TO:

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SUBJECT: Multi-segment files on Multics

Segments on Multics have a size limit which is perfectly acceptible for

most applications.   However, subsystems which make use of large data

bases need ways of treating many segments as a single file. An approach

that has been adopted on Multics is to put these segments into a direc-

tory with a non-zero bit count.   Such a directory is called a multi-segment

file (msf).

This convention is considered to be at a higher level than the file system

and command system.   That is, the file system and most of the command

system do not recognize msf's.   To manipulate an msf the user must use

the tools provided him by the subsystem which maintains the msf.   For

instance, he cannot expect to edit an msf containing ASCII information

using a standard Multics editor.   For convenience, the list, status and

delete commands do recognize msf's.   In addition, the IO daemon, if given

an msf, will assume that the bit count of the msf is the number of segments

in the msf and that if the msf contains N+1 segments then their names are

the characters 0, 1, 2, ..., N.