

**NAME**

gcobol — GCC COBOL Front-end I/O function API

**LIBRARY***libgcobol***SYNOPSIS**

```

#include <symbols.h>
#include <io.h>
#include <gcobolio.h>

gcobol_io_t
gcobol_fileops();

class gcobol_io_t {
public:
    static const char constexpr marquee[64];
    typedef void (open_t)( cblc_file_t *file,
                           char *filename,
                           int mode_char,
                           int is_quoted );
    typedef void (close_t)( cblc_file_t *file,
                            int how );
    typedef void (start_t)( cblc_file_t *file,
                            int relop, // needs enum
                            int first_last_key,
                            size_t length );
    typedef void (read_t)( cblc_file_t *file,
                           int where );
    typedef void (write_t)( cblc_file_t *file,
                           unsigned char *data,
                           size_t length,
                           int after,
                           int lines,
                           int is_random );
    typedef void (rewrite_t)( cblc_file_t *file,
                              size_t length, bool is_random );
    typedef void (delete_t)( cblc_file_t *file,
                             bool is_random );

    open_t      *Open;
    close_t     *Close;
    start_t     *Start;
    read_t      *Read;
    write_t     *Write;
    rewrite_t   *Rewrite;
    delete_t    *Delete;
    ...
};

```

**DESCRIPTION**

**gcobol** supplies replaceable I/O functionality via **gcobol\_fileops()**. It returns a pointer to a structure of C function pointers that implement sequential, relative, and indexed file operations over files whose On Disk Format (ODF) is defined by **gcobol**. A user wishing to use another library that implements the same functionality over a different ODF must supply a different implementation of **gcobol\_fileops()**, plus 7 functions, as described in this document. The pointers to those user-implemented functions are placed in a C++ object of type *gcobol\_io\_t* and an instantiation of that type is returned by **gcobol\_fileops()**. The compiled program initializes I/O operations by calling that function the first

time any file is opened.

Each function takes as its first argument a pointer to a *cblc\_file\_t* object, which is analogous to a *FILE* object used in the C **stdio** functions. The *cblc\_file\_t* structure acts as a communication area between the compiled program and the I/O library. Any information needed about the file is kept there. Notably, the outcome of any operation is stored in that structure in the *file\_status* member, not as a return code. Information about the *operation* (as opposed to the *file*) appear as parameters to the function.

*cblc\_file\_t* has one member, not used by **gcobol**, that is reserved for the user:

*void \* implementation.*

User-supplied I/O functions may assign and dereference *implementation*. **gcobol** will preserve the value, but never references it.

The 7 function pointers in *gcobol\_io\_t* are

- Open     *void open\_t(cblc\_file\_t \*file, char \*filename, int mode\_char, int is\_quoted)*  
           parameters:  
           *filename*    is the filename, as known to the OS  
           *mode\_char*   is one of  
                       'r' OPEN INPUT: read-only mode  
                       'w' OPEN OUTPUT: create a new file or overwrite an existing one  
                       'a' EXTEND: append to sequential file  
                       '+' modify existing file  
           *is\_quoted*   If **true**, *filename* is taken literally. If **false**, *filename* is interpreted as the name of an environment variable, the contents of which, if extant, are taken as the name of the file to be opened. If no such variable exists, then *filename* is used verbatim.
- Close     *void close\_t(cblc\_file\_t \*file, int how)*  
           parameters:  
           *how*    A value of 0x08 closes a "REEL unit". Because no such thing is supported, the function sets the file status to "07", meaning *not a tape*.
- Start     *void start\_t(cblc\_file\_t \*file, int relop, int first\_last\_key, size\_t length)*  
           parameters:  
           *relop*    is one of  
                       0    means '<'  
                       1    means '<='  
                       2    means '='  
                       3    means '!='  
                       4    means '>='  
                       5    means '>'  
           *first\_last\_key*  
                       is the key number (starting at 1) of the key within the *cblc\_file\_t* structure.  
           *length*    is the size of the key (TODO: per the START statement?)
- Read     *void read\_t(cblc\_file\_t \*file, int where)* parameters:  
           *where*  
                       -2 PREVIOUS  
                       -1 NEXT  
                       *N* represents a key number, starting with 1, in the *cblc\_file\_t* structure. The value of that key is used to find the record, and read it.
- Write     *void write\_t(cblc\_file\_t \*file, unsigned char \*data, size\_t length, int after, int lines, int is\_random)*  
           parameters:

