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Linux / UNIX Recursively Search All Files For A String

Posted by Vivek Gite <vivek@nixcraft.com>

How do I recursively search all text files for a string such as foo under UNIX / Linux / *BSD / Mac OS X shell prompt?

You can use grep command or find command as follows.

grep command: Recursively Search All Files For A String

[1]

```
cd /path/to/dir
grep -r "word" .
```

```
grep -r "string" .
```

Ignore case distinctions:

```
grep -ri "word" .
```

To display print only the filenames with GNU grep, enter:

```
grep -r -l "foo" .
```

You can also specify directory name:

```
grep -r -l "foo" /path/to/dir/*.c
```

find command: Recursively Search All Files For A String

find command is recommend because of speed and ability to deal with filenames that contain spaces.

```
cd /path/to/dir
find . -type f -exec grep -l "word" {} +
find . -type f -exec grep -l "seting" {} +
find . -type f -exec grep -l "foo" {} +
```

Older UNIX version should use xargs to speed [2] up things:

```
find /path/to/dir -type f | xargs grep -l "foo"
```

It is good idea to pass -print0 option to find command that it can deal with filenames that contain spaces or other metacharacters:

```
find /path/to/dir -type f -print0 | xargs -0 grep -l "foo"
```

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[1] Image: **http://www.cyberciti.biz/faq/category/bash-shell/**

[2] xargs to speed: **http://www.cyberciti.biz/faq/linux-unix-bsd-xargs-construct-argument-lists-utility/**