



Linux documentation



Unit objectives

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

- Use the **man** command to view information about Linux commands
- Describe the use of **info**
- Describe the HOWTO documentation
- Explain the importance of the Internet for gathering information about Linux

The man command

- With the **man** command, you can read the manual page of commands.
- Manual pages are stored in `/usr/share/man`.
- The manual page consists of:
 - **Name:** The name of the command and a one-line description
 - **Synopsis:** The syntax of the command
 - **Description:** Explanation of how the command works and what it does
 - **Options:** The options used by the command
 - **Files:** The files used by the command
 - **Bugs:** Known bugs and errors
 - **See also:** Other commands related to this one

man example (1 of 2)

```
$ man finger
```

```
FINGER(1)          BSD General Commands Manual          FINGER(1)
```

NAME

finger — user information lookup program

SYNOPSIS

```
finger [-lmsp] [user ...] [user@host ...]
```

DESCRIPTION

The finger displays information about the system users.

Options are:

-s Finger displays the user's login name, real

Manual page finger(1) line 1

man example (2 of 2)

- The -k option of the **man** command or the **apropos** command prints out a description of all entries that match the given keyword.

```
$ man -k print
arch (1) - print machine architecture
date (1) - print or set the system date and time
logname (1) - print user's login name
lpc (8) - line printer control program
lpd (8) - line printer spooler daemon
lpr (1) - off line print
lprm (1) - remove jobs from the line printer queue
```

man sections

- The collection of manual pages is divided into nine sections:
 1. Executable or shell commands
 2. System calls
 3. Library calls
 4. Special files (usually found in `/dev`)
 5. File formats and conventions
 6. Games
 7. Miscellaneous (macro packages and so on)
 8. System administration commands
 9. Kernel routines (non-standard)
- Certain subjects appear in multiple sections.
- To select correct section, add section number:
 - `man 1 passwd` (about the **passwd** command)
 - `man 5 passwd` (about the **passwd** file)

The info command

- The **info** command is sometimes a replacement for manual pages.
- It is widely used by the GNU project.
- Information for **info** is stored in `/usr/share/info`.
- Some **info** commands include:

<code><space></code>	next screen of text
<code></code> or <code><bs></code>	previous screen of text
<code>n</code>	next node
<code>p</code>	previous node
<code>q</code>	quit info

info example

```
# info pwd
```

```
File: coreutils.info, Node: pwd invocation, Next: stty invocation, \
Up: Working context
```

```
19.1 `pwd': Print working directory
=====
```

```
`pwd' prints the name of the current directory. Synopsis:
```

```
pwd [OPTION]...
```

```
The program accepts the following options. Also see *note Common
options:..
```

```
`-L'
`--logical'
```

```
If the contents of the environment variable `PWD' provide an
absolute name of the current directory with no `.' or `..'
components, but possibly with symbolic links, then output those
```

```
--zz-Info: (coreutils.info.gz)pwd invocation, 38 lines --Top-----
```


The --help option

- This is another way of getting help about a command.
- Help is built into the command itself (if supported).

```
$ cat --help
```

```
Usage: cat [OPTION]... [FILE]...
```

```
Concatenate FILE(s), or standard input, to standard output.
```

-A, --show-all	equivalent to -vET
-b, --number-nonblank	number nonempty output lines
-e	equivalent to -vE
-E, --show-ends	display \$ at end of each line
-n, --number	number all output lines
-s, --squeeze-blank	suppress repeated empty output lines
-t	equivalent to -vT
-T, --show-tabs	display TAB characters as ^I
-u	(ignored)
-v, --show-nonprinting	use ^ and M- notation, except for LFD and TAB
--help	display this help and exit
--version	output version information and exit

HOWTO documents

- These are documents that describe in detail a certain aspect of configuring or using Linux.
- They include detailed information about how to perform a given task.
 - DHCP support
 - Kernel compilation
 - Dual boot with other operating systems
- HOWTO documents are text files in `/usr/share/doc/HOWTO`.
 - Need to be installed manually
- On the Internet:
 - <http://www.tldp.org/index.html>

HOWTO example

```
$ zless /usr/share/doc/HOWTO/en-txt/UPS-HOWTO.gz
```

UPS HOWTO

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Revision History

Revision 2.2

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Revised by: esr

An Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) is an important thing to have if you live in an area where power outages are at all common, especially if you run a mail/DNS/Web server that must be up 24/7. This HOWTO will teach you things you need to know to select a UPS intelligently and

```
/usr/share/doc/HOWTO/en-txt/UPS-HOWTO.gz
```

Other documentation

- Certain programs also offer other kinds of documentation.
 - HTML
 - PDF
 - PostScript
 - Plain text
- These are usually stored in
`/usr/share/doc/<package_name>.`

Internet

- All Linux documentation available on the Internet
- Google: <http://www.google.com/linux>
- Other sites:
 - www.tldp.org
 - www.linux.org
 - www.redhat.com
 - www.novell.com/linux
 - www.fedoraproject.org
 - www.kernel.org
 - www.lwn.net
 - www.ibm.com/developerworks/linux
 - Many more



Unit review

- The **man** command can be used from the command line to view the proper syntax of Linux commands.
- Some commands have more complete documentation available by using the **info** command.
- Specific system administration tasks are described in the HOWTO documents.
- The Internet is the place for the latest information about Linux.

