



Linux Commands

Linux open Command

5 months ago • by Sidratul Muntaha

In this guide, we will demonstrate using the **open** command in Linux.

Prerequisites

To perform the steps demonstrated in this guide, you will need the following components:

- A properly configured Linux system. For testing, consider using a [Linux VM](#).
- Basic understanding of the command-line interface.

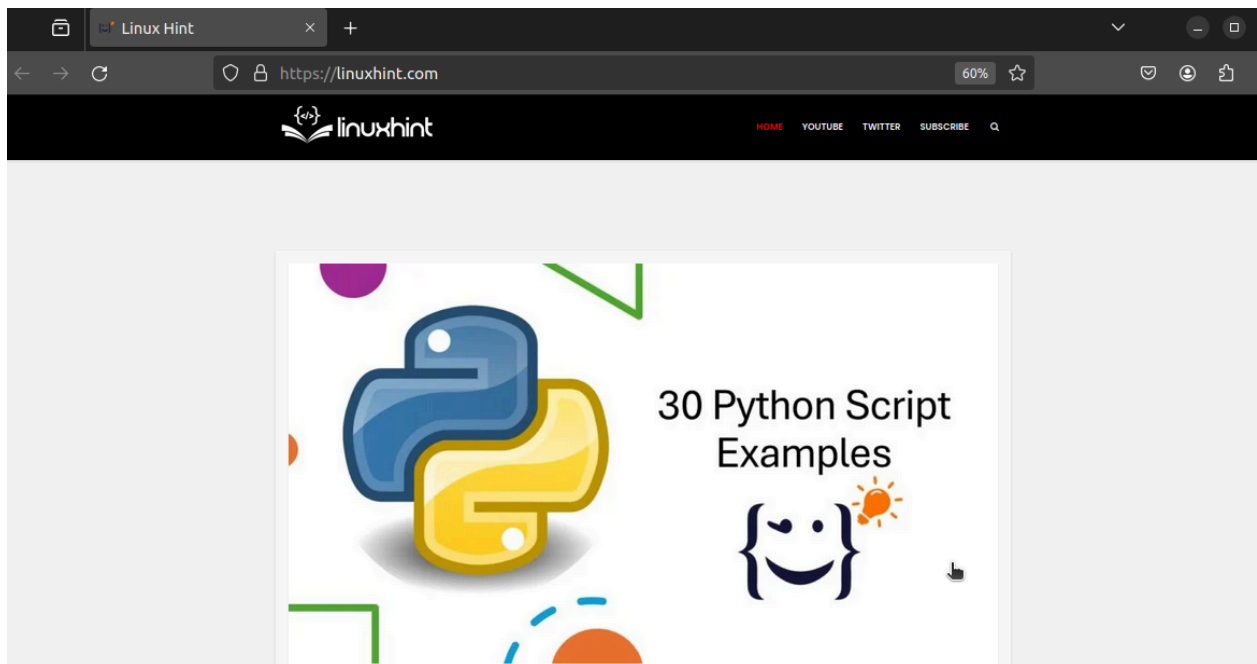
The open command

In Linux, the **open** command is a CLI tool that attempts to open a specified file, directory, or URL using the default program.

Check out the following example:

```
open https://linuxhint.com/
```

```
viktor@viktor-Standard-PC-Q35-ICH9-2009: ~  
viktor@viktor-Standard-PC-Q35-ICH9-2009:~$ open https://linuxhint.com  
viktor@viktor-Standard-PC-Q35-ICH9-2009:~$ Gtk-Message: 19:59:58.594: Not loading modul  
e "atk-bridge": The functionality is provided by GTK natively. Please try to not load i  
t.
```



