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Introductory Note 201

UNIX/Linux Shell Commands

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28th July, 2003

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Abstract

The *Shell* is the command interpreter on UNIX and Linux systems. This Note intoduces some of the basic features of the Shell and lists many of the commands or programs available on the UNIX and Linux computers in Cardiff School of Computer Science.

Contents

1 The Shell

The UNIX and Linux command interpreter or *shell* is the program users interact with in a terminal emulation window. The terminal emulation window can be one in the workstation's Graphical User Interface - `gnome-terminal` on Linux or `dtterm` on Solaris. Alternatively, it can be an application such as `telnet`, secure shell client or `PuTty` on a Windows PC that's logged into Linux or UNIX over the network.

The shell used in the School of Computer Science is `bash` - Bourne Again Shell. There are other shells available such as the Bourne Shell, the C-Shell and the TC-Shell, and you can choose to use a different shell if you prefer. They all have similar characteristics but each has its own particular features. This Note assumes you are using `bash`.

`Bash` has the following features:

- a command prompt which may be configured by the user. The default prompt is

  ```
  bash-2.05$
  ```

  - a dollar symbol preceded by "bash" and the `bash` program's version number.

- the shell, like other programs on UNIX and Linux has an associated *current directory*. Programs running on UNIX and Linux use the current directory as the starting point when locating files. The shell command

  ```
  bash-2.05$ cd
  ```

  is used to change the current directory to a different location in the UNIX or Linux file system.

- commands are invoked by naming them. Most UNIX and Linux commands are simply programs which are executed by the shell. For example,

  ```
  bash-2.05$ ls
  ```

  runs the program `ls` which reads the current directory and lists the names of its files.

- When you type a command name, the shell will check to see if the command is *built-in* and will otherwise search a set of directories until it finds the program. This set is known as the *search path*.

The search path includes the current directory, your home directory and its subdirectory "linuxbin" or "solarisbin" (depending on whether you are logged in to Linux or Solaris). You can write your own programs and invoke them simply by typing their names. If you store such a program in the directory "linuxbin" or "solarisbin" as appropriate, it will be found and run no matter what your current directory is.

- commands often have *argument* strings which may, for instance, represent filenames. E.g.

  ```
  bash-2.05b$ cd ~/linuxbin
  ```

  change the current directory to "linuxbin" in your home directory. (The *tilde* character ~ means your home directory to the shell.

  Some commands need more than one argument. E.g.

  ```
  bash-2.05b$ cp fileA fileB
  ```

  is the copy command `cp` with two filename arguments; "fileA" is copied to a new file, "fileB".

  Some commands have *flag* or *option* argument strings usually beginning with "-" or "–". The flags modify the behaviour of the program being invoked:

  ```
  bash-2.05b$ ls -lt
  ```

  makes `ls` give a long listing of the files sorted by time of creation.

- the shell will expand *wildcards* to match filenames in the current directory. For example,

  ```
  bash-2.05b$ ls -l *.c
  ```

  will give a directory listing of the files with names "*anything*.c" (conventionally C program source files).

- most UNIX and Linux commands and programs adhere to a concept of *standard input* and *standard output*. The standard input is a stream of data which the program reads and the standard output is a stream of output written by the program. Often these are both attached to the terminal so that input comes from your keyboard and output goes to your screen. The shell lets you *redirect* the standard input and output.

  The symbol "<" is used to redirect standard input from a file and the symbol ">" is used to redirect standard output to a file. For example:

  ```
  bash-2.05b$ cat < fileA
  ```

  makes `cat` reads from file "fileA". It outputs the file's contents to the terminal or screen.

  ```
  bash-2.05b$ cat < fileA > fileB
  ```

  reads from "fileA" and writes to "fileB".

- the Shell has the facility to *pipe* the output of one program to the input of another. The pipe symbol is "|". For example:

  ```
  bash-2.05b$ ls | wc -w
  ```

  pipes the output of `ls` (viz., your filenames) into the word count program `wc`. The "-w" flag tells `wc` to count the number of words in its input. So the above command counts the number of files in your directory.

- You may assign *aliases* for commands or groups of commands:

```
bash-2.05b$ alias xx=exit
```

  sets up an alias "xx" to stand for the command `exit`.

