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## FreeBSD csh / tcsh: Export Shell Variable

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**Q.** I'm using FreeBSD 7 with csh (tcsh) shell. How do I export shell variable under FreeBSD operating systems?

**A.** tcsh is an enhanced but completely compatible version of the Berkeley UNIX C shell, csh. It is a command language interpreter usable both as an interactive login shell and a shell script command processor. It includes a command-line editor and many other features.

## FreeBSD display current environment variables

Type the following command to print current names and values of environment variables:

```
setenv
```

Sample output:

```
SHELL=/usr/local/bin/bash
TERM=xterm
SSH_CLIENT=10.10.29.66 37484 22
SSH_TTY=/dev/ttyp2
USER=root
PAGER=more
FTP_PASSIVE_MODE=YES
PATH=/sbin:/bin:/usr/sbin:/usr/bin:/usr/games:/usr/local/sbin:/usr/local/bin:/root/bin
MAIL=/var/mail/root
BLOCKSIZE=K
PWD=/root
SHLVL=2
HOME=/root
LOGNAME=root
SSH_CONNECTION=10.10.29.66 37484 10.24.116.2 22
_=/bin/csh
HOSTTYPE=FreeBSD
VENDOR=unknown
OSTYPE=FreeBSD
MACHTYPE=unknown
GROUP=wheel
HOST=vps.nixcraft.in
REMOTEHOST=10.10.29.66
EDITOR=vim
```

## Export shell variable

To export and set new environment variables, enter:

```
setenv name value
setenv EDITOR /usr/bin/vim
```

You need to add all your environment variables to ~/.cshrc file - csh resource script, read at beginning of execution by each shell. Here is my sample .cshrc file:

```
alias h      history 25
alias j      jobs -l
alias la     ls -a
alias lf     ls -FA
alias ll     ls -lA
```

```
# A righteous umask
umask 22

set path = (/sbin /bin /usr/sbin /usr/bin /usr/games /usr/local/sbin /usr/local/bin $HOME/bin)

setenv EDITOR vim
setenv PAGER less
setenv BLOCKSIZE M

if ($?prompt) then
    # An interactive shell -- set some stuff up
    set prompt = "`/bin/hostname -s`# "
    set filec
    set history = 100
    set savehist = 100
    set mail = (/var/mail/$USER)
    if ( $?tcsh ) then
        bindkey "^W" backward-delete-word
        bindkey -k up history-search-backward
        bindkey -k down history-search-forward
    endif
endif
endif
```

## A list of commonly used environment variables

An array of strings called the environment is made available by `execve()` call when a process begins. By convention these strings have the form `name=value`. The following names are used by various commands

- **BLOCKSIZE** : The size of the block units used by several commands, most notably `df`, `du` and `ls`. **BLOCKSIZE** may be specified in units of a byte by specifying a number, in units of a kilobyte by specifying a number followed by `K` or `k`, its of a megabyte by specifying a number followed by `M` or `m` etc.
- **COLUMNS** : The user's preferred width in column positions for the terminal. Utilities such as `ls` and `who` use this to format output into columns.
- **EDITOR** : Default editor name.
- **EXINIT** : A startup list of commands read by `ex` and `vi`.
- **HOME** : A user's login directory, set by `login` from the password file `/etc/passwd`.
- **LANG** : This variable configures all programs which use `setlocale` to use the specified locale unless the `LC_*` variables are set.
- **MAIL** : The location of the user's mailbox instead of the default in `/var/mail`, used by `mail`, `sh`, and many other mail clients.
- **PAGER** : Default paginator program. The program specified by this variable is used by `mail`, `man`, `ftp`, etc, to display information which is longer than the current display.
- **PATH** : The sequence of directories, separated by colons, searched by `csh`, `sh`, `system`, `execvp`, etc, when looking for an executable file. **PATH** is set to `/usr/bin:/bin` initially by `login`.
- **PRINTER** : The name of the default printer to be used by `lpr`, `lpq`, and `lprm`.
- **PWD** : The current directory pathname.
- **SHELL** : The full pathname of the user's login shell.
- **TERM** : The kind of terminal for which output is to be prepared. This information is used by commands, such as `ncroff` or `plot` which may exploit special terminal capabilities.
- **TMPDIR** : The directory in which to store temporary files. Most applications use either `/tmp` or `var/tmp`. Setting this variable will make them use another directory.
- **TZ** : The timezone to use when displaying dates.
- **USER** : The login name of the user.

## Further readings:

- man page - `csh`, `tcsh`

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