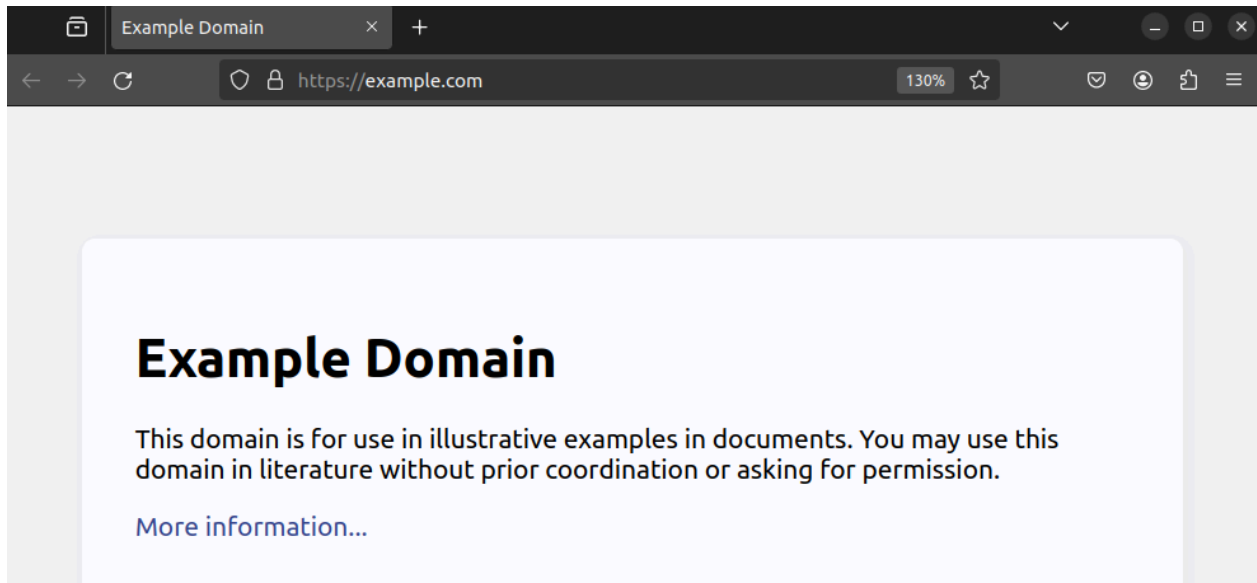
Here, the **open** command will open the URL on the default web browser.

open vs xdg-open

Some Linux systems use **xdg-open** (part of the **xdg-utils** package) instead of the **open** command. In practice, they both behave the same:

```
xdg-open https://example.com
```

```
viktor@viktor-Standard-PC-Q35-ICH9-2009: ~
viktor@viktor-Standard-PC-Q35-ICH9-2009:~$ xdg-open https://example.com
viktor@viktor-Standard-PC-Q35-ICH9-2009:~$ Gtk-Message: 20:03:30.579: Not loading module
"atk-bridge": The functionality is provided by GTK natively. Please try to not load it.
viktor@viktor-Standard-PC-Q35-ICH9-2009:~$ |
```



To rectify this, we can create an alias for the **xdg-open** command. The following example demonstrates creating a temporary **Bash** alias:

```
alias open='xdg-open'
```

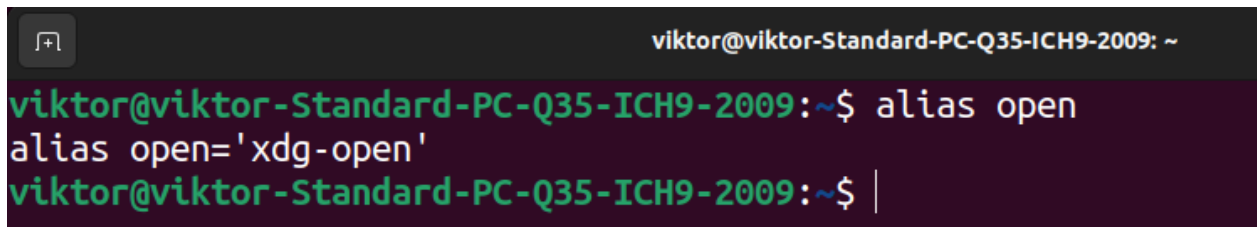
```
viktor@viktor-Standard-PC-Q35-ICH9-2009: ~
viktor@viktor-Standard-PC-Q35-ICH9-2009:~$ alias open='xdg-open'
viktor@viktor-Standard-PC-Q35-ICH9-2009:~$ |
```

