



10 Lesser Known Linux Commands – Part 2

Ravi Saive | Last Updated: July 22, 2024 | Read Time: 4 mins | [Linux Commands](#) | [26 Comments](#)

Following up on our previous discussion of [lesser-known Linux commands](#), this article will explore more hidden commands, which are extremely useful for managing your Linux system from the command line.

12. <space> Command – Hiding Commands from Linux History

Every command you type in the terminal gets recorded in the history and can be retrieved using the [history command](#).

How about cheating [history command](#)? Yeah, you can do it, and it is very easy. Just put one or more white space before typing a command in the terminal and your command won't be recorded.

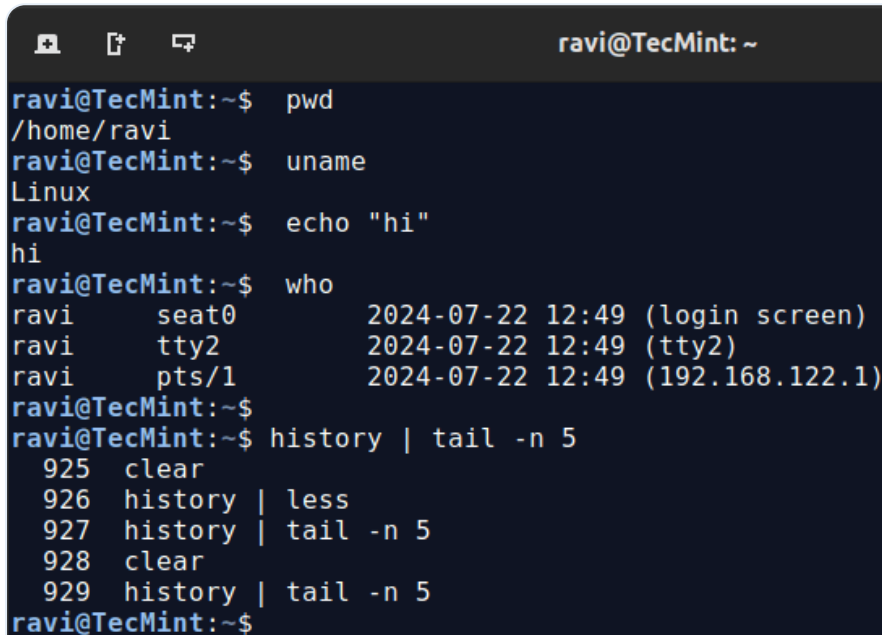
Let's give it a try. We will enter five [common Linux commands](#) ([ls](#), [pwd](#), [uname](#), [echo](#), and [who](#)) in the terminal with a leading space and check if these commands are logged in the history or not.

```
ls  
pwd  
uname  
echo "hi"  
who
```

Now run the 'history' command to see whether these above executed commands are recorded or not.

```
history
```

You see our last executed commands are not logged. we can also cheat history by using an alternate command '`cat | bash`' of course without quotes, in the same way as above.



```
ravi@TecMint:~$ pwd
/home/ravi
ravi@TecMint:~$ uname
Linux
ravi@TecMint:~$ echo "hi"
hi
ravi@TecMint:~$ who
ravi    seat0      2024-07-22 12:49 (login screen)
ravi    tty2       2024-07-22 12:49 (tty2)
ravi    pts/1      2024-07-22 12:49 (192.168.122.1)
ravi@TecMint:~$
ravi@TecMint:~$ history | tail -n 5
 925  clear
 926  history | less
 927  history | tail -n 5
 928  clear
 929  history | tail -n 5
ravi@TecMint:~$
```