- the shell has string and numeric valued variables.

```
bash-2.05b$ x="hello world"
bash-2.05b$ echo $x
```

  prints "hello world" on the screen. Some variables are pre-set, e.g. `$HOME` is your home directory. Type `set` to see a list of assigned variables.

- `Bash` is an interpretive programming language with `while` loops, `for` loops, `if-then-else` statements, etc. See the UNIX or Linux on-line documentation for more details. Type

```
bash-2.05b$ man bash
```

  to view its manual page.

- *scripts* of shell commands can be written. These can be invoked in the same way as compiled programs (i.e. just by naming them). For example:

```
bash-2.05b$ cat > ~/linuxbin/countfiles
#!/bin/bash
ls | wc -w
^D
bash-2.05b$ chmod +x ~/linuxbin/countfiles
```

  creates a `bash` script file in your "linuxbin" directory. The `chmod` command changes its protection mode to make it *executable*.

  The first line of the script tells Linux that the script is written in the Bourne again Shell language (UNIX and Linux scripts can be written in any application language), while the second line tells the Shell to run the directory listing command, `ls`, and pipe its output to the word count program, `wc`. Now

```
bash-2.05b$ countfiles
```

  will execute the script and count and output the number of files in your directory,

- the shell has "job control". Programs which don't require any terminal interaction can be run in the background.

```
bash-2.05b$ sort bigfile > sortedfile &
[1] 3470
bash-2.05b$
```

  The "&" puts the `sort` program into the background and the shell is available immediately for other commands. The shell prints the job control number ("1" in this case) and the process identity number ("3470").

  The special character "^Z" (Control-Z) can be used to suspend a program which is running in the foreground:

```
bash-2.05b$ sort bigfile > sortedfile
^Z
[1]+ Stopped sort bigfile >sortedfile
bash-2.05b$
```

  You may now use command `bg` to put the program into the background or `fg` to continue it in the foreground. If you have more than one job running in the background or suspended, you can refer to them by their job number. So

```
fg %2
```

bring job number 2 into the foreground while

```
kill %1
```

terminates job number 1.

The command

```
bash-2.05b$ jobs
```

lists the status of all stopped or background jobs along with the job number (1,2,3...).

If a backgound job needs terminal input, it will stop until you bring it into the foreground.

- the shell has a history mechanism - it remembers the last few commands.

```
bash-2.05b$ history
```

lists the remembered commands along with a reference number, e.g:

```
515 cd .Intro
516 ls -ltd 302*
517 latex 302
518 latex 302
519 dvips -Ppdf -G0 -ta4 302
520 ps2pdf 302.ps
521 acoread 302.pdf
```

In a workstation's terminal emulation windows, you can cut and paste from the history to rerun a command. You can also use the symbol "!" to rerun any command from the history:

```
bash-2.05b$ !518
```

reruns command number "518" from the history.

```
bash-2.05b$ !ps
```

reruns the last command starting "`ps...`".

```
bash-2.05b$ !!
```

reruns the last command.

See the manual page on `bash` for more details (type `man bash`).

`Bash` has an additional mechanism which allows you to recall and edit previous commands using the keyboard up-arrow key [↑]. If you press up-arrow, the last command re-appears on the terminal. Press up-arrow again to get earlier commands. To rerun the command, press [RETURN]. To amend the command before rerunning it, use the delete key to remove characters from the end or use the back-arrow [←] to reposition the cursor to delete or insert characters within the command.

2 Command Summary

Here is a summary of some of the commands available. For more details refer to the manual page in Section 1 of the UNIX Reference Manual. You can see these online by using the `man` command. Just type `man` followed by the name of the command you want to see.

2.1 Logging out

logout	- log off UNIX

Note, on the Sun SPARCStations or Linux workstation you will need to exit the Desktop Environment instead, see Introductory Notes 301 and 302.

