl_print_term(stderr, ep);
    fprintf(stderr, "\n");
    erl_free_term(ep);
}
erl_free_term(pattern);
erl_free_term(term);
```

Refer to the Reference Manual, the `erl_match()` function for more information. Also, refer to your Erlang manual for information about pattern matching.

Connecting to a Distributed Erlang Node

In order to connect to a distributed Erlang node you need to first initialize the connection routine with `erl_connect_init()`, which stores information such as the host name, node name, and IP address for later use:

```
int identification_number = 99;
int creation=1;
char *cookie="a secret cookie string"; /* An example */
erl_connect_init(identification_number, cookie, creation);
```

Refer to the Reference Manual, the `erl_connect` module for more information.

After initialization, you set up the connection to the Erlang node. Use `erl_connect()` to specify the Erlang node you want to connect to. The following example sets up the connection and should result in a valid socket file descriptor:

```
int sockfd;
char *nodename="xyz@chivas.du.etx.ericsson.se"; /* An example */
if ((sockfd = erl_connect(nodename)) < 0)
    erl_err_quit("ERROR: erl_connect failed");
```

`erl_err_quit()` prints the specified string and terminates the program. Refer to the Reference Manual, the `erl_error()` function for more information.

Using EPMD

Epmd is the Erlang Port Mapper Daemon. Distributed Erlang nodes register with epmd on the localhost to indicate to other nodes that they exist and can accept connections. Epmd maintains a register of node and port number information, and when a node wishes to connect to another node, it first contacts epmd in order to find out the correct port number to connect to.

When you use `erl_connect()` to connect to an Erlang node, a connection is first made to epmd and, if the node is known, a connection is then made to the Erlang node.

C nodes can also register themselves with epmd if they want other nodes in the system to be able to find and connect to them.

Before registering with epmd, you need to first create a listen socket and bind it to a port. Then:

```
int pub;

pub = erl_publish(port);
```

`pub` is a file descriptor now connected to epmd. Epmd monitors the other end of the connection, and if it detects that the connection has been closed, the node will be unregistered. So, if you explicitly close the descriptor or if your node fails, it will be unregistered from epmd.

Be aware that on some systems (such as VxWorks), a failed node will not be detected by this mechanism since the operating system does not automatically close descriptors that were left open when the node failed. If a node has failed in this way, epmd will prevent you from registering a new node with the old name, since it thinks that the old name is still in use. In this case, you must unregister the name explicitly:

```
erl_unpublish(node);
```

This will cause epmd to close the connection from the far end. Note that if the name was in fact still in use by a node, the results of this operation are unpredictable. Also, doing this does not cause the local end of the connection to close, so resources may be consumed.

Sending and Receiving Erlang Messages

Use one of the following two functions to send messages:

- `erl_send()`
- `erl_reg_send()`

As in Erlang, it is possible to send messages to a *Pid* or to a registered name. It is easier to send a message to a registered name because it avoids the problem of finding a suitable *Pid*.

Use one of the following two functions to receive messages:

- `erl_receive()`
- `erl_receive_msg()`

`erl_receive()` receives the message into a buffer, while `erl_receive_msg()` decodes the message into an Erlang term.

Example of Sending Messages

In the following example, `{Pid, hello_world}` is sent to a registered process `my_server`. The message is encoded by `erl_send()`:

```
extern const char *erl_thisnodename(void);
extern short erl_thiscreation(void);
#define SELF(fd) erl_mk_pid(erl_thisnodename(),fd,0,erl_thiscreation())
ETERM *arr[2], *emsg;
int sockfd, creation=1;

arr[0] = SELF(sockfd);
arr[1] = erl_mk_atom("Hello world");
emsg = erl_mk_tuple(arr, 2);

erl_reg_send(sockfd, "my_server", emsg);
erl_free_term(emsg);
```

The first element of the tuple that is sent is your own *Pid*. This enables `my_server` to reply. Refer to the Reference Manual, the `erl_connect` module for more information about send primitives.

Example of Receiving Messages

In this example `{Pid, Something}` is received. The received *Pid* is then used to return `{goodbye,Pid}`

```
ETERM *arr[2], *answer;
int sockfd,rc;
char buf[BUFSIZE];
ErlMessage emsg;

if ((rc = erl_receive_msg(sockfd , buf, BUFSIZE, &emsg)) == ERL_MSG) {
    arr[0] = erl_mk_atom("goodbye");
    arr[1] = erl_element(1, emsg.msg);
    answer = erl_mk_tuple(arr, 2);
    erl_send(sockfd, arr[1], answer);
}
```

```
    erl_free_term(answer);
    erl_free_term(msg.msg);
    erl_free_term(msg.to);
}
}
```

In order to provide robustness, a distributed Erlang node occasionally polls all its connected neighbours in an attempt to detect failed nodes or communication links. A node which receives such a message is expected to respond immediately with an ERL_TICK message. This is done automatically by `erl_receive()`, however when this has occurred `erl_receive` returns ERL_TICK to the caller without storing a message into the `ErlMessage` structure.

When a message has been received, it is the caller's responsibility to free the received message `msg.msg` as well as `msg.to` or `msg.from`, depending on the type of message received.

Refer to the Reference Manual for additional information about the following modules:

- `erl_connect`
- `erl_eterm`.

Remote Procedure Calls

An Erlang node acting as a client to another Erlang node typically sends a request and waits for a reply. Such a request is included in a function call at a remote node and is called a remote procedure call. The following example shows how the `erl_interface` library supports remote procedure calls:

```
char modname[]=THE_MODNAME;
ETERM *reply,*ep;
ep = erl_format("[~a,[]]", modname);
if (!(reply = erl_rpc(fd, "c", "c", ep)))
    erl_err_msg("<ERROR> when compiling file: %s.erl !\n", modname);
erl_free_term(ep);
ep = erl_format("{ok,_}");
if (!erl_match(ep, reply))
    erl_err_msg("<ERROR> compiler errors !\n");
erl_free_term(ep);
erl_free_term(reply);
```

`c:c/1` is called to compile the specified module on the remote node. `erl_match()` checks that the compilation was successful by testing for the expected `ok`.

Refer to the Reference Manual, the `erl_connect` module for more information about `erl_rpc()`, and its companions `erl_rpc_to()` and `erl_rpc_from()`.

Using Global Names

A C node has access to names registered through the Erlang Global module. Names can be looked up, allowing the C node to send messages to named Erlang services. C nodes can also register global names, allowing them to provide named services to Erlang processes or other C nodes.

ErlInterface does not provide a native implementation of the global service. Instead it uses the global services provided by a “nearby” Erlang node. In order to use the services described in this section, it is necessary to first open a connection to an Erlang node.

To see what names there are:

```
char **names;
int count;
int i;

names = erl_global_names(fd,&count);

if (names)
    for (i=0; i<count; i++)
        printf("%s\n",names[i]);

free(names);
```

`erl_global_names()` allocates and returns a buffer containing all the names known to global. `count` will be initialized to indicate how many names are in the array. The array of strings in `names` is terminated by a NULL pointer, so it is not necessary to use `count` to determine when the last name is reached.

It is the caller's responsibility to free the array. `erl_global_names()` allocates the array and all of the strings using a single call to `malloc()`, so `free(names)` is all that is necessary.

To look up one of the names:

```
ETERM *pid;
char node[256];

pid = erl_global_whereis(fd,"schedule",node);
```

If "schedule" is known to global, an Erlang pid is returned that can be used to send messages to the schedule service. Additionally, `node` will be initialized to contain the name of the node where the service is registered, so that you can make a connection to it by simply passing the variable to `erl_connect()`.

Before registering a name, you should already have registered your port number with `epmd`. This is not strictly necessary, but if you neglect to do so, then other nodes wishing to communicate with your service will be unable to find or connect to your process.

Create a pid that Erlang processes can use to communicate with your service:

```
ETERM *pid;

pid = erl_mk_pid(thisnode,14,0,0);
erl_global_register(fd,servicename,pid);
```

After registering the name, you should use `erl_accept()` to wait for incoming connections.

Do not forget to free `pid` later with `erl_free_term()`!

To unregister a name:

```
erl_global_unregister(fd,servicename);
```

The Registry

This section describes the use of the registry, a simple mechanism for storing key-value pairs in a C-node, as well as backing them up or restoring them from a Mnesia table on an Erlang node. More detailed information about the individual API functions can be found in the reference manual.

Keys are strings, i.e. 0-terminated arrays of characters, and values are arbitrary objects. Although integers and floating point numbers are treated specially by the registry, you can store strings or binary objects of any type as pointers.

To start, you need to open a registry:

```
ei_reg *reg;

reg = ei_reg_open(45);
```

The number 45 in the example indicates the approximate number of objects that you expect to store in the registry. Internally the registry uses hash tables with collision chaining, so there is no absolute upper limit on the number of objects that the registry can contain, but if performance or memory usage are important, then you should choose a number accordingly. The registry can be resized later.

You can open as many registries as you like (if memory permits).

Objects are stored and retrieved through set and get functions. In the following examples you see how to store integers, floats, strings and arbitrary binary objects:

```
struct bonk *b = malloc(sizeof(*b));
char *name = malloc(7);

ei_reg_setival(reg,"age",29);
ei_reg_setfval(reg,"height",1.85);

strcpy(name,"Martin");
ei_reg_setsval(reg,"name",name);

b->l = 42;
b->m = 12;
ei_reg_setpval(reg,"jox",b,sizeof(*b));
```

If you attempt to store an object in the registry and there is an existing object with the same key, the new value will replace the old one. This is done regardless of whether the new object and the old one have the same type, so you can, for example, replace a string with an integer. If the existing value is a string or binary, it will be freed before the new value is assigned.

Stored values are retrieved from the registry as follows:

