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Finding Files: find and locate

The find command line utility provides an extremely powerful and flexible method for locating files based on their properties, including name. It does not search the interior of files for patterns, etc.; that is more the province of **grep** and its variations.

The general form of a **find** command is:

```
1    $ find [location] [criteria] [actions]
```

where there are three classes of arguments, each of which may be omitted. If no location is given, the current directory **(.)** is assumed; if no criteria are given, all files are displayed; and, if no actions are given, only a listing of the names is given.

There are many logical expressions which can be used for criteria. For example, the command:

```
1    $ find /etc -name "*.conf"
```

will print out the names of all files in the **/etc** directory and its descendants, recursively, that end in **.conf**. To specify a simple action request:

```
1    $ find /etc -name "*.conf" -ls
```

will print out a long listing, not just the names.

A little more complicated example is the following:

```
1    $ find /tmp /etc -name "*.conf" -or -newer /tmp/.X0-lock -ls
```

will look in subdirectories under **/etc** and **/tmp** for files whose names end in **.conf**, or are newer than **/tmp/.X0-lock** and print out a long listing.