

Compiler Application (COMPILER)

version 2.1

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COMPILER Reference Manual

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- Erlang Module **compile** [page 2] – Erlang Compiler

compile

The following functions are exported:

- `file(File)`
[page 2] Compiles a file
- `file(File, Options) -> CompRet`
[page 2] Compiles a file
- `forms(Forms)`
[page 3] Compiles a list of forms
- `forms(Forms, Options) -> CompRet`
[page 3] Compiles a list of forms
- `format_error(ErrorDescriptor) -> string()`
[page 4] Formats an error descriptor

compile (Module)

This module provides an interface to the standard Erlang compiler. It can generate either a new file which contains the object code, or return a binary which can be loaded directly.

Exports

`file(File)`

Is the same as `file(File, [verbose,report_errors,report_warnings])`.

`file(File, Options) -> CompRet`

Types:

- `CompRet = ModRet | BinRet | ErrRet`
- `ModRet = {ok,ModuleName} | {ok,ModuleName,Warnings}`
- `BinRet = {ok,ModuleName,Binary} | {ok,ModuleName,Binary,Warnings}`
- `ErrRet = error | {error,Errors,Warnings}`

Compiles the code in the file `File`, which is an Erlang source code file without the `.erl` extension. `Options` determine the behavior of the compiler.

Returns `{ok,ModuleName}` if successful, or `error` if there are errors. An object code file is created if the compilation succeeds with no errors.

As a step in the compilation of Erlang code, `erl_lint` is run, resulting in warning and error messages, if appropriate. The options relevant to the syntactic and semantic controls of `erl_lint` are listed in the documentation of the module `erl_lint`.

The elements of `Options` can be selected as follows:

`binary` Causes the compiler to return the object code in a binary instead of creating an object file. If successful, the compiler returns `{ok,ModuleName,Binary}`

`'P'` Produces a listing of the parsed code after preprocessing and parse transforms, in the file `<File>.P`. No object file is produced.

`'E'` Produces a listing of the code after all source code transformations have been performed, in the file `<File>.E`. No object file is produced.

`'S'` Produces a listing of the assembler code in the file `<File>.S`. No object file is produced.

`trace` Produces slightly slower code that can be traced function by function with the use of the BIF `erlang:trace/3`.

`report_errors/report_warnings` Causes errors/warnings to be printed as they occur.

- `report` This is a short form for both `report_errors` and `report_warnings`.
- `return_errors` If this flag is set, then `{error,ErrorList,WarningList}` is returned when there are errors.
- `return_warnings` If this flag is set, then an extra field containing `WarningList` is added to the tuples returned on success.
- `return` This is a short form for both `return_errors` and `return_warnings`.
- `verbose` Causes more verbose information from the compiler describing what it is doing.
- `{outdir,Dir}` Sets a new directory for the object code. The current directory is used for output, except when a directory has been specified with this option.
- `export_all` Causes all functions in the module to be exported.
- `{i,Dir}` Add `Dir` to the list of directories to be searched when including a file.
- `{d,Macro}`
- `{d,Macro,Value}` Defines a macro `Macro` to have the value `Value`. The default is `true`).
- `{parse_transform,Module}` Causes the parse transformation function `Module:parse_transform/2` to be applied to the parsed code before the code is checked for errors.
- `asm` The input file is expected to be assembler code (default file suffix “.S”). Note that the format of assembler files is not documented, and may change between releases - this option is primarily for internal debugging use.
- `v1` Runs version 1 of the compiler, which was the compiler included in the previous major release of OTP (R5).
- `v2` Runs version 2 of the compiler. This is the default version.

Note that all the options except the include path can also be given in the file with a `-compile([Option,...]).` attribute.

For debugging of the compiler, or for pure curiosity, the intermediate code generated by each compiler pass can be inspected. A complete list of the options to produce list files can be printed by typing `compile:options()` at the Erlang shell prompt. The options will be printed in order that the passes are executed. If more than one listing option is used, the one representing the earliest pass takes effect.

Unrecognized options are ignored.

Both `WarningList` and `ErrorList` have the following format:

```
[{FileName, [ErrorInfo]}].
```

`ErrorInfo` is described below. The file name has been included here as the compiler uses the Erlang pre-processor `epp`, which allows the code to be included in other files. For this reason, it is important to know to *which* file an error or warning line number refers.

`forms(Forms)`

Is the same as `forms(File, [verbose,report_errors,report_warnings])`.

`forms(Forms, Options) -> CompRet`

Types:

- Forms = [Form]
- CompRet = ModRet | BinRet | ErrRet
- ModRet = {ok,ModuleName} | {ok,ModuleName,Warnings}
- BinRet = {ok,ModuleName,Binary} | {ok,ModuleName,Binary,Warnings}
- ErrRet = error | {error,Errors,Warnings}

Analogous to `file/1`, but takes a list of forms (in the Erlang abstract format representation) as first argument. The option `binary` is implicit; i.e., no object code file is produced. If the options indicate that a listing file should be produced (e.g., 'E'), the module name is taken as the file name.

```
format_error(ErrorDescriptor) -> string()
```

Types:

- ErrorDescriptor = `errordesc()`

Uses an `ErrorDescriptor` and returns a string which describes the error. This function is usually called implicitly when an `ErrorInfo` structure is processed. See below.

Default compiler options

The (host operating system) environment variable `ERL_COMPILER_OPTIONS` can be used to give default compiler options. Its value must be a valid Erlang term. If the value is a list, it will be used as is. If it's not a list, it will be put into a list. The list will be appended to any options given to `file/2` or `forms/2`.

Example: Setting `ERL_COMPILER_OPTIONS` to "[v1]" will by default use the old compiler. This default version can be overridden by a `v2` option given to `file/2`.

Parse Transformations

Parse transformations are used when a programmer wants to use Erlang syntax but with different semantics. The original Erlang code is then transformed into other Erlang code. This type of activity is strongly discouraged.

Error Information

The `ErrorInfo` mentioned above is the standard `ErrorInfo` structure which is returned from all IO modules. It has the following format

```
{ErrorLine, Module, ErrorDescriptor}
```

A string describing the error is obtained with the following call:

```
apply(Module, format_error, ErrorDescriptor)
```

See Also

epp, erlid_trans, erl_lint

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