```

long i;
double f;
char *s;
struct bonk *b;
int size;

i = ei_reg_getival(reg,"age");
f = ei_reg_getfval(reg,"height");
s = ei_reg_getsval(reg,"name");
b = ei_reg_getpval(reg,"jox",&size);

```

In all of the above examples, the object must exist and it must be of the right type for the specified operation. If you do not know the type of a given object, you can ask:

```

struct ei_reg_stat buf;

ei_reg_stat(reg,"name",&buf);

```

Buf will be initialized to contain object attributes.

Objects can be removed from the registry:

```
ei_reg_delete(reg,"name");
```

When you are finished with a registry, close it to remove all the objects and free the memory back to the system:

```
ei_reg_close(reg);
```

Backing up the registry to Mnesia

The contents of a registry can be backed up to Mnesia on a “nearby” Erlang node. You need to provide an open connection to the Erlang node (see `erl_connect()`). Also, Mnesia 3.0 or later must be running on the Erlang node before the backup is initiated:

```
ei_reg_dump(fd, reg, "mtab", dumpflags);
```

The example above will backup the contents of the registry to the specified Mnesia table “mtab”. Once a registry has been backed up to Mnesia in this manner, additional backups will only affect objects that have been modified since the most recent backup, i.e. objects that have been created, changed or deleted. The backup operation is done as a single atomic transaction, so that the entire backup will be performed or none of it will.

In the same manner, a registry can be restored from a Mnesia table:

```
ei_reg_restore(fd, reg, "mtab");
```

This will read the entire contents of “mtab” into the specified registry. After the restore, all of the objects in the registry will be marked as unmodified, so a subsequent backup will only affect objects that you have modified since the restore.

Note that if you restore to a non-empty registry, objects in the table will overwrite objects in the registry with the same keys. Also, the *entire* contents of the registry is marked as unmodified after the restore, including any modified objects that were not overwritten by the restore operation. This may not be your intention.

Storing strings and binaries

When string or binary objects are stored in the registry it is important that a number of simple guidelines are followed.

Most importantly, the object must have been created with a single call to `malloc()` (or similar), so that it can later be removed by a single call to `free()`. Objects will be freed by the registry when it is closed, or when you assign a new value to an object that previously contained a string or binary.

You should also be aware that if you store binary objects that are context-dependent (e.g. containing pointers or open file descriptors), they will lose their meaning if they are backed up to a Mnesia table and subsequently restored in a different context.

When you retrieve a stored string or binary value from the registry, the registry maintains a pointer to the object and you are passed a copy of that pointer. You should never free an object retrieved in this manner because when the registry later attempts to free it, a runtime error will occur that will likely cause the C-node to crash.

You are free to modify the contents of an object retrieved this way. However when you do so, the registry will not be aware of the changes you make, possibly causing it to be missed the next time you make a Mnesia backup of the registry contents. This can be avoided if you mark the object as dirty after any such changes with `ei_reg_markdirty()`, or pass appropriate flags to `ei_reg_dump()`.

Erl_Interface Command Reference

Short Summaries

- Command **erl_call** [page 14] – Call/Start a Distributed Erlang Node

erl_call

The following functions are exported:

- **erl_call** <options> Start/Call Erlang

erl_call (Command)

`erl_call` makes it possible to start and/or communicate with a distributed Erlang node. It is built upon the `erl_interface` library as an example application. Its purpose is to use an Unix shell script to interact with a distributed Erlang node. It performs all communication with the Erlang *rex server*, using the standard Erlang RPC facility. It does not require any special software to be run at the Erlang target node.

The main use is to either start a distributed Erlang node or to make an ordinary function call. However, it is also possible to pipe an Erlang module to `erl_call` and have it compiled, or to pipe a sequence of Erlang expressions to be evaluated (similar to the Erlang shell).

Options, which cause `stdin` to be read, can be used with advantage as scripts from within (Unix) shell scripts. Another nice use of `erl_call` could be from (http) CGI-bin scripts.

Exports

`erl_call <options>`

Each option flag is described below with its name, type and meaning.

- a [**Mod** [**Fun** [**Args**]]] (*optional*): Applies the specified function and returns the result. `Mod` must be specified, however `[]` is assumed for unspecified `Fun` and `Args`. `Args` should be in the same format as for `erlang:apply/3`. Note that this flag takes exactly one argument, so quoting may be necessary in order to group `Mod`, `Fun` and `Args`, in a manner dependent on the behaviour of your command shell.
- c **Cookie** (*optional*): Use this option to specify a certain cookie. If no cookie is specified, the `~/.erlang.cookie` file is read and its content are used as cookie. The Erlang node we want to communicate with must have the same cookie.
- d (*optional*): Debug mode. This causes all IO to be output to the file `~/.erl_call.out.Nodename`, where `Nodename` is the node name of the Erlang node in question.
- e (*optional*): Reads a sequence of Erlang expressions, separated by `' '` and ended with a `'.'`, from `stdin` until EOF (Control-D). Evaluates the expressions and returns the result from the last expression. Returns `{ok,Result}` if successful.
- h **HiddenName** (*optional*): Specifies the name of the hidden node that `erl_call` represents.
- m (*optional*): Reads an Erlang module from `stdin` and compiles it.
- n **Node** (one of `-n`, `-name`, `-sname` is required): Has the same meaning as `-name` and can still be used for backwards compatibility reasons.

- name Node** (one of `-n`, `-name`, `-sname` is required): Node is the name of the node to be started or communicated with. It is assumed that Node is started with `erl -name`, which means that fully qualified long node names are used. If the `-s` option is given, an Erlang node will (if necessary) be started with `erl -name`.
- q** (*optional*): Halts the Erlang node specified with the `-n` switch. This switch overrides the `-s` switch.
- r** (*optional*): Generates a random name of the hidden node that `erl_call` represents.
- s** (*optional*): Starts a distributed Erlang node if necessary. This means that in a sequence of calls, where the `'-s'` and `'-n Node'` are constant, only the first call will start the Erlang node. This makes the rest of the communication very fast. This flag is currently only available on the Unix platform.
- sname Node** (one of `-n`, `-name`, `-sname` is required): Node is the name of the node to be started or communicated with. It is assumed that Node is started with `erl -sname` which means that short node names are used. If `-s` option is given, an Erlang node will be started (if necessary) with `erl -sname`.
- v** (*optional*): Prints a lot of verbose information. This is only useful for the developer and maintainer of `erl_call`.
- x ErlScript** (*optional*): Specifies another name of the Erlang start-up script to be used. If not specified, the standard `erl` start-up script is used.

Examples

Starts an Erlang node and calls `erlang:time/0`.

```
erl_call -s -a 'erlang time' -n madonna
{18,27,34}
```

Terminates an Erlang node by calling `erlang:halt/0`.

```
erl_call -s -a 'erlang halt' -n madonna
```

An apply with several arguments.

```
erl_call -s -a 'lists map [{math,sqrt},[1,4,9,16,25]]' -n madonna
```

Evaluates a couple of expressions. The input ends with EOF (Control-D).

```
erl_call -s -e -n madonna
statistics(runtime),
X=1,
Y=2,
{_,T}=statistics(runtime),
{X+Y,T}.
^D
{ok,{3,0}}
```

Compiles a module and runs it. Again, the input ends with EOF (Control-D). (In the example shown, the output has been formatted afterwards).

