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How do I Compare two files under Linux or UNIX?

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You need to use diff command to display line-by-line difference between two files. The general syntax of diff command as follows:
diff FILE1 FILE2

Where,

FILE1 FILE2: Diff command will examine both file1 and file2 and tells you what changes need to be made for file1 and file2 to match. Please note that diff command point to which lines need be:

1. Added (a)
2. Deleted (d)
3. Changed (c)
4. Further lines in file1 identified with a less than (<) symbol and lines in file2 with a greater than (>) symbol.

Examples

diff file1.txt file2.txt

Output:

```
8c8,9
  URL: www.nixcraft.in
> Email: support@nixcraft.in
```

The contents of both files:

\$ cat file1.txt

Output:

```
Welcome to nixCraft!

If undeliverd return to nixCraft
#404, DC bay area, 2nd phase,
Pune.

Ph: 555-11112223
URL: www.nixcraft.com
```

\$ cat file2.txt

Output:

```
Welcome to nixCraft!

If undeliverd return to nixCraft
#404, DC bay area, 2nd phase,
Pune.

Ph: 555-11112223
URL: www.nixcraft.in
Email: support@nixcraft.in
```

Side-by-side merge of file differences

You can get a clear-cut visual difference between two text files using the command sdiff:

\$ sdiff file1.txt file2.txt

Output:

<pre>Welcome to nixCraft! If undeliverd return to nixCraft #404, DC bay area, 2nd phase, Pune. Ph: 555-11112223 URL: www.nixcraft.com</pre>	<pre>Welcome to nixCraft! If undeliverd return to nix #404, DC bay area, 2nd phase Pune. Ph: 555-11112223 URL: www.nixcraft.in > Email: support@nixcraft.in</pre>
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