Lecture 2a - Common Unix Commands and Their Usage

Structure of a Unix Command

Unix Commands all have a similar structure:
`COMMAND FLAGS PARAMETER(S)`

Flags: Flags are options available on commands. Not all commands need flags. Some REQUIRE them.

Note that spaces need to seperate the command from the flags, and the flags from the parameters, and the parameters from other parameters.

You can combine multiple flags under one - or have each flag listed with it's own -

Useful Unix Commands

What do they do? How and why do we use these commands?
Below is a small list of commands we will go over in class. SOME of the flags useful with them are listed as well.

- ls : list contents of a directory
  - usage: `ls directoryPathname` -- lists items in specified directory.
  - Flags: -l -a (there's more too!)
- cat : view file contents
  - usage: `cat filenameToView`
- more : view file contents, but pause each screen. Page through each screen with space bar.
  - usage: `more filenameToView`
- less : view file contents, pause each screen, space bar, use of arrow keys.
  - usage: `less filenameToView`
- touch : creates file or updates file timestamp
  - usage: `touch SomeFilename`
- cp : copy file to another file or location
  - usage: `cp WhatToCopy WhereToCopyTo`
  - Flags: -i -r
- mv : move file to another file or location (move file to another file, whaaaaaa?)
  - usage: `mv WhatToMove WhereToMoveTo`
- rm : remove file (or directory... hmmmmm...)
  - usage: `rm FileToDelete`
- pwd : displays absolute pathname to current directory
  - usage: `pwd`

- mkdir : create directory
  - usage: `mkdir NewDirectoryName`
- rmdir : remove directory (EMPTY ONES ONLY!)
  - usage: `rmdir DirectoryToRemove`
- cd : (**c**hange **d**irectory) navigate through directories
  - usage: `cd WhereToMoveTo`
- wc : word count
  - usage: `wc FileToTakeWordCountOf`
  - flags: -w -c -l
- passwd : use this command to change your account password
- man : use the man command with any other command name as a parameter to open up a manual page to see useage notes and flags available with any unix command. (you can also list any command name with --help afterwards to see a smaller help page).

[Back to Course Homepage](#)