2.2 Files and Directories

These commands allow you to create directories and handle files.

cat	- concatenate and print data
cd	- change current directory
chgrp	- change file group
chmod	- change file mode
cp	- copy file data
file	- determine file type
find	- find files
grep	- search file for regular expression
head	- give first few lines
just	- text justification program
lpq	- spool queue examination program
lpr	- spool file for line printing
lprm, cancel	- remove jobs from line printer queue
ls	- list and generate statistics for files
mkdir	- make a new directory
more, page	- display file data at your terminal
mv	- move or rename files
pwd	- print working directory
rm, rmdir	- remove (unlink) files or directories
tail	- print last lines from file
touch	- update access and modification times of a file

2.2.1 Commands for accessing floppy disks

The mtools commands are for accessing MSDOS disks.

mcopy	- copy to/from floppy disk
mdir	- list directory of floppy disk
mcd	- change MSDOS directory
mdel	- delete an MSDOS file

2.3 File Editors

Editors are used to create and amend files.

emacs	- GNU project Emacs
ex, edit	- line editor
gedit	- GNOME GUI text editor
nedit	- easy-to-use GUI text editor
xemacs	- emacs with mouse action
dtpad	- Sun CDE text editor
pico	- easy text editor for vdus
vi	- standard text editor

`Vi`, `pico` and `emacs` are screen-based editors which run on a vdu or in a workstations terminal emulation window; `dtpad`, `gedit`, `nedit` and `xemacs` are graphical user interface (GUI) -based editors with cut and paste, mouse-controlled cursor positioning etc.

2.4 Manipulating data

The contents of files can be compared and altered with the following commands.

awk	- pattern scanning and processing language
cmp	- compare the contents of two files
comm	- compare sorted data
cut	- cut out selected fields of each line of a file
diff	- differential file comparator
expand, unexpand	- expand tabs to spaces, and vice versa
gawk	- pattern scanning and processing language

2.5 Manipulating data (cont'd)

join	- join files on some common field
look	- find lines in sorted data
perl	- data manipulation language
paste	- merge file data
sed	- stream text editor
sort	- sort file data
split	- split file into smaller files
tr	- translate characters
uniq	- report repeated lines in a file
wc	- count words, lines, and characters

2.6 Compressed files

Files may be compressed to save space. Compressed files can be created and examined.

compress	- compress files
uncompress	- uncompress files
zcat	- cat a compressed file
zcmp, zdiff	- compare compressed files
zmore	- file perusal filter for crt viewing of compressed text
gzip	- GNU alternative compression method
gunzip	- uncompress gzipped files

2.7 Information

Manuals and documentation are available on-line. Go to our web site www.cs.cf.ac.uk/systems for web-based documentation. The following Shell commands give information.

answerbook2	- invoke netscape to view for Sun documentation
apropos	- locate commands by keyword lookup
dthelpview	- Sun CDE Workstation help viewer
man	- displays manual pages online
info	- displays command information pages online
yelp	- GNOME help viewer

2.8 Status

These commands list or alter information about the system.

chfn	- change your finger entry
date	- print the date
determin	- automatically find terminal type
du	- print amount of disk usage
finger	- print information about logged-in users
groups	- show group memberships
homequota	- show quota and file usage
iostat	- report I/O statistics
kill	- send a signal to a process
last	- show last logins of users
lun	- list user names or login ID
netstat	- show network status
passwd	- change your login password
printenv	- display value of a shell variable
ps	- print process status statistics
quota -v	- display disk usage and limits
reset	- reset terminal mode
script	- keep script of terminal session
stty	- set terminal options
time	- time a command
tset	- set terminal mode
tty	- print current terminal name
uptime	- display system status
users	- print names of logged in users
vmstat	- report virtual memory statistics
w	- show what logged in users are doing
who	- list logged in users

2.9 Printing

Files can be printed using shell commands, using the GUI print manager, or direct from some applications.

You must specify a printer by name. Printers are called

tl3_lw	Teaching Lab 3 (C/2.08) laser printer
tl2_lw	Teaching Lab 2 (C/2.05) laser printer
tl1_lw	Teaching Lab 1 (C/2.04) laser printer

Most commands which can be used to print files, expect the printer name to be given following a `-P` argument.