```

erl_call -s -m -a lolita -n madonna
-module(lolita).
-compile(export_all).
start() ->
    P = processes(),
    F = fun(X) -> {X,process_info(X,registered_name)} end,
    lists:map(F,[],P).
^D
[<madonna@chivas.du.etx.ericsson.se,0,0>,
 {registered_name,init}},
 [<madonna@chivas.du.etx.ericsson.se,2,0>,
 {registered_name,erl_prim_loader}},
 [<madonna@chivas.du.etx.ericsson.se,4,0>,
 {registered_name,error_logger}},
 [<madonna@chivas.du.etx.ericsson.se,5,0>,
 {registered_name,application_controller}},
 [<madonna@chivas.du.etx.ericsson.se,6,0>,
 {registered_name,kernel}},
 [<madonna@chivas.du.etx.ericsson.se,7,0>,
 []],
 [<madonna@chivas.du.etx.ericsson.se,8,0>,
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 [<madonna@chivas.du.etx.ericsson.se,9,0>,
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 []],
 [<madonna@chivas.du.etx.ericsson.se,16,0>,
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 [<madonna@chivas.du.etx.ericsson.se,17,0>,
 {registered_name,code_server}},
 [<madonna@chivas.du.etx.ericsson.se,20,0>,
 {registered_name,user}},
 [<madonna@chivas.du.etx.ericsson.se,38,0>,
 []]]

```

Erl_Interface Library Reference

Short Summaries

- C Library **Registry** [page 21] – Store and backup key-value pairs
- C Library **erl_connect** [page 29] – Communicate with Distributed Erlang
- C Library **erl_error** [page 37] – Error Print Routines
- C Library **erl_eterm** [page 38] – Functions for Erlang Term Construction
- C Library **erl_format** [page 47] – Create and Match Erlang Terms
- C Library **erl_global** [page 49] – Access globally registered names
- C Library **erl_malloc** [page 51] – Memory Allocation Functions
- C Library **erl_marshall** [page 53] – Encoding and Decoding of Erlang terms

Registry

The following functions are exported:

- `int ei_reg_close(reg)` Close a registry
- `int ei_reg_delete(reg, key)` Delete an object from the registry
- `int ei_reg_dump(fd, reg, mntab, flags)` Back up a registry to Mnesia
- `double ei_reg_getfval(reg, key)` Get a floating point object
- `int ei_reg_getival(reg, key)` Get an integer object
- `const void * ei_reg_getpval(reg, key, size)` Get a binary object
- `const char * ei_reg_getsval(reg, key)` Get a string object
- `int ei_reg_getval(reg, key, flags, v, ...)` Get any object
- `int ei_reg_markdirty(reg, key)` Mark an object as dirty
- `ei_reg * ei_reg_open(size)` Create and open a registry
- `int ei_reg_purge(reg)` Remove deleted objects
- `int ei_reg_resize(reg, newsize)` Resize a registry
- `int ei_reg_restore(fd, reg, mntab)` Restore a registry from Mnesia
- `int ei_reg_setfval(reg, key, f)` Assign a floating point object
- `int ei_reg_setival(reg, key, i)` Assign an integer object
- `int ei_reg_setpval(reg, key, p, size)` Assign a binary object

- `int ei_reg_setsval(reg, key, s)` Assign a string object
- `int ei_reg_setval(reg, key, flags, v, ...)` Assign a value to any object type
- `int ei_reg_stat(reg, key, obuf)` Get object information
- `int ei_reg_tabstat(reg, obuf)` Get registry information

erl_connect

The following functions are exported:

- `int erl_connect_init(number, cookie, creation)` Initializes communication
- `int erl_connect_xinit(host, alive, node, addr, cookie, creation)` Initializes communication
- `int erl_connect(node)` Establishes a connection to an Erlang node
- `int erl_xconnect(addr, alive)` Establishes a connection to an Erlang node
- `int erl_close_connection(fd)` Closes a connection to an Erlang node
- `int erl_receive(fd, bufp, bufsize)` Receives a message
- `int erl_receive_msg(fd, bufp, bufsize, emsg)` Receives and decodes a message
- `int erl_xreceive_msg(fd, bufpp, bufsizep, emsg)` Receives and decodes a message
- `int erl_send(fd, to, msg)` Sends a message
- `int erl_reg_send(fd, to, msg)` Sends a message to a registered name
- `ETERM * erl_rpc(fd, mod, fun, args)` Remote Procedure Call
- `void erl_rpc_to(fd, mod, fun, args)` Remote Procedure Call
- `int erl_rpc_from(fd, timeout, emsg)` Remote Procedure Call
- `int erl_publish(port)` Publishes a node name
- `int erl_xpublish(port, addr)` Publishes a node name
- `int erl_accept(listensock, conp)` Accepts a connection
- `const char * erl_thiscookie()` Retrieves some values
- `const char * erl_thisnodename()` Retrieves some values
- `const char * erl_thishostname()` Retrieves some values
- `const char * erl_thisalivename()` Retrieves some values
- `short erl_thiscreation()` Retrieves some values
- `int erl_unpublish(alive)` Unpublishes a node name

erl_error

The following functions are exported:

- `void erl_err_msg(FormatStr, ...)` Non-fatal error, and not system call error
- `void erl_err_quit(FormatStr, ...)` Fatal error, but not system call error
- `void erl_err_ret(FormatStr, ...)` Non-fatal system call error
- `void erl_err_sys(FormatStr, ...)` Fatal system call error

erl_eterm

The following functions are exported:

- ETERM * erl_cons(head, tail) Prepends a term to the head of a list.
- ETERM * erl_copy_term(term) Creates a copy of an Erlang term
- ETERM * erl_element(position, tuple) Extracts an element from an Erlang tuple
- void erl_init(NULL, 0) Initialization routine
- ETERM * erl_hd(list) Extracts the first element from a list
- ETERM * erl_iolist_to_binary(term) Converts an IO list to a binary
- char * erl_iolist_to_string(list) Converts an IO list to a zero terminated string
- int erl_iolist_length(list) Returns the length of an IO list
- int erl_length(list) Determines the length of a list
- ETERM * erl_mk_atom(string) Creates an atom
- ETERM * erl_mk_binary(bptr, size) Creates a binary object
- ETERM * erl_mk_empty_list() Creates an empty Erlang list
- ETERM * erl_mk_estring(string, len) Creates an Erlang string
- ETERM * erl_mk_float(f) Creates an Erlang float
- ETERM * erl_mk_int(n) Creates an Erlang integer
- ETERM * erl_mk_list(array, arrsize) Creates a list from an array
- ETERM * erl_mk_pid(node, number, serial, creation) Creates a process identifier
- ETERM * erl_mk_port(node, number, creation) Creates a port identifier
- ETERM * erl_mk_ref(node, number, creation) Creates an old Erlang reference
- ETERM * erl_mk_long_ref(node, n1, n2, n3, creation) Creates an Erlang reference
- ETERM * erl_mk_string(string) Creates a string
- ETERM * erl_mk_tuple(array, arrsize) Creates an Erlang tuple from an array
- ETERM * erl_mk_uint(n) Creates an unsigned integer
- ETERM * erl_mk_var(name) Creates an Erlang variable
- int erl_print_term(stream, term) Prints an Erlang term
- int erl_size(term) Returns the arity of a tuple or binary
- ETERM * erl_tl(list) Extracts the tail from a list
- ETERM * erl_var_content(term, name) Extracts the content of a variable

erl_format

The following functions are exported:

- ETERM * erl_format(FormatStr, ...) Creates an Erlang term
- int erl_match(Pattern, Term) Performs pattern matching

erl_global

The following functions are exported:

- `char ** erl_global_names(fd, count)` Obtain list of Global names
- `int erl_global_register(fd, name, pid)` Register a name in Global
- `int erl_global_unregister(fd, name)` Unregister a name in Global
- `ETERM * erl_global_whereis(fd, name, node)` Look up a name in global

erl_malloc

The following functions are exported:

- `ETERM * erl_alloc_eterm(etype)` Allocates an ETERM structure
- `void erl_eterm_release(void)` Clears the ETERM freelist
- `void erl_eterm_statistics(allocated, freed)` Reports term allocation statistics
- `void erl_free_array(array, size)` Frees an array of ETERM structures
- `void erl_free_term(t)` Frees an ETERM structure
- `void erl_free_compound(t)` Frees an array of ETERM structures
- `void erl_malloc(size)` Allocates some memory
- `void erl_free(ptr)` Frees some memory

erl_marshall

The following functions are exported:

- `int erl_compare_ext(bufp1, bufp2)` Compares encoded byte sequences
- `ETERM * erl_decode(bufp)` Converts a term from Erlang external format
- `ETERM * erl_decode_buf(bufpp)` Converts a term from Erlang external format
- `int erl_encode(term, bufp)` Converts a term into Erlang external format
- `int erl_encode_buf(term, bufpp)` Converts a term into Erlang external format
- `int erl_ext_size(bufp)` Counts elements in encoded term
- `char erl_ext_type(bufp)` Determines type of an encoded byte sequence
- `unsigned char * erl_peek_ext(bufp, pos)` Steps over encoded term
- `int erl_term_len(t)` Determines encoded size of term

registry (C Module)

This module provides support for storing key-value pairs in a table known as a registry, backing up registries to Mnesia in an atomic manner, and later restoring the contents of a registry from Mnesia.

Exports

```
int ei_reg_close(reg)
```

Types:

- `ei_reg *reg`;

A registry that has previously been created with `ei_reg_open()` is closed, and all the objects it contains are freed.

`reg` is the registry to close.

The function returns 0.

```
int ei_reg_delete(reg, key)
```

Types:

- `ei_reg *reg`;
- `const char *key`;

Delete an object from the registry. The object is not actually removed from the registry, it is only marked for later removal so that on subsequent backups to Mnesia, the corresponding object can be removed from the Mnesia table as well. If another object is later created with the same key, the object will be reused.

The object will be removed from the registry after a call to `ei_reg_dump()` or `ei_reg_purge()`.

`reg` is the registry containing `key`.

`key` is the object to remove.

If the object was found, the function returns 0 indicating success. Otherwise the function returns -1.

```
int ei_reg_dump(fd, reg, mntab, flags)
```

Types:

- `int fd`;
- `ei_reg *reg`;
- `const char *mntab`;

- int flags;

Dump the contents of a registry to a Mnesia table in an atomic manner, i.e. either all data will be updated, or none of it will. If any errors are encountered while backing up the data, the entire operation is aborted.

fd is an open connection to Erlang. Mnesia 3.0 or later must be running on the Erlang node.

reg is the registry to back up.

mntab is the name of the Mnesia table where the backed up data should be placed. If the table does not exist, it will be created automatically using configurable defaults. See your Mnesia documentation for information about configuring this behaviour.

If flags is 0, the backup will include only those objects which have been created, modified or deleted since the last backup or restore (i.e. an incremental backup). After the backup, any objects that were marked dirty are now clean, and any objects that had been marked for deletion are deleted.

Alternatively, setting flags to EI_FORCE will cause a full backup to be done, and EI_NOPURGE will cause the deleted objects to be left in the registry afterwards. These can be bitwise ORed together if both behaviours are desired. If EI_NOPURGE was specified, you can use ei_reg_purge() to explicitly remove the deleted items from the registry later.

The function returns 0 on success, or -1 on failure.

```
double ei_reg_getfval(reg,key)
```

Types:

- ei_reg *reg;
- const char *key;

Get the value associated with key in the registry. The value must be a floating point type.

reg is the registry where the object will be looked up.

key is the name of the object to look up.

On success, the function returns the value associated with key. If the object was not found or it was not a floating point object, -1.0 is returned. To avoid problems with in-band error reporting (i.e. if you cannot distinguish between -1.0 and a valid result) use the more general function ei_reg_getval() instead.

```
int ei_reg_getival(reg,key)
```

Types:

- ei_reg *reg;
- const char *key;

Get the value associated with key in the registry. The value must be an integer.

reg is the registry where the object will be looked up.

key is the name of the object to look up.

On success, the function returns the value associated with key. If the object was not found or it was not an integer object, -1 is returned. To avoid problems with in-band error reporting (i.e. if you cannot distinguish between -1 and a valid result) use the more general function ei_reg_getval() instead.