Verify if the alias was created successfully:

```
alias
```

```
viktor@viktor-Standard-PC-Q35-ICH9-2009: ~
viktor@viktor-Standard-PC-Q35-ICH9-2009:~$ alias
alias alert='notify-send --urgency=low -i "${[ $? = 0 ]} && echo terminal || echo error"
"${history|tail -n1|sed -e '\''s/^\s*[0-9]\+\s*//;s/[\;|]\s*alert$/'\''}"'
alias egrep='egrep --color=auto'
alias fgrep='fgrep --color=auto'
alias grep='grep --color=auto'
alias l='ls -CF'
alias la='ls -A'
alias ll='ls -aF'
alias ls='ls --color=auto'
alias open='xdg-open'
viktor@viktor-Standard-PC-Q35-ICH9-2009:~$ |
```

```
alias open
```



```
viktor@viktor-Standard-PC-Q35-ICH9-2009: ~  
viktor@viktor-Standard-PC-Q35-ICH9-2009:~$ alias open  
alias open='xdg-open'  
viktor@viktor-Standard-PC-Q35-ICH9-2009:~$ |
```

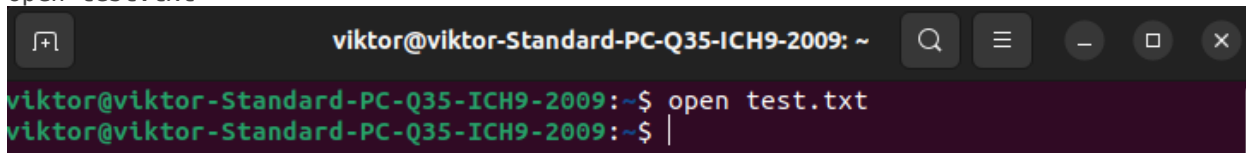
Note that various command arguments of the **open** command won't work with **xdg-open**. Some distros implement the **open** command as a symlink to **xdg-open** (Ubuntu, for example).

Using the open Command

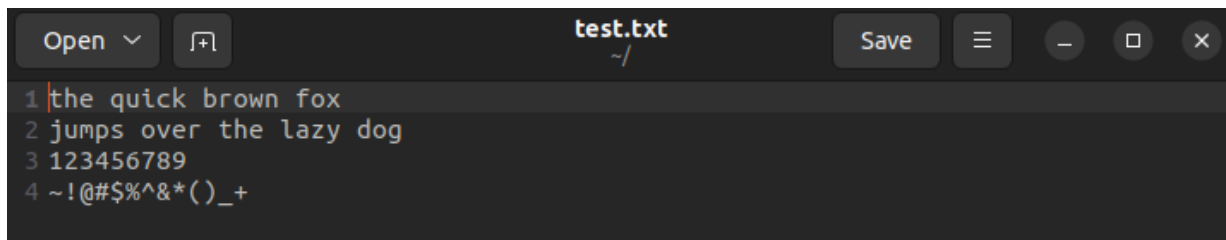
Opening Text Files

To open a text file in the default text editor/viewer, run the following command:

```
open test.txt
```



```
viktor@viktor-Standard-PC-Q35-ICH9-2009:~$ open test.txt  
viktor@viktor-Standard-PC-Q35-ICH9-2009:~$ |
```



