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Copying Files

Copying Files

Creating copies of files can be useful for numerous reasons:

- If a copy of a file is created before changes are made, then it is possible to revert back to the original.
- A copy of a file can be used to transfer a file to removable media devices.
- A copy of an existing document can be used as a template for a new document.

```
cp [OPTIONS] SOURCE DESTINATION
```

Follow Along

Use the following command to switch to the `Documents` directory:

```
sysadmin@localhost:~$ cd ~/Documents
```

The `cp` command is used to copy files. Similar to the `mv` command, it requires at least two arguments: a source and a destination. For example, to copy the `/etc/passwd` file to the current directory, use the following command:

```
sysadmin@localhost:~/Documents$ cp /etc/passwd .
```

Note

The second argument is the `.` character. Recall from the *Changing Directories* section that is a shortcut which represents the current directory.

The result of executing the previous command would create a copy of the contents of the `/etc/passwd` file in the `Documents` directory, since that is our current directory. This can be confirmed using the `ls` command:

```
sysadmin@localhost:~/Documents$ ls
School          alpha-third.txt  hidden.txt    numbers.txt  red.t:
Work            alpha.txt        letters.txt   os.csv
adjectives.txt  animals.txt      linux.txt     passwd

alpha-first.txt   food.txt       longfile.txt  people.csv
alpha-second.txt  hello.sh       newhome.txt   profile.txt
```

Consider This

Permissions can have an impact on file management commands, such as the `cp` command. In order to copy a file, it is necessary to have execute permission to access the directory where the file is located and the read permission for the file being copied.

It is also necessary to have write and execute permission on the directory the file is being copied to. Typically, there are two places where you should always have write and execute permission on the directory: your home directory and the `/tmp` directory.

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