Checkpoint

1. True or False: A HOWTO document is the best source of documentation if you want up-to-date information about a specific command.
2. The main Linux documentation Web site is:
 - a. <http://www.tldp.org>
 - b. <http://www.linux.org>
 - c. <http://www.lwn.net>
 - d. <http://www.kernel.org>
3. In which sections are manual pages divided?

Checkpoint solutions

1. True or False: A HOWTO document is the best source of documentation if you want up-to-date information about a specific command.

The answer is false.

2. The main Linux documentation Web site is:

- a. <http://www.tldp.org>
- b. <http://www.linux.org>
- c. <http://www.lwn.net>
- d. <http://www.kernel.org>

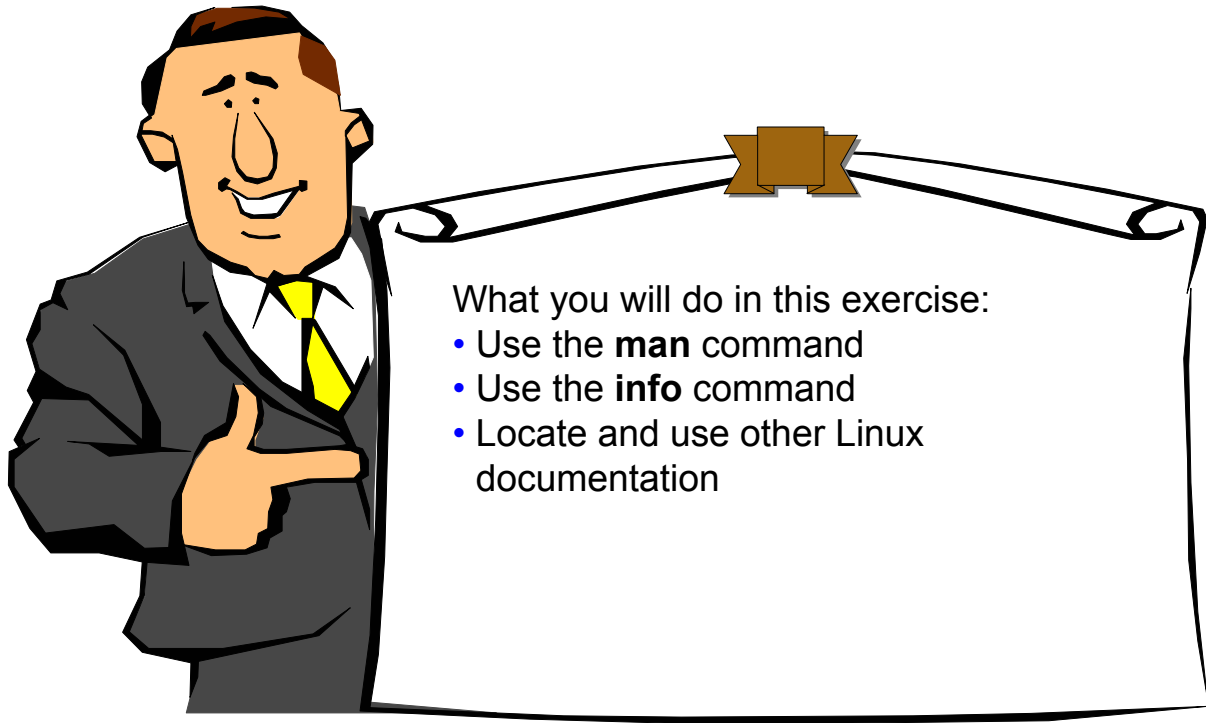
The answer is <http://www.tldp.org>.

3. In which sections are manual pages divided?

The answers are [user commands](#), [system calls](#), [library calls](#), [devices](#), [file formats and protocols](#), [games](#), [conventions](#), [macro packages](#), and [so forth](#), [system administration](#), and [Linux kernel](#).

Exercise: Linux documentation

IBM Power Systems



What you will do in this exercise:

- Use the **man** command
- Use the **info** command
- Locate and use other Linux documentation

Unit summary

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