

IEEE Standards Interpretation for IEEE Std 1003.1™-2008 IEEE Standard for Information Technology- Portable Operating System Interface (POSIX®) Base Specifications, Issue 7

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Interpretation Request #1

Topic: OLDPWD **Clause:** 4. Utilities

IEEE Std 1003.1-2008 says to set OLDPWD to PWD if “the PWD environment variable is changed” or if the PWD environment variable value is changed. Currently all the existing Posix shells don’t compare OLDPWD and PWD values, thus the result of cd command might be that OLDPWD is set to current directory.

Interpretation Response

IEEE Std 1003.1-2008 clearly states that the OLDPWD environment variable must be set to the current working directory immediately prior to the call to cd as long as the cd command completes successfully, and conforming implementations must conform to this.

Rationale for Interpretation

When IEEE Std 1003.1-2008 requires that the PWD environment variable be set, that constitutes a change to the PWD environment variable even if the new value of PWD is the same as the old value of PWD.