```
const void * ei_reg_getpval(reg,key,size)
```

Types:

- ei_reg *reg;
- const char *key;
- int size;

Get the value associated with *key* in the registry. The value must be a binary (pointer) type.

reg is the registry where the object will be looked up.

key is the name of the object to look up.

size will be initialized to contain the length in bytes of the object, if it is found.

On success, the function returns the value associated with *key* and indicates its length in *size*. If the object was not found or it was not a binary object, NULL is returned. To avoid problems with in-band error reporting (i.e. if you cannot distinguish between NULL and a valid result) use the more general function `ei_reg_getval()` instead.

```
const char * ei_reg_getsval(reg,key)
```

Types:

- ei_reg *reg;
- const char *key;

Get the value associated with *key* in the registry. The value must be a string.

reg is the registry where the object will be looked up.

key is the name of the object to look up.

On success, the function returns the value associated with *key*. If the object was not found or it was not a string, NULL is returned. To avoid problems with in-band error reporting (i.e. if you cannot distinguish between NULL and a valid result) use the more general function `ei_reg_getval()` instead.

```
int ei_reg_getval(reg,key,flags,v,...)
```

Types:

- ei_reg *reg;
- const char *key;
- int flags;
- void *v (see below)

This is a general function for retrieving any kind of object from the registry.

reg is the registry where the object will be looked up.

key is the name of the object to look up.

flags indicates the type of object that you are looking for. If *flags* is 0, then any kind of object will be returned. If *flags* is one of `ELINT`, `ELFLT`, `ELSTR` or `ELBIN`, then only values of that kind will be returned. The buffer pointed to by *v* must be large enough to hold the return data, i.e. it must be a pointer to one of `int`, `double`, `char*` or `void*`, respectively. Also, if *flags* is `ELBIN`, then a fifth argument `int *size` is required, so that the size of the object can be returned.

If the function succeeds, *v* (and *size* if the object is binary) will be initialized with the value associated with *key*, and the function will return one of `ELINT`, `ELFLT`, `ELSTR`

or ELBIN, indicating the type of object. On failure the function will return -1 and the arguments will not be updated.

```
int ei_reg_markdirty(reg,key)
```

Types:

- ei_reg *reg;
- const char *key;

Mark a registry object as dirty. This will ensure that it is included in the next backup to Mnesia. Normally this operation will not be necessary since all of the normal registry 'set' functions do this automatically. However if you have retrieved the value of a string or binary object from the registry and modified the contents, then the change will be invisible to the registry and the object will be assumed to be unmodified. This function allows you to make such modifications and then let the registry know about them.

reg is the registry containing the object.

key is the name of the object to mark.

The function returns 0 on success, or -1 on failure.

```
ei_reg * ei_reg_open(size)
```

Types:

- int size;

Open (create) a registry. The registry will be initially empty. Use ei_reg_close() to close the registry later.

size is the approximate number of objects you intend to store in the registry. Since the registry uses a hash table with collision chaining, there is no absolute upper limit on the number of objects that can be stored in it. However for reasons of efficiency, it is a good idea to choose a number that is appropriate for your needs. It is possible to use ei_reg_resize() to change the size later. Note that the number you provide will be increased to the nearest larger prime number.

On success, an empty registry will be returned. On failure, NULL will be returned.

```
int ei_reg_purge(reg)
```

Types:

- ei_reg *reg;

Remove all objects marked for deletion. When objects are deleted with ei_reg_delete() they are not actually removed from the registry, only marked for later removal. This is so that on a subsequent backup to Mnesia, the objects can also be removed from the Mnesia table. If you are not backing up to Mnesia then you may wish to remove the objects manually with this function.

reg is a registry containing objects marked for deletion.

The function returns 0 on success, or -1 on failure.

```
int ei_reg_resize(reg,newsize)
```

Types:

- ei_reg *reg;
- int newsize;

Change the size of a registry.

`newsize` is the new size to make the registry. The number will be increased to the nearest larger prime number.

On success, the registry will be resized, all contents rehashed, and the function will return 0. On failure, the registry will be left unchanged and the function will return -1.

```
int ei_reg_restore(fd,reg,mntab)
```

Types:

- int fd;
- ei_reg *reg;
- const char *mntab;

The contents of a Mnesia table are read into the registry.

`fd` is an open connection to Erlang. Mnesia 3.0 or later must be running on the Erlang node.

`reg` is the registry where the data should be placed.

`mntab` is the name of the Mnesia table to read data from.

Note that only tables of a certain format can be restored, i.e. those that have been created and backed up to with `ei_reg_dump()`. If the registry was not empty before the operation, then the contents of the table are added to the contents of the registry. If the table contains objects with the same keys as those already in the registry, the registry objects will be overwritten with the new values. If the registry contains objects that were not in the table, they will be unchanged by this operation.

After the restore operation, the entire contents of the registry is marked as unmodified. Note that this includes any objects that were modified before the restore and not overwritten by the restore.

The function returns 0 on success, or -1 on failure.

```
int ei_reg_setfval(reg,key,f)
```

Types:

- ei_reg *reg;
- const char *key;
- double f;

Create a key-value pair with the specified `key` and floating point value `f`. If an object already existed with the same key, the new value replaces the old one. If the previous value was a binary or string, it is freed with `free()`.

`reg` is the registry where the object should be placed.

`key` is the name of the object.

`f` is the floating point value to assign.

The function returns 0 on success, or -1 on failure.

```
int ei_reg_setival(reg,key,i)
```

Types:

- ei_reg *reg;
- const char *key;

- `int i;`

Create a key-value pair with the specified `key` and integer value `i`. If an object already existed with the same `key`, the new value replaces the old one. If the previous value was a binary or string, it is freed with `free()`.

`reg` is the registry where the object should be placed.

`key` is the name of the object.

`i` is the integer value to assign.

The function returns 0 on success, or -1 on failure.

```
int ei_reg_setpval(reg,key,p,size)
```

Types:

- `ei_reg *reg;`
- `const char *key;`
- `const void *p;`
- `int size;`

Create a key-value pair with the specified `key` whose “value” is the binary object pointed to by `p`. If an object already existed with the same `key`, the new value replaces the old one. If the previous value was a binary or string, it is freed with `free()`.

`reg` is the registry where the object should be placed.

`key` is the name of the object.

`p` is a pointer to the binary object. The object itself must have been created through a single call to `malloc()` or similar function, so that the registry can later delete it if necessary by calling `free()`.

`size` is the length in bytes of the binary object.

The function returns 0 on success, or -1 on failure.

```
int ei_reg_setsval(reg,key,s)
```

Types:

- `ei_reg *reg;`
- `const char *key;`
- `const char *s;`

Create a key-value pair with the specified `key` whose “value” is the specified string `s`. If an object already existed with the same `key`, the new value replaces the old one. If the previous value was a binary or string, it is freed with `free()`.

`reg` is the registry where the object should be placed.

`key` is the name of the object.

`s` is the string to assign. The string itself must have been created through a single call to `malloc()` or similar function, so that the registry can later delete it if necessary by calling `free()`.

The function returns 0 on success, or -1 on failure.

```
int ei_reg_setval(reg,key,flags,v,...)
```

Types:

- `ei_reg *reg;`

- `const char *key;`
- `int flags;`
- `v` (see below)

Create a key-value pair with the specified key whose value is specified by `v`. If an object already existed with the same key, the new value replaces the old one. If the previous value was a binary or string, it is freed with `free()`.

`reg` is the registry where the object should be placed.

`key` is the name of the object.

`flags` indicates the type of the object specified by `v`. Flags must be one of `EL_INT`, `EL_FLT`, `EL_STR` and `EL_BIN`, indicating whether `v` is `int`, `double`, `char*` or `void*`. If `flags` is `EL_BIN`, then a fifth argument `size` is required, indicating the size in bytes of the object pointed to by `v`.

If you wish to store an arbitrary pointer in the registry, specify a `size` of 0. In this case, the object itself will not be transferred by an `ei_reg_dump()` operation, just the pointer value.

The function returns 0 on success, or -1 on failure.

```
int ei_reg_stat(reg,key,obuf)
```

Types:

- `ei_reg *reg;`
- `const char *key;`
- `struct ei_reg_stat *obuf;`

Return information about an object.

`reg` is the registry containing the object.

`key` is the name of the object.

`obuf` is a pointer to an `ei_reg_stat` structure, defined below:

```
struct ei_reg_stat {
    int attr;
    int size;
};
```

In `attr` the object's attributes are stored as the logical OR of its type (one of `EL_INT`, `EL_FLT`, `EL_BIN` and `EL_STR`), whether it is marked for deletion (`EL_DELETE`) and whether it has been modified since the last backup to Mnesia (`EL_DIRTY`).

The `size` field indicates the size in bytes required to store `EL_STR` (including the terminating 0) and `EL_BIN` objects, or 0 for `EL_INT` and `EL_FLT`.

The function returns 0 and initializes `obuf` on success, or returns -1 on failure.

