INTRO TO THE LINUX TERMINAL

By Miranda Harrison

The Linux Shell Terminal interprets the user's commands and tells the operating system what to do with them.

When you first open the terminal, you will see something like: **pi@raspberrypi: ~ $** with a cursor after it.

- **pi** is the name of the current user
- **raspberrypi** is the name of the system
- **~** represents the home directory. In our case the home directory is */home/pi*
- **$** is the prompt symbol. A user's commands will appear after this symbol

A commonly used command in the terminal is ***ls*** (note this is an L, not an i). This command lists the files and directories that are in the current directory. Try it out for yourself!

If you are wondering which directory you are in, type ***pwd*** which stands for "print working directory".

Another commonly used command is ***cd.*** This command stands for *change directory* and it does just as described. Try typing into the terminal: ***cd Documents***

You should now see that you are in the documents directory. By typing ***ls*** you can view what is inside the documents directory.

If you want to "move down" a directory, or go back to the one you were previously in you can type the command: ***cd ..***

If you type this into the terminal now, you will now return to the home directory.

You can also pass options into commands, also known as flags or switches. Think of these as optional parameters or conditions. These options can be indicated with a single dash **-** followed by a single or double character. They can also be indicated by a double dash **--** typically followed by a word. Options can be passed with or without arguments.

An example of passing an option with no arguments is: *ls -a*

This command lists all of the contents of the current directory including hidden files.

An example of an option with an argument is: *ls -a ~/Documents*

This lists all of the contents of the Documents directory.

You should now have a basic understanding of navigating in the Linux terminal!