*data* address of in-memory buffer to write  
*length* length of in-memory buffer to write  
*after* has the value 1 if the  
     AFTER ADVANCING *n* LINES  
     phrase was present in the **WRITE** statement, else 0  
*lines* may be one of  
     -666 ADVANCING PAGE  
     -1 no **ADVANCING** phrase appeared  
     0 ADVANCING 0 LINES is valid  
     >0 the value of *n* in ADVANCING *n* LINES  
*is\_random* is **true** if the *access mode* is RANDOM

Rewrite `void rewrite_t(cblc_file_t *file, size_t length, bool is_random)` parameters:  
     *length* number of bytes to write  
     *is\_random* **true** if *access mode* is RANDOM  
 Delete `void delete_t(cblc_file_t *file, bool is_random)` parameters:  
     *is\_random* **true** if *access mode* is RANDOM

The library implements one function that the **gcobol**-produced binary calls directly:

`gcobol_io_t *gcobol_fileops()`

This function populates a `gcobol_io_t` object with the above function pointers. The compiled binary begins by calling `gcobol_fileops()`, and then uses the supplied pointers to effect I/O.

## RETURN VALUES

I/O functions return **void**. `gcobol_fileops()` returns `gcobol_io_t*`.

## STANDARDS

The I/O library supplied by **gcobol**, **libgcobolio.so**, supports the I/O semantics defined by ISO COBOL. It is not intended to be compatible with any other ODF. That is, **libgcobolio.so** cannot be used to exchange data with any other COBOL implementation.

The purpose of the `gcobol_io_t` structure is to allow the use of other I/O implementations with other ODF representations.

## CAVEATS

The library is not well tested, not least because it is not implemented.

## BUGS

The future is yet to come.

## COPYRIGHT

Copyright (c) 2021-2026 Symas Corporation

Redistribution and use in source and binary forms, with or without modification, are permitted provided that the following conditions are met:

- \* Redistributions of source code must retain the above copyright notice, this list of conditions and the following disclaimer.
- \* Redistributions in binary form must reproduce the above copyright notice, this list of conditions and the following disclaimer in the documentation and/or other materials provided with the distribution.
- \* Neither the name of the Symas Corporation nor the names of its contributors may be used to endorse or promote products derived from this software without specific prior written permission.

THIS SOFTWARE IS PROVIDED BY THE COPYRIGHT HOLDERS AND CONTRIBUTORS "AS IS" AND ANY EXPRESS OR IMPLIED WARRANTIES, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, THE IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY AND FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE ARE DISCLAIMED. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE COPYRIGHT OWNER OR CONTRIBUTORS BE LIABLE FOR ANY DIRECT, INDIRECT, INCIDENTAL, SPECIAL, EXEMPLARY, OR CONSEQUENTIAL DAMAGES (INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, PROCUREMENT OF SUBSTITUTE GOODS OR SERVICES; LOSS OF USE, DATA, OR PROFITS; OR BUSINESS INTERRUPTION) HOWEVER CAUSED AND ON ANY THEORY OF LIABILITY, WHETHER IN CONTRACT, STRICT LIABILITY, OR TORT (INCLUDING NEGLIGENCE OR OTHERWISE) ARISING IN ANY WAY OUT OF THE USE OF THIS SOFTWARE, EVEN IF ADVISED OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.