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## Linux log files location and how do I view logs files?

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**Q.** I am new to Linux and I would like to know where are the log files located under Debian or Cento OS Linux server? How do I open or view log files?

**A.** Almost all logfiles are located under `/var/log` directory (and subdirectory). You can change to this directory using `cd` command but you need to be the root user. You can use `less`, `more`, `cat` or `tail` command to see the logs.

Go to `/var/logs` directory:

```
# cd /var/logs
```

View common log file `/var/log/messages` using any one of the following command:

```
# tail -f /var/log/messages
# less /var/log/messages
# more -f /var/log/messages
# vi /var/log/messages
```

Output:

```
Jul 17 22:04:25 router dnsprobe[276]: dns query failed
Jul 17 22:04:29 router last message repeated 2 times
Jul 17 22:04:29 router dnsprobe[276]: Primary DNS server Is Down... Switching To Secondary
Jul 17 22:05:08 router dnsprobe[276]: Switching Back To Primary DNS server
Jul 17 22:26:11 debian -- MARK --
Jul 17 22:46:11 debian -- MARK --
Jul 17 22:47:36 router -- MARK --
Jul 17 22:47:36 router dnsprobe[276]: dns query failed
Jul 17 22:47:38 debian kernel: rtc: lost some interrupts at 1024Hz.
Jun 17 22:47:39 debian kernel: IN=eth0 OUT= MAC=00:0f:ea:91:04:07:00:08:5c:00:00:01:08:00
```

## Common Linux log files name and usage

- `/var/log/message`: General message and system related stuff
- `/var/log/auth.log`: Authentication logs
- `/var/log/kern.log`: Kernel logs
- `/var/log/cron.log`: Crond logs (cron job)
- `/var/log/maillog`: Mail server logs
- `/var/log/qmail/`: Qmail log directory (more files inside this directory)
- `/var/log/httpd/`: Apache access and error logs directory
- `/var/log/lighttpd`: Lighttpd access and error logs directory
- `/var/log/boot.log`: System boot log
- `/var/log/mysqld.log`: MySQL database server log file
- `/var/log/secure`: Authentication log
- `/var/log/utmp` or `/var/log/wtmp`: Login records file
- `/var/log/yum.log`: Yum log files

In short `/var/log` is the location where you should find all Linux logs file. However some applications such as `httpd` have a directory within `/var/log/` for their own log files. You can rotate log file using [logrotate](#)<sup>[2]</sup> software and monitor logs files using [logwatch](#)<sup>[3]</sup> software.

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