Files may be sent to the printers as simple text files or they may be processed in various ways for the laser printers.

lpr -P*printer*	- send a file to a printer
a2ps -P*printer*	- format text file in PostScript and print on laser printer
dvips -P*printer*	postprocess TeX file into Postscript and print on laser printer

2.10 Messages between Users

The UNIX systems support on-screen messages to other users and world-wide electronic mail.

pine	- vdu-based mail utility
elm	- alternative vdu-based mail utility
frm, from	- identifies sender of mail
mail	- simple send or read mail program
dtmail	- CDE mail handling tool on SPARCStations
evolution	- GUI mail handling tool on Linux
mesg	- permit or deny messages
parcel	- send files to another user
talk	- talk to another user
write	- write message to another user

2.11 Networking

The School of Computer Science is connected to the JANET Internet Protocol Service (JIPS), the UK Universities' network.

These commands are used to send and receive files from Campus UNIX hosts and from other hosts on JIPS and the Internet around the world.

ftp	- file transfer program
rcp	- remote file copy
rlogin	- remote login to a UNIX host
rsh	- remote shell
tftp	- trivial file transfer program
telnet	- make terminal connection to another host
ssh	- secure shell terminal or command connection
scp	- secure shell remote file copy
sftp	- secure shell file transfer program
netscape	- web browser

(Some of these commands may be restricted for security reasons).

2.12 Programming

The following programming tools and languages are available.

2.12.1 General

dbx	- Sun debugger
workshop	- integrated program development environment on SPARCStations
make	- maintain program groups
nm	- print program's name list
size	- print program's sizes
strip	- remove symbol table and relocation bits

2.12.2 C

cb	- C program beautifier
cc	- ANSI C compiler for Suns SPARC systems
ctrace	- C program debugger
cxref	- generate C program cross reference
workshop	- SPARCStation development environment
gcc	GNU ANSI C Compiler
indent	- indent and format C program source

2.12.3 C++

CC	- C++ compiler for Suns SPARC systems
workshop	- SPARCStation development environment
g++	GNU C++ Compiler

2.12.4 JAVA

javac	- JAVA compiler
appletviewer	JAVA applet viewer
netbeans	- Java integrated development environment on Linux
runide	- Java integrated development environment on SPARCStations

2.12.5 FORTRAN

f77	- Fortran 77 compiler
f90	- Fortran 90 compiler
f95	- Fortran 95 compiler
fsplit	- split a multi-routine Fortran file
workshop	- SPARCStation development environment

2.12.6 Prolog

sicstus	- Sicstus Prolog

2.12.7 Other Languages

(Not available on all systems).

bc	- interactive arithmetic language processor
gcl	- GNU Common Lisp
squeak	- smalltalk
mathematica	symbolic maths package
matlab	- maths package
perl	- general purpose language
php	- web page embedded language
asp	- web page embedded language

2.13 Text Processing

`Troff` is the standard UNIX text formatter. `TeX` is also available for documents intended for a LaserPrinter.

2.13.1 General Commands

fmt	- simple text formatter
spell	- check text for spelling error
ispell	- check text for spelling error
gv, ggv	- gnu PostScript previewer for workstations
sdtimage	- PostScript previewer for SPARCStations

2.13.2 Troff

eqn	- mathematical preprocessor for troff
grap	- pic preprocessor for drawing graphs
nroff	- text formatting language
pic	- troff preprocessor for drawing pictures
tbl	- prepare tables for nroff or troff
troff	- text formatting and typesetting language
groff	- GNU troff interface for laserprinting

`groff` can be used to invoke all the preprocessors as necessary.

2.13.3 TeX

dvips	- convert a DVI file to POSTSCRIPT
tex	- text formatting and typesetting
latex	- latex formatter
xdvi	- dvi previewer for DECStations and SPARCStations

2.14 Word Processing

StarOffice on Suns and Openoffice.org is available on the Suns and Linux repectively. These are Office packages which attempt compatibilty with MS Office.

2.15 Database Management

Mysql, Oracle and informix are available.

setoracle	- set up oracle environment and path on Suns
sqlplus	- run the Oracle SQL interpreter
sqlldr	- run the Oracle SQL data loader
oemapp work-sheet	- run the Oracle worksheet interface
mysql	- run the mysql SQL interpreter

Other database systems are available for research use. See your supervisor for information.