```
int ei_reg_tabstat(reg,obuf)
```

Types:

- `ei_reg *reg;`
- `struct ei_reg_tabstat *obuf;`

Return information about a registry. Using information returned by this function, you can see whether the size of the registry is suitable for the amount of data it contains.

`reg` is the registry to return information about.

`obuf` is a pointer to an `ei_reg_tabstat` structure, defined below:

```
struct ei_reg_tabstat {  
    int size;  
    int nelem;  
    int npos;  
    int collisions;  
};
```

The `size` field indicates the number of hash positions in the registry. This is the number you provided when you created or last resized the registry, rounded up to the nearest prime.

`nelem` indicates the number of elements stored in the registry. It includes objects that are deleted but not purged.

`npos` indicates the number of unique positions that are occupied in the registry.

`collisions` indicates how many elements are sharing positions in the registry.

On success, the function returns 0 and `obuf` is initialized to contain table statistics. On failure, the function returns -1.

erl_connect (C Module)

This module provides support for communication between distributed Erlang nodes and C nodes, in a manner that is transparent to Erlang processes.

A C node appears to Erlang as a *hidden node*. That is, Erlang processes that know the name of the C node are able to communicate with it in a normal manner, but the node name will not appear in the listing provided by the Erlang function `nodes/0`.

Exports

```
int erl_connect_init(number, cookie, creation)
int erl_connect_xinit(host, alive, node, addr, cookie, creation)
```

Types:

- int number;
- char *cookie;
- short creation;
- char *host, *alive, *node;
- struct in_addr *addr;

These functions initialize the `erl_connect` module. In particular, they are used to identify the name of the C-node from which they are called. One of these functions must be called before any of the other functions in the `erl_connect` module are used.

`erl_connect_xinit()` stores for later use information about the node's host name `host`, alive name `alive`, node name `node`, IP address `addr`, cookie `cookie`, and creation number `creation`. `erl_connect_init()` provides an alternative interface which does not require as much information from the caller. Instead, `erl_connect_init()` uses `gethostbyname()` to obtain default values.

If you use `erl_connect_init()` your node will have a short name, i.e., it will not be fully qualified. If you need to use fully qualified (a.k.a. long) names, use `erl_connect_xinit()` instead.

`host` is the name of the host on which the node is running.

`alive` is the alive name of the node.

`node` is the name of the node. The nodename should be of the form *alivename@hostname*.

`addr` is the 32-bit IP address of `host`.

`cookie` is the authorization string required for access to the remote node. Refer to the `auth` module for more details.

creation helps identify a particular instance of a C node. In particular, it can help prevent us from receiving messages sent to an earlier process with the same registered name.

A C node acting as a server will be assigned a creation number when it calls `erl_publish()` or `erl_xpublish()`.

number is used by `erl_connect_init()` to construct the actual node name. In the second example shown below, *"c17@a.DNS.name"* will be the resulting node name.

Example 1:

```
struct in_addr addr;
addr = inet_addr("150.236.14.75");
if (!erl_connect_xinit("chivas",
                      "madonna",
                      "madonna@chivas.du.etx.ericsson.se",
                      &addr;
                      "samplecookiestring..."),
    0)
    erl_err_quit("<ERROR> when initializing !");
```

Example 2:

```
if (!erl_connect_init(17, "samplecookiestring...", 0))
    erl_err_quit("<ERROR> when initializing !");
```

```
int  erl_connect(node)
int  erl_xconnect(addr, alive)
```

Types:

- char *node, *alive;
- struct in_addr *addr;

These functions set up a connection to an Erlang node.

`erl_xconnect()` requires the IP address of the remote host and the alive name of the remote node to be specified. `erl_connect()` provides an alternative interface, and determines the information from the node name provided.

`addr` is the 32-bit IP address of the remote host.

`alive` is the alivename of the remote node.

`node` is the name of the remote node.

These functions return an open file descriptor on success, or a negative value indicating that an error occurred.

```
#define NODE    "madonna@chivas.du.etx.ericsson.se"
#define ALIVE   "madonna"
#define IP_ADDR "150.236.14.75"

/** Variant 1 */
erl_connect( NODE );

/** Variant 2 */
struct in_addr addr;
addr = inet_addr(IP_ADDR);
erl_xconnect( &addr , ALIVE );
```

```
int erl_close_connection(fd)
```

Types:

- int fd;

This function closes an open connection to an Erlang node.

Fd is a file descriptor obtained from `erl_connect()` or `erl_xconnect()`.

On success, 0 is returned. If the call fails, a non-zero value is returned, and the reason for the error can be obtained with the appropriate platform-dependent call.

```
int erl_receive(fd, bufp, bufsize)
```

Types:

- int fd;
- char *bufp;
- int bufsize;

This function receives a message consisting of a sequence of bytes in the Erlang external format.

fd is an open descriptor to an Erlang connection.

bufp is a buffer large enough to hold the expected message.

bufsize indicates the size of bufp.

If a *tick* occurs, i.e., the Erlang node on the other end of the connection has polled this node to see if it is still alive, the function will return `ERL_TICK` and no message will be placed in the buffer.

On success, the message is placed in the specified buffer and the function returns the number of bytes actually read. On failure, the function returns a negative value indicating the type of error that occurred.

```
int erl_receive_msg(fd, bufp, bufsize, emsg)
```

Types:

- int fd;
- unsigned char *bufp;
- int bufsize;
- ErlMessage *emsg;

This function receives the message into the specified buffer, and decodes into the (`ErlMessage *`) `emsg`.

fd is an open descriptor to an Erlang connection.

bufp is a buffer large enough to hold the expected message.

bufsize indicates the size of bufp.

emsg is a pointer to an `ErlMessage` structure, into which the message will be decoded. `ErlMessage` is defined as follows:

```
typedef struct {
    int type;
    ETERM *msg;
    ETERM *to;
    ETERM *from;
    char to_name[MAXREGLLEN];
} ErlMessage;
```

Note:

The definition of `ErlMessage` has changed since earlier versions of `Erl_Interface`.

`type` identifies the type of message, one of `ERL_SEND`, `ERL_REG_SEND`, `ERL_LINK`, `ERL_UNLINK` and `ERL_EXIT`.

If `type` contains `ERL_SEND` this indicates that an ordinary send operation has taken place, and `emsg->to` contains the Pid of the recipient. If `type` contains `ERL_REG_SEND` then a registered send operation took place, and `emsg->from` contains the Pid of the sender. In both cases, the actual message will be in `emsg->msg`.

If `type` contains one of `ERL_LINK` or `ERL_UNLINK`, then `emsg->to` and `emsg->from` contain the pids of the sender and recipient of the link or unlink. `emsg->msg` is not used in these cases.

If `type` contains `ERL_EXIT`, then this indicates that a link has been broken. In this case, `emsg->to` and `emsg->from` contain the pids of the linked processes, and `emsg->msg` contains the reason for the exit.

Note:

It is the caller's responsibility to release the memory pointed to by `emsg->msg`, `emsg->to` and `emsg->from`.

If a *tick* occurs, i.e., the Erlang node on the other end of the connection has polled this node to see if it is still alive, the function will return `ERL_TICK` indicating that the tick has been received and responded to, but no message will be placed in the buffer. In this case you should call `erl_receive_msg()` again.

On success, the function returns `ERL_MSG` and the `Emsg` struct will be initialized as described above, or `ERL_TICK`, in which case no message is returned. On failure, the function returns `ERL_ERROR`.

```
int erl_xreceive_msg(fd, bufpp, bufsizep, emsg)
```

Types:

- int fd;
- unsigned char **bufpp;
- int *bufsizep;
- ErlMessage *emsg;

This function is similar to `erl_receive_msg`. The difference is that `erl_xreceive_msg` expects the buffer to have been allocated by `malloc`, and reallocates it if the received message doesn't fit into the original buffer. For that reason, both buffer and buffer length are given as pointers - their values may change by the call.

On success, the function returns `ERL_MSG` and the `Emsg` struct will be initialized as described above, or `ERL_TICK`, in which case no message is returned. On failure, the function returns an error code (the error codes are defined in `erl_connect.h`).

```
int erl_send(fd, to, msg)
```

Types:

- int fd;
- ETERM *to, *msg;

This function sends an Erlang term to a process.

fd is an open descriptor to an Erlang connection.

to is an Erlang term containing the Pid of the intended recipient of the message.

msg is the Erlang term to be sent.

The function returns 1 if successful, otherwise 0.

```
int erl_reg_send(fd, to, msg)
```

Types:

- int fd;
- char *to;
- ETERM *msg;

This function sends an Erlang term to a registered process.

fd is an open descriptor to an Erlang connection.

to is a string containing the registered name of the intended recipient of the message.

msg is the Erlang term to be sent.

The function returns 1 if successful, otherwise 0.

```
ETERM * erl_rpc(fd, mod, fun, args)
```

```
void erl_rpc_to(fd, mod, fun, args)
```

```
int erl_rpc_from(fd, timeout, emsg)
```

Types:

- int fd, timeout;
- char *mod, *fun;
- ETERM *args;
- ErlMessage *emsg;

These functions support calling Erlang functions on remote nodes. `erl_rpc_to()` sends an rpc request to a remote node and `erl_rpc_from()` receives the results of such a call. `erl_rpc()` combines the functionality of these two functions by sending an rpc request and waiting for the results. See also `rpc:call/4`.

`fd` is an open descriptor to an Erlang connection.

`timeout` is the maximum time (in ms) to wait for results. Specify `ERL_NO_TIMEOUT` to wait forever. When `erl_rpc()` calls `erl_rpc_from()`, the call will never timeout.

`mod` is the name of the module containing the function to be run on the remote node.

`fun` is the name of the function to run.

`args` is an Erlang list, containing the arguments to be passed to the function.

`emsg` is a message containing the result of the function call.

The actual message returned by the rpc server is a 2-tuple `{rex,Reply}`. If you are using `erl_rpc_from()` in your code then this is the message you will need to parse. If you are using `erl_rpc()` then the tuple itself is parsed for you, and the message returned to your program is the erlang term containing `Reply` only. Replies to rpc requests are always `ERL_SEND` messages.

Note:

It is the caller's responsibility to free the returned `ETERM` structure as well as the memory pointed to by `emsg->msg` and `emsg->to`.

On success, `erl_rpc()` returns an Erlang term containing the result of the call. On failure, it returns `NULL`. The value returned by `erl_rpc_from()` is `ERL_ERROR` on failure, or `ERL_TIMEOUT` if a reply is not received within the specified time. On success, `erl_rpc_from()` returns `ERL_MSG` and `Emsg` contains the response. See `erl_receive_msg()` for a description of the `ErlMessage` struct.