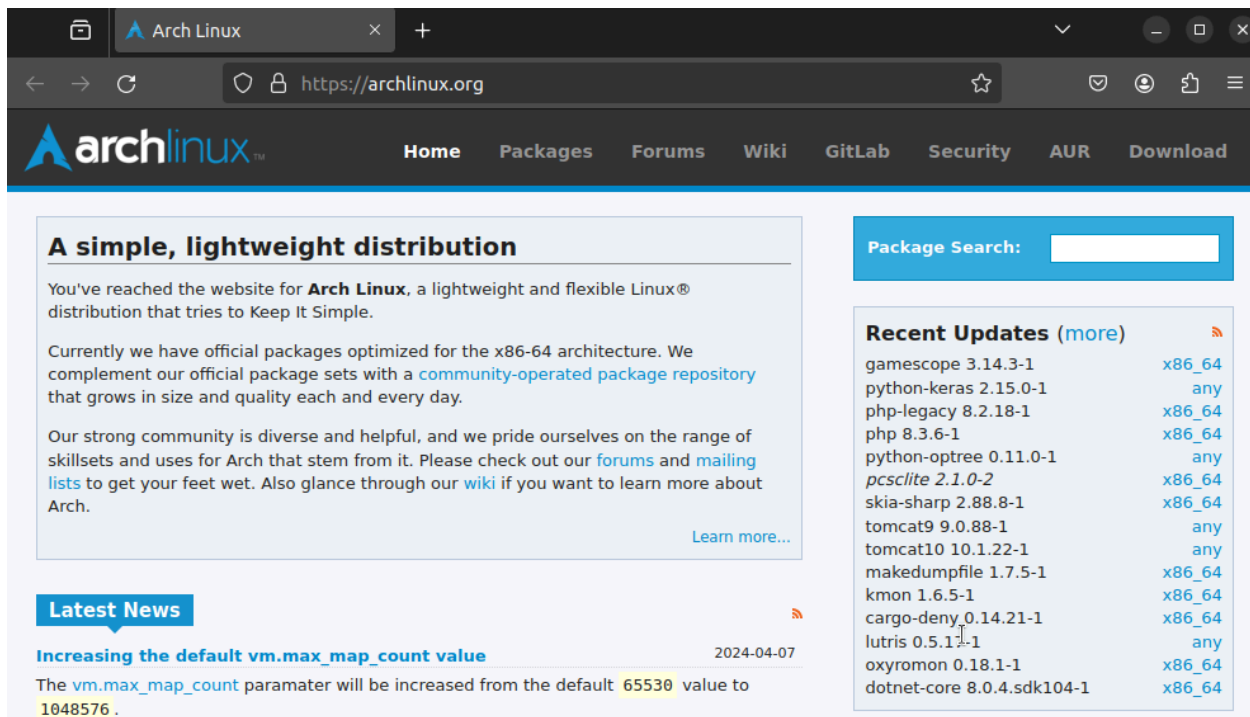
```
Open ▾ test.txt Save  
1 the quick brown fox  
2 jumps over the lazy dog  
3 123456789  
4 ~!@#$%^&*()_+
```

Opening an URL

If we attempt to open a URL, the expected behavior is to open the URL in the default web browser.

```
open https://archlinux.org
```

```
viktor@viktor-Standard-PC-Q35-ICH9-2009: ~
viktor@viktor-Standard-PC-Q35-ICH9-2009:~$ open https://archlinux.org
viktor@viktor-Standard-PC-Q35-ICH9-2009:~$ Gtk-Message: 20:17:39.434: Not loading module "atk-bridge": The functionality is provided by GTK natively. Please try to not load it.
```



Opening a File using a Specific App

If not specified, the **open** command will use the default app to open the specified file/URL. However, we can specify a different program to use when attempting to open the file.

To open with a different program, the command structure is as follows:

```
open -a
```

We can also specify what app to use using bundle identifier:

```
open -b
```

Note that it won't work with **xdg-open**.

Opening a File in a New Program Instance

If the file-associated program is already running, then **open** will use the already-running instance. In some situations, however, we may want to open the file in a new program instance.

To open the file with a new program instance, use the **"-n"** flag:

```
open -n
```