Ruby master - Feature #16495
Inconsistent quotes in error messages
01/09/2020 09:54 PM - Kolano (Kenneth Kolano)

Status: Open
Priority: Normal
Assignee: matz (Yukihiro Matsumoto)
Target version: 

Description
Error messages use inconsistent pairs of quotes, for instance:

```
-e:1:in `<main>': undefined local variable or method `foo' for main:Object (NameError)
```

where a back tick is used on the left-hand side, and a single quote is used on the right.

The same quotes should be used on either side of the elements being quoted.

Related issues:
- Related to Ruby master - Bug #12321: Backticks in log output cause issues
  - Rejected
- Related to Ruby master - Bug #13589: unmatched opening backtick / closing quote in NoMethodError: undefined method `name' for {}:Hash
  - Rejected

History
#1 - 01/09/2020 10:36 PM - jeremyevans0 (Jeremy Evans)
- Backport deleted (2.5: UNKNOWN, 2.6: UNKNOWN, 2.7: UNKNOWN)
- ruby -v deleted (2.5.3)
- Tracker changed from Bug to Feature

#2 - 01/10/2020 12:36 AM - shevegen (Robert A. Heiler)
Hmm. Is this encoding-related perhaps? I remember having had that when I used ISO (ISO-8859-1 specifically, and a non-utf locale too). Nowadays, with Unicode, I don't seem to have this inconsistent quote - but I understand what you refer to. I used to think that it was used to denote the start, and end part of the content. :P (They are not the same characters in general right? Otherwise they would appear the same. I always thought it may be some standard, perhaps to make parsing easier or something.)

Never bothered me that much to really investigate, though.

#3 - 01/10/2020 01:04 AM - nobu (Nobuyoshi Nakada)
This combination is very common, e.g., Emacs, TeX, etc.

#4 - 01/10/2020 01:41 AM - mame (Yusuke Endoh)
- Related to Bug #12321: Backticks in log output cause issues added

#5 - 01/10/2020 01:42 AM - mame (Yusuke Endoh)
- Related to Bug #13589: unmatched opening backtick / closing quote in NoMethodError: undefined method `name' for {}:Hash added

#6 - 01/10/2020 03:30 AM - sawa (Tsuyoshi Sawada)
- Description updated
- Subject changed from Inconsistant Quotes in Error Messages to Inconsistent quotes in error messages

#7 - 01/16/2020 08:30 AM - matz (Yukihiro Matsumoto)
It was something cultural. I admit nowadays very few people use backquote as a left-hand quote, but it used to be. I also admit consistent quotes are easier for our eyes when using recent major fonts. But changing those quotes may affect existing log parsers. We have to estimate how big is the influence of the changes.

Matz.

#8 - 01/17/2020 03:06 PM - Dan0042 (Daniel DeLorme)
Maybe a fix could involve customization of which quotes to display via an ENV var or something?
Instead of changing the code all over the place you'd just be changing e.g. rb_sprintf to replace matching sets of ` and ` to use the custom quotes. So it would be possible to dynamically set the quotes to ` and ` (or even unicode ` and `) if you don't use log parsers that rely on the regular behavior. Log parsers could eventually use these custom quotes for their parsing. It would be possible for individuals to gradually experiment and report bugs where custom quote are causing trouble. Just an idea...

#9 - 01/18/2020 05:14 PM - marcandre (Marc-Andre Lafortune)
- Assignee set to matz (Yukihiro Matsumoto)

I fail to see the actual gain.

This would introducing potential incompatibilities. For example, I remember parsing using these quotes myself (this code isn't used for recent rubies so doing the change wouldn't actually affect it).

Please reject this.

#10 - 01/18/2020 05:23 PM - zverok (Victor Shepelev)

I fail to see the actual gain.

As it was already pointed in related tickets, the gain (or rather the problem solved) comes when the error message is copy-pasted into any input field supporting Markdown or Markdown-alike syntax. This includes this very tracker; and GitHub/GitLab comments/PRs; and Slack and any of its open- or closed-source modern alternatives, like Gitter or Mattermost; and almost any other of developer-friendly software that emerged in the last 10 years or so. I believe it is relatively small, but constantly annoying problem.

#11 - 01/19/2020 02:22 AM - nobu (Nobuyoshi Nakada)

zverok (Victor Shepelev) wrote:

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Why don't you use block quoting?

#12 - 01/19/2020 12:13 PM - zverok (Victor Shepelev)

nobu (Nobuyoshi Nakada)

Why don't you use block quoting?

Because error messages are by their nature something you frequently want to communicate quickly and inline? Here are some examples of backtick breaking communication: https://gist.github.com/zverok/a4fcacab3dc06d9d7585c92cad8a8dc6