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8 Classic Linux Commands and Their Modern Alternatives

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With the growth of Linux, powerful alternatives to standard Linux commands have been developed by the community. Here are some of them.

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When you're learning Linux, you may begin with the basic commands that have existed since the days of Unix. However, developers created the standard commands long ago, and currently, these commands are simplified for ease of use.

As an intermediate or expert user, it is good to learn powerful alternatives to these commands and master them. These alternatives to classic commands save up your time and provide detailed results.

Here are some of the best alternatives to the standard commands in Linux.

Linux Commands and Their Alternatives

Let's start with the summary of every command with its alternative:

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Classic Commands	Description	Modern Alternatives
man	Display any command's user manual in a simple format	tldr
cat	Create files, view files' contents, concatenate files, and much more	bat
find	Finds a specific file or directory from the terminal	fd
grep	Search a file with the specific character pattern and display those lines	ack
du	Shows the information about disk usage	ncdu
top	Displays information on processes in real-time with the possibility of interaction	htop
vim	Popular text editor with added features such as cursor style, etc.	Neovim
df	Provides information about the free space on the disk	duf


Classic Commands	Description	Modern Alternatives

The above table offers essential details about some of the most-used Linux commands. Next, you will learn about examples of classic commands and their alternatives.


1. man vs. tldr

The man command gives a detailed description of other Linux commands. However, if you don't want to read long details, you can use the tldr (too long; didn't read) command. For example, let's get information about the tar command using both man and tldr:

```
man tar
```

man command in Linux terminal

```
tldr tar
```

 tldr command in Linux terminal

As you can see, the results are entirely different, and tldr offers a more compact result.

2. cat vs. bat

The cat command creates files, [views file contents](#), and concatenates them. On the other hand, the bat command offers an advanced substitute for the cat command, including features such as syntax highlighting, Git integration, automatic paging, and many more.

The name "bat" is based on the mammal "bat" because it looks like a cat with wings. Let's view the content of a shell script using both cat and bat commands:

```
cat <filename>
```

☐ cat command in the Linux terminal

```
batcat <filename>
```

☐ bat command in Linux terminal

The difference between the two commands is that cat showed the script in text format, whereas the bat command shows the result with syntax highlighting.

3. find vs. fd

[The find command](#) is used to find a specific file or directory from the terminal. However, the fd command offers a more convenient way to search for any file.

For example, the find command requires the **-name** option to search for a file if a user doesn't know its location, but the fd command needs nothing.

```
find -name <filename>
```

☐ find command in Terminal UI

```
fdfind <filename>
```

The fd command directly shows the file location, so it's an advanced alternative of the find command.

4. grep vs. ack

[The grep command](#) searches a file for specific character patterns and displays all lines containing that pattern. As its alternative, the ack command offers a quick search option. The ack command also offers excellent flexibility to exclude a certain output from the search result.

Let's take an example to show the working of grep and ack:

```
grep <character> <filename>
```

☐ grep-command-in-Terminal-UI

ack <character>


☐ ack command in Linux terminal

With the grep command, you need to provide character details with the filename. However, the ack command only needs character details and will search the complete system accordingly.

5. du vs. ncdu

du stands for "disk usage" and displays an estimated file space usage in the system. As an alternative, the ncd� command is short for "Ncurses disk usage" and provides a bit more useful way to check the disk usage.

du

 du-command-in-Linux-terminal

ncdu


The above example shows that the ncdu command offers a more convenient interface and detailed information than the du command.

6. top vs. htop

[The top or "table of processes" command](#) provides information about the currently running processes in real-time. This command also details memory usage, resource utilization, and CPU usage.

Meanwhile, [the htop command](#) allows you to monitor resource utilization in a more interactive and user-friendly way. Hence, the htop command is an advanced version of the top command.

top

 top command in Linux terminal

htop

The difference is clear, as the htop command has a much more interactive output than the top command.

7. Vim vs. Neovim

Vim is a screen-based text editor that gives easy accessibility to create and modify text efficiently. Neovim is just an advanced version of Vim that solves the issues faced by users while using Vim.

It is a fact that Neovim and Vim are almost the same, but Neovim's usability and extensibility make it an advanced version of Vim. Neovim's support for all the Vim plugins and asynchronous features offers an extensive performance boost.

vim

☐ vim command in Linux

`nvim`


 nvim command in Linux terminal

As you can see, there is no difference in the user interface of both the editors, but the internal features of each are different.

8. df vs. duf

The df or "disk-free" command provides information about the file system with the total available space. For an advanced option, duf or "disk usage and free space" command provides the same information as df and du, but with a modern, stylized output.

df

 df command in terminal

duf

[The duf command](#) has an entirely different output than the df command, providing information on disk usage and available space in a tabular representation.

Advanced Linux Command Alternatives Make Things Easier

Linux has changed a lot over the years, and now it has become one of the best operating systems worldwide. This change also brings modern alternatives to classic commands. These alternatives offer advanced features and options to users for performing tasks efficiently.

These new alternatives can save you time and effort while you go about doing your work on Linux. Learning new commands is a sure-fire way to get better at the command line, and the Linux operating system, in general. As a beginner, getting familiar with the ins and outs of the operating system architecture, and learning some tips and tricks to get more done in less time should be your primary goal.

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