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## 36.16. `commands` — Utilities for running commands¶

Platforms: Unix

The `commands` module contains wrapper functions for [`os.popen\(\)`](#) which take a system command as a string and return any output generated by the command and, optionally, the exit status.

The [`subprocess`](#) module provides more powerful facilities for spawning new processes and retrieving their results. Using the [`subprocess`](#) module is preferable to using the `commands` module.

### Note

In Python 3.x, [`getstatus\(\)`](#) and two undocumented functions (`mk2arg()` and `mkarg()`) have been removed. Also, [`getstatusoutput\(\)`](#) and [`getoutput\(\)`](#) have been moved to the [`subprocess`](#) module.

The `commands` module defines the following functions:

`commands.getstatusoutput(cmd)`¶

Execute the string `cmd` in a shell with [`os.popen\(\)`](#) and return a 2-tuple (`status`, `output`). `cmd` is actually run as `{ cmd ; } 2>&1`, so that the returned output will contain output or error messages. A trailing newline is stripped from the output. The exit status for the command can be interpreted according to the rules for the C function `wait()`.

`commands.getoutput(cmd)`¶

Like [`getstatusoutput\(\)`](#), except the exit status is ignored and the return value is a string containing the command's output.

`commands.getstatus(file)`¶

Return the output of `ls -ld file` as a string. This function uses the [`getoutput\(\)`](#) function, and properly escapes backslashes and dollar signs in the argument.

Deprecated since version 2.6: This function is nonobvious and useless. The name is also misleading in the presence of [`getstatusoutput\(\)`](#).

### Example:

```
>>> import commands
>>> commands.getstatusoutput('ls /bin/ls')
(0, '/bin/ls')
>>> commands.getstatusoutput('cat /bin/junk')
(256, 'cat: /bin/junk: No such file or directory')
>>> commands.getstatusoutput('/bin/junk')
(256, 'sh: /bin/junk: not found')
>>> commands.getoutput('ls /bin/ls')
'/bin/ls'
>>> commands.getstatus('/bin/ls')
'-rwxr-xr-x 1 root      13352 Oct 14  1994 /bin/ls'
```

### See also

Module [`subprocess`](#)

Module for spawning and managing subprocesses.

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