```
int  erl_publish(port)
int  erl_xpublish(port, addr)
```

Types:

- `int port;`
- `struct in_addr *addr;`

These functions are used by a server process to register with the local name server *epmd*, thereby allowing other processes to send messages by using the registered name. Before calling either of these functions, the process should have called `bind()` and `listen()` on an open socket.

Note:

The use of `erl_xpublish` is deprecated. Use `erl_publish` instead.

`port` is the local name to register, and should be the same as the port number that was previously bound to the socket.

`addr` is the 32-bit IP address of the local host.

To unregister with epmd, simply close the returned descriptor. See also `erl_unpublish()`.

On success, the function returns a descriptor connecting the calling process to epmd. On failure, it returns -1.

```
int  erl_accept(listensock, conp)
```

Types:

- int listensock;
- ErlConnect *conp;

This function is used by a server process to accept a connection from a client process.

listensock is an open socket descriptor on which `listen()` has previously been called.

conp is a pointer to an ErlConnect struct, described as follows:

```
typedef struct {
    char ipadr[4];
    char nodename[MAXNODELEN];
} ErlConnect;
```

On success, conp is filled in with the address and node name of the connecting client and a file descriptor is returned. On failure, ERL_ERROR is returned.

```
const char * erl_thiscookie()
const char * erl_thisnodename()
const char * erl_thishostname()
const char * erl_thisalivename()
short  erl_thiscreation()
```

These functions can be used to retrieve information about the C Node. These values are initially set with `erl_connect_init()` or `erl_connect_xinit()`.

```
int  erl_unpublish(alive)
```

Types:

- char *alive;

This function can be called by a process to unregister a specified node name from epmd on the localhost. This may be useful, for example, when epmd has not detected the failure of a node, and will not allow the name to be reused. If you use this function to unregister your own process, be sure to also close the descriptor that was returned by `erl_publish()`.

Note:

Careless use of this function may have unpredictable results, if the registered node is in fact still running.

alive is the name of the node to unregister, i.e., the first component of the nodename, without the @hostname.

If the node was successfully unregistered from epmd, the function returns 0. Otherwise, it returns -1.

Debug Information

If a connection attempt fails, the following can be checked:

- that the right cookie was used
- that *epmd* is running
- the remote Erlang node on the other side is running the same version of Erlang as the `erl_interface` library.

erl_error (C Module)

This module contains some error printing routines taken from *Advanced Programming in the UNIX Environment* by W. Richard Stevens.

These functions are all called in the same manner as `printf()`, i.e. with a string containing format specifiers followed by a list of corresponding arguments. All output from these functions is to `stderr`.

Exports

```
void erl_err_msg(FormatStr, ... )
```

Types:

- `const char *FormatStr;`

The message provided by the caller is printed. This function is simply a wrapper for `fprintf()`.

```
void erl_err_quit(FormatStr, ... )
```

Types:

- `const char *FormatStr;`

Use this function when a fatal error has occurred that is not due to a system call. The message provided by the caller is printed and the process terminates with an exit value of 1. The function does not return.

```
void erl_err_ret(FormatStr, ... )
```

Types:

- `const char *FormatStr;`

Use this function after a failed system call. The message provided by the caller is printed followed by a string describing the reason for failure.

```
void erl_err_sys(FormatStr, ... )
```

Types:

- `const char *FormatStr;`

Use this function after a failed system call. The message provided by the caller is printed followed by a string describing the reason for failure, and the process terminates with an exit value of 1. The function does not return.

erl_eterm (C Module)

This module contains functions for creating and manipulating Erlang terms.

An Erlang term is represented by a C structure of type ETERM. Applications should not reference any fields in this structure directly, because it may be changed in future releases to provide faster and more compact term storage. Instead, applications should use the macros and functions provided.

The following macros each take a single ETERM pointer as an argument. They return a non-zero value if the test is true, and 0 otherwise:

ERL_IS_INTEGER(t) True if t is an integer.
 ERL_IS_UNSIGNED_INTEGER(t) True if t is an integer.
 ERL_IS_FLOAT(t) True if t is a floating point number.
 ERL_IS_ATOM(t) True if t is an atom.
 ERL_IS_PID(t) True if t is a Pid (process identifier).
 ERL_IS_PORT(t) True if t is a port.
 ERL_IS_REF(t) True if t is a reference.
 ERL_IS_TUPLE(t) True if t is a tuple.
 ERL_IS_BINARY(t) True if t is a binary.
 ERL_IS_LIST(t) True if t is a list with zero or more elements.
 ERL_IS_EMPTY_LIST(t) True if t is an empty list.
 ERL_IS_CONS(t) True if t is a list with at least one element.

The following macros can be used for retrieving parts of Erlang terms. None of these do any type checking; results are undefined if you pass an ETERM* containing the wrong type. For example, passing a tuple to ERL_ATOM_PTR() will likely result in garbage.

char *ERL_ATOM_PTR(t) A string representing atom t.
 int ERL_ATOM_SIZE(t) The length (in characters) of atom t.
 void *ERL_BIN_PTR(t) A pointer to the contents of t
 int ERL_BIN_SIZE(t) The length (in bytes) of binary object t.
 int ERL_INT_VALUE(t) The integer of t.
 unsigned int ERL_INT_UVALUE(t) The unsigned integer value of t.
 double ERL_FLOAT_VALUE(t) The floating point value of t.
 ETERM *ERL_PID_NODE(t) The Node in pid t.
 int ERL_PID_NUMBER(t) The sequence number in pid t.
 int ERL_PID_SERIAL(t) The serial number in pid t.
 int ERL_PID_CREATION(t) The creation number in pid t.
 int ERL_PORT_NUMBER(t) The sequence number in port t.

`int ERL_PORT_CREATION(t)` The creation number in port `t`.
`ETERM *ERL_PORT_NODE(t)` The node in port `t`.
`int ERL_REF_NUMBER(t)` The first part of the reference number in ref `t`. Use only for compatibility.
`int ERL_REF_NUMBERS(t)` Pointer to the array of reference numbers in ref `t`.
`int ERL_REF_LEN(t)` The number of used reference numbers in ref `t`.
`int ERL_REF_CREATION(t)` The creation number in ref `t`.
`int ERL_TUPLE_SIZE(t)` The number of elements in tuple `t`.
`ETERM *ERL_CONS_HEAD(t)` The head element of list `t`.
`ETERM *ERL_CONS_TAIL(t)` A List representing the tail elements of list `t`.

Exports

`ETERM * erl_cons(head, tail)`

Types:

- `ETERM *head`;
- `ETERM *tail`;

This function concatenates two Erlang terms, prepending `head` onto `tail` and thereby creating a cons cell. To make a proper list, `tail` should always be a list or an empty list. Note that `NULL` is not a valid list.

`head` is the new term to be added.

`tail` is the existing list to which `head` will be concatenated.

The function returns a new list.

`ERL_CONS_HEAD(list)` and `ERL_CONS_TAIL(list)` can be used to retrieve the head and tail components from the list. `erl_hd(list)` and `erl_tl(list)` will do the same thing, but check that the argument really is a list.

For example:

```

ETERM *list,*anAtom,*anInt;
anAtom = erl_mk_atom("madonna");
anInt  = erl_mk_int(21);
list   = erl_mk_empty_list();
list   = erl_cons(anAtom, list);
list   = erl_cons(anInt, list);
... /* do some work */
erl_free_compound(list);
  
```

`ETERM * erl_copy_term(term)`

Types:

- `ETERM *term`;

This function creates and returns a copy of the Erlang term `term`.

ETERM * erl_element(position, tuple)

Types:

- int position;
- ETERM *tuple;

This function extracts a specified element from an Erlang tuple.

position specifies which element to retrieve from tuple. The elements are numbered starting from 1.

tuple is an Erlang term containing at least position elements.

The function returns a new Erlang term corresponding to the requested element, or NULL if position was greater than the arity of tuple.

void erl_init(NULL, 0)

Types:

- void *NULL;
- int 0;

This function must be called before any of the others in the erl_interface library in order to initialize the library functions. The arguments must be specified as erl_init(NULL,0).

ETERM * erl_hd(list)

Types:

- ETERM *list;

Extracts the first element from a list.

list is an Erlang term containing a list.

The function returns an Erlang term corresponding to the head element in the list, or a NULL pointer if list was not a list.

ETERM * erl_iolist_to_binary(term)

Types:

- ETERM *list;

This function converts an IO list to a binary term.

list is an Erlang term containing a list.

This function an Erlang binary term, or NULL if list was not an IO list.

Informally, an IO list is a deep list of characters and binaries which can be sent to an Erlang port. In BNF, an IO list is formally defined as follows:

```
iolist ::= []
        | Binary
        | [iohead | iolist]
        ;
iohead ::= Binary
        | Byte (integer in the range [0..255])
        | iolist
        ;
```

`char * erl_iolist_to_string(list)`

Types:

- ETERM *list;

This function converts an IO list to a '\0' terminated C string.

`list` is an Erlang term containing an IO list. The IO list must not contain the integer 0, since C strings may not contain this value except as a terminating marker.

This function returns a pointer to a dynamically allocated buffer containing a string. If `list` is not an IO list, or if `list` contains the integer 0, NULL is returned. It is the caller's responsibility free the allocated buffer with `erl_free()`.

Refer to `erl_iolist_to_binary()` for the definition of an IO list.

`int erl_iolist_length(list)`

Types:

- ETERM *list;

Returns the length of an IO list.

`list` is an Erlang term containing an IO list.

The function returns the length of `list`, or -1 if `list` is not an IO list.

Refer to `erl_iolist_to_binary()` for the definition of an IO list.

`int erl_length(list)`

Types:

- ETERM *list;

Determines the length of a proper list.

`list` is an Erlang term containing proper list. In a proper list, all tails except the last point to another list cell, and the last tail points to an empty list.

Returns -1 if `list` is not a proper list.

`ETERM * erl_mk_atom(string)`

Types:

- char *string;

Creates an atom.

`string` is the sequence of characters that will be used to create the atom.

Returns an Erlang term containing an atom. Note that it is the callers responsibility to make sure that `string` contains a valid name for an atom.

`ERL_ATOM_PTR(atom)` can be used to retrieve the atom name (as a string). Note that the string is not 0-terminated in the atom. `ERL_ATOM_SIZE(atom)` returns the length of the atom name.

`ETERM * erl_mk_binary(bptr, size)`

Types:

- char *bptr;
- int size;

This function produces an Erlang binary object from a buffer containing a sequence of bytes.

`bptr` is a pointer to a buffer containing data to be converted.

`size` indicates the length of `bptr`.

The function returns an Erlang binary object.

`ERL_BIN_PTR(bin)` retrieves a pointer to the binary data. `ERL_BIN_SIZE(bin)` retrieves the size.

`ETERM * erl_mk_empty_list()`

This function creates and returns an empty Erlang list. Note that `NULL` is not used to represent an empty list; Use this function instead.

`ETERM * erl_mk_estring(string, len)`

Types:

- `char *string`;
- `int len`;

This function creates a list from a sequence of bytes.

`string` is a buffer containing a sequence of bytes. The buffer does not need to be zero-terminated.

`len` is the length of `string`.

The function returns an Erlang list object corresponding to the character sequence in `string`.

`ETERM * erl_mk_float(f)`

Types:

- `double f`;

Creates an Erlang float.

`f` is a value to be converted to an Erlang float.

The function returns an Erlang float object with the value specified in `f`.

`ERL_FLOAT_VALUE(t)` can be used to retrieve the value from an Erlang float.

`ETERM * erl_mk_int(n)`

Types:

- `int n`;

Creates an Erlang integer.

`n` is a value to be converted to an Erlang integer.

The function returns an Erlang integer object with the value specified in `n`.

`ERL_INT_VALUE(t)` can be used to retrieve the value value from an Erlang integer.

`ETERM * erl_mk_list(array, arrsize)`

Types:

- `ETERM **array`;

- int arrsize;

Creates an Erlang list from an array of Erlang terms, such that each element in the list corresponds to one element in the array.

array is an array of Erlang terms.

arrsize is the number of elements in array.

The function creates an Erlang list object, whose length arrsize and whose elements are taken from the terms in array.

ETERM * erl_mk_pid(node, number, serial, creation)

Types:

- const char *node;
- unsigned int number;
- unsigned int serial;
- unsigned int creation;

This function creates an Erlang process identifier. The resulting pid can be used by Erlang processes wishing to communicate with the C node.

node is the name of the C node.

number, serial and creation are arbitrary numbers. Note though, that these are limited in precision, so only the low 15, 3 and 2 bits of these numbers are actually used.

The function returns an Erlang pid object.

ERL_PID_NODE(pid), ERL_PID_NUMBER(pid), ERL_PID_SERIAL(pid) and ERL_PID_CREATION(pid) can be used to retrieve the four values used to create the pid.

ETERM * erl_mk_port(node, number, creation)

Types:

- const char *node;
- unsigned int number;
- unsigned int creation;

This function creates an Erlang port identifier.

node is the name of the C node.

number and creation are arbitrary numbers. Note though, that these are limited in precision, so only the low 18 and 2 bits of these numbers are actually used.

The function returns an Erlang port object.

ERL_PORT_NODE(port), ERL_PORT_NUMBER(port) and ERL_PORT_CREATION can be used to retrieve the three values used to create the port.

ETERM * erl_mk_ref(node, number, creation)

Types:

- const char *node;
- unsigned int number;
- unsigned int creation;

This function creates an old Erlang reference, with only 18 bits - use `erl_mk_long_ref` instead.

`node` is the name of the C node.

`number` should be chosen uniquely for each reference created for a given C node.

`creation` is an arbitrary number.

Note that `number` and `creation` are limited in precision, so only the low 18 and 2 bits of these numbers are actually used.

The function returns an Erlang reference object.

`ERL_REF_NODE(ref)`, `ERL_REF_NUMBER(ref)`, and `ERL_REF_CREATION(ref)` to retrieve the three values used to create the reference.

```
ETERM * erl_mk_long_ref(node, n1, n2, n3, creation)
```

Types:

- `const char *node`;
- `unsigned int n1, n2, n3`;
- `unsigned int creation`;

This function creates an Erlang reference, with 82 bits.

`node` is the name of the C node.

`n1`, `n2` and `n3` can be seen as one big number $n1 \cdot 2^{64} + n2 \cdot 2^{32} + n3$ which should be chosen uniquely for each reference created for a given C node.

`creation` is an arbitrary number.

Note that `n3` and `creation` are limited in precision, so only the low 18 and 2 bits of these numbers are actually used.

The function returns an Erlang reference object.

`ERL_REF_NODE(ref)`, `ERL_REF_NUMBERS(ref)`, `ERL_REF_LEN(ref)` and `ERL_REF_CREATION(ref)` to retrieve the values used to create the reference.

```
ETERM * erl_mk_string(string)
```

Types:

- `char *string`;

This function creates a list from a zero terminated string.

`string` is the zero-terminated sequence of characters (i.e. a C string) from which the list will be created.

The function returns an Erlang list.

```
ETERM * erl_mk_tuple(array, arrsize)
```

Types:

- `ETERM **array`;
- `int arrsize`;

Creates an Erlang tuple from an array of Erlang terms.

array is an array of Erlang terms.

arrsize is the number of elements in array.

The function creates an Erlang tuple, whose arity is size and whose elements are taken from the terms in array.

To retrieve the size of a tuple, either use the `erl_size` function (which checks the type of the checked term and works for a binary as well as for a tuple), or the `ERL_TUPLE_SIZE(tuple)` returns the arity of a tuple. `erl_size()` will do the same thing, but it checks that the argument really is a tuple. `erl_element(index, tuple)` returns the element corresponding to a given position in the tuple.

ETERM * `erl_mk_uint(n)`

Types:

- unsigned int n;

Creates an Erlang unsigned integer.

n is a value to be converted to an Erlang unsigned integer.

The function returns an Erlang unsigned integer object with the value specified in n.

`ERL_INT_UVALUE(t)` can be used to retrieve the value from an Erlang unsigned integer.

ETERM * `erl_mk_var(name)`

Types:

- char *name;

This function creates an unbound Erlang variable. The variable can later be bound through pattern matching or assignment.

name specifies a name for the variable.

The function returns an Erlang variable object with the name name.

int `erl_print_term(stream, term)`

Types:

- FILE *stream;
- ETERM *term;

This function prints the specified Erlang term to the given output stream.

stream indicates where the function should send its output.

term is the Erlang term to print.

The function returns the number of characters written, or a negative value if there was an error.

int `erl_size(term)`

Types:

- ETERM *term;

Returns the arity of an Erlang tuple, or the number of bytes in an Erlang binary object.
`term` is an Erlang tuple or an Erlang binary object.

The function returns the size of `term` as described above, or -1 if `term` is not one of the two supported types.

ETERM * erl_tl(list)

Types:

- ETERM *list;

Extracts the tail from a list.

`list` is an Erlang term containing a list.

The function returns an Erlang list corresponding to the original list minus the first element, or NULL pointer if `list` was not a list.

ETERM * erl_var_content(term, name)

Types:

- ETERM *term;
- char *name;

This function returns the contents of the specified variable in an Erlang term.

`term` is an Erlang term. In order for this function to succeed, `term` must be an Erlang variable with the specified name, or it must be an Erlang list or tuple containing a variable with the specified name. Other Erlang types cannot contain variables.

`name` is the name of an Erlang variable.

Returns the Erlang object corresponding to the value of `name` in `term`. If no variable with the name `name` was found in `term`, or if `term` is not a valid Erlang term, NULL is returned.

erl_format (C Module)

This module contains two routines - one general function for creating Erlang terms and one for pattern matching Erlang terms.

Exports

ETERM * erl_format(FormatStr, ...)

Types:

- char *FormatStr;

This is a general function for creating Erlang terms using a format specifier and a corresponding set of arguments, much in the way printf() works.

FormatStr is a format specification string. The set of valid format specifiers is as follows:

- ~i - Integer
- ~f - Floating point
- ~a - Atom
- ~s - String
- ~w - Arbitrary Erlang term

For each format specifier that appears in FormatStr, there must be a corresponding argument following FormatStr. An Erlang term is built according to the FormatStr with values and Erlang terms substituted from the corresponding arguments and according to the individual format specifiers. For example:

```
erl_format("[{name,~a},{age,~i},{data,~w}]",
           "madonna",
           21,
           erl_format("[{adr,~s,~i}]", "E-street", 42));
```

This will create an (ETERM *) structure corresponding to the Erlang term:

```
[{name,madonna},{age,21},{data,[{adr,"E-street",42}]}]
```

The function returns an Erlang term, or NULL if FormatStr does not describe a valid Erlang term.

int erl_match(Pattern, Term)

Types:

- ETERM *Pattern,*Term;

This function is used to perform pattern matching similar to that done in Erlang. Refer to an Erlang manual for matching rules and more examples.

Pattern is an Erlang term, possibly containing unbound variables.

Term is an Erlang term that we wish to match against Pattern.

Term and Pattern are compared, and any unbound variables in Pattern are bound to corresponding values in Term.

If Term and Pattern can be matched, the function returns a non-zero value and binds any unbound variables in Pattern. If Term Pattern do not match, the function returns 0. For example:

```
ETERM *term, *pattern, *pattern2;
term1   = erl_format("{14,21}");
term2   = erl_format("{19,19}");
pattern1 = erl_format("{A,B}");
pattern2 = erl_format("{F,F}");
if (erl_match(pattern1, term1)) {
    /* match succeeds:
     * A gets bound to 14,
     * B gets bound to 21
     */
    ...
}
if (erl_match(pattern2, term1)) {
    /* match fails because F cannot be
     * bound to two separate values, 14 and 21
     */
    ...
}
if (erl_match(pattern2, term2)) {
    /* match succeeds and F gets bound to 19 */
    ...
}
```

erl_var_content() can be used to retrieve the content of any variables bound as a result of a call to erl_match().

erl_global (C Module)

This module provides support for registering, looking up and unregistering names in the Erlang Global module. For more information, see the description of Global in the reference manual.

Exports

```
char ** erl_global_names(fd,count)
```

Types:

- int fd;
- int *count;

Retrieve a list of all known global names.

fd is an open descriptor to an Erlang connection.

count is the address of an integer, or NULL. If count is not NULL, it will be set by the function to the number of names found.

On success, the function returns an array of strings, each containing a single registered name, and sets count to the number of names found. The array is terminated by a single NULL pointer. On failure, the function returns NULL and count is not modified.

Note:

It is the caller's responsibility to free the array afterwards. It has been allocated by the function with a single call to `malloc()`, so a single `free()` is all that is necessary.

```
int erl_global_register(fd,name,pid)
```

Types:

- int fd;
- const char *name;
- ETERM *pid;

This function registers a name in Global.

`fd` is an open descriptor to an Erlang connection.

`name` is the name to register in Global.

`pid` is the pid that should be associated with `name`. This is the value that Global will return when processes request the location of `name`.

The function returns 0 on success, or -1 on failure.

```
int erl_global_unregister(fd,name)
```

Types:

- int `fd`;
- const char *`name`;

This function unregisters a name from Global.

`fd` is an open descriptor to an Erlang connection.

`name` is the name to unregister from Global.

The function returns 0 on success, or -1 on failure.

```
ETERM * erl_global_whereis(fd,name,node)
```

Types:

- int `fd`;
- const char *`name`;
- char *`node`;

`fd` is an open descriptor to an Erlang connection.

`name` is the name that is to be looked up in Global.

If `node` is not NULL, it is a pointer to a buffer where the function can fill in the name of the node where `name` is found. `node` can be passed directly to `erl_connect()` if necessary.

On success, the function returns an Erlang Pid containing the address of the given name, and `node` will be initialized to the nodename where `name` is found. On failure NULL will be returned and `node` will not be modified.

erl_malloc (C Module)

This module provides functions for allocating and deallocating memory.

Exports

`ETERM * erl_alloc_eterm(etype)`

Types:

- unsigned char etype;

This function allocates an (ETERM) structure. Specify etype as one of the following constants:

- ERL_STRING
- ERL_INTEGER
- ERL_U_INTEGER /* unsigned integer */
- ERL_ATOM
- ERL_PID /* Erlang process identifier */
- ERL_PORT
- ERL_REF /* Erlang reference */
- ERL_LIST
- ERL_TUPLE
- ERL_BINARY
- ERL_FLOAT
- ERL_VARIABLE
- ERL_SMALL_BIG /* bignum */
- ERL_U_SMALL_BIG /* bignum */

ERL_SMALL_BIG and ERL_U_SMALL_BIG are for creating Erlang bignums, which can contain integers of arbitrary size. The size of an integer in Erlang is machine dependent, but in general any integer larger than 2^{28} requires a bignum.

`void erl_eterm_release(void)`

Clears the freelist, where blocks are placed when they are released by `erl_free_term()` and `erl_free_compound()`.

`void erl_eterm_statistics(allocated, freed)`

Types:

- long *allocated;
- long *freed;

allocated and freed are initialized to contain information about the fix-allocator used to allocate ETERM components. allocated is the number of blocks currently allocated to ETERM objects. freed is the length of the freelist, where blocks are placed when they are released by erl_free_term() and erl_free_compound().

```
void erl_free_array(array, size)
```

Types:

- ETERM **array;
- int size;

This function frees an array of Erlang terms.

array is an array of ETERM* objects.

size is the number of terms in the array.

```
void erl_free_term(t)
```

Types:

- ETERM *t;

Use this function to free an Erlang term.

```
void erl_free_compound(t)
```

Types:

- ETERM *t;

Normally it is the programmer's responsibility to free each Erlang term that has been returned from any of the erl_interface functions. However since many of the functions that build new Erlang terms in fact share objects with other existing terms, it may be difficult for the programmer to maintain pointers to all such terms in order to free them individually.

erl_free_compound() will recursively free all of the sub-terms associated with a given Erlang term, regardless of whether we are still holding pointers to the sub-terms.

There is an example in the User Manual under "Building Terms and Patterns"

```
void erl_malloc(size)
```

Types:

- long size;

This function calls the standard malloc() function.

```
void erl_free(ptr)
```

Types:

- void *ptr;

This function calls the standard free() function.

erl_marshall (C Module)

This module contains functions for encoding Erlang terms into a sequence of bytes, and for decoding Erlang terms from a sequence of bytes.

Exports

```
int erl_compare_ext(bufp1, bufp2)
```

Types:

- unsigned char *bufp1, *bufp2;

This function compares two encoded terms.

bufp1 is a buffer containing an encoded Erlang term term1.

bufp2 is a buffer containing an encoded Erlang term term2.

The function returns 0 if the terms are equal, -1 if term1 is less than term2, or 1 if term2 is less than term1.

```
ETERM * erl_decode(bufp)
```

```
ETERM * erl_decode_buf(bufpp)
```

Types:

- unsigned char *bufp;
- unsigned char **bufpp;

erl_decode() and erl_decode_buf() decode the contents of a buffer and return the corresponding Erlang term. erl_decode_buf() provides a simple mechanism for dealing with several encoded terms stored consecutively in the buffer.

bufp is a pointer to a buffer containing one or more encoded Erlang terms.

bufpp is the address of a buffer pointer. The buffer contains one or more consecutively encoded Erlang terms. Following a successful call to erl_decode_buf(), bufpp will be updated so that it points to the next encoded term.

erl_decode() returns an Erlang term corresponding to the contents of bufp on success, or NULL on failure. erl_decode_buf() returns an Erlang term corresponding to the first of the consecutive terms in bufpp and moves bufpp forward to point to the next term in the buffer. On failure, each of the functions returns NULL.

```
int erl_encode(term, bufp)
```

```
int erl_encode_buf(term, bufpp)
```

Types:

- ETERM *term;
- unsigned char *bufp;
- unsigned char **bufpp;

erl_encode() and erl_encode_buf() encode Erlang terms into external format for storage or transmission. erl_encode_buf() provides a simple mechanism for encoding several terms consecutively in the same buffer.

term is an Erlang term to be encoded.

bufp is a pointer to a buffer containing one or more encoded Erlang terms.

bufpp is a pointer to a pointer to a buffer containing one or more consecutively encoded Erlang terms. Following a successful call to erl_encode_buf(), bufpp will be updated so that it points to the position for the next encoded term.

These functions return 0 in success, or 1 if term was not a valid Erlang term.

Note that no bounds checking is done on the buffer. It is the caller's responsibility to make sure that the buffer is large enough to hold the encoded terms. You can either use a static buffer that is large enough to hold the terms you expect to need in your program, or use erl_term_len() to determine the exact requirements for a given term.

The following can help you estimate the buffer requirements for a term. Note that this information is implementation specific, and may change in future versions. If you are unsure, use erl_term_len().

Erlang terms are encoded with a 1 byte tag that identifies the type of object, a 2- or 4-byte length field, and then the data itself. Specifically:

Tuples need 5 bytes, plus the space for each element.

Lists need 5 bytes, plus the space for each element, and 1 additional byte for the empty list at the end.

Strings and atoms need 3 bytes, plus 1 byte for each character (the terminating 0 is not encoded). Really long strings (more than 64k characters) are encoded as lists. Atoms cannot contain more than 256 characters.

Integers need 5 bytes.

Characters (integers < 256) need 2 bytes.

Floating point numbers need 32 bytes.

Pids need 10 bytes, plus the space for the node name, which is an atom.

Ports and Refs need 6 bytes, plus the space for the node name, which is an atom.

The total space required will be the result calculated from the information above, plus 1 additional byte for a version identifier.

```
int erl_ext_size(bufp)
```

Types:

- unsigned char *bufp;

This function returns the number of elements in an encoded term.

```
char erl_ext_type(bufp)
```

Types:

- unsigned char *bufp;

This function identifies and returns the type of Erlang term encoded in a buffer.

```
unsigned char * erl_peek_ext(bufp, pos)
```

Types:

- unsigned char *bufp;
- int pos;

This function is used for stepping over one or more encoded terms in a buffer, in order to directly access a later term.

bufp is a pointer to a buffer containing one or more encoded Erlang terms.

pos indicates how many terms to step over in the buffer.

The function returns a pointer to a sub-term that can be used in a subsequent call to `erl_decode()` in order to retrieve the term at that position. If there is no term, or pos would exceed the size of the terms in the buffer, NULL is returned.

```
int erl_term_len(t)
```

Types:

- ETERM *t;

This function determines the buffer space that would be needed by `t` if it were encoded into Erlang external format by `erl_encode()`.

The size in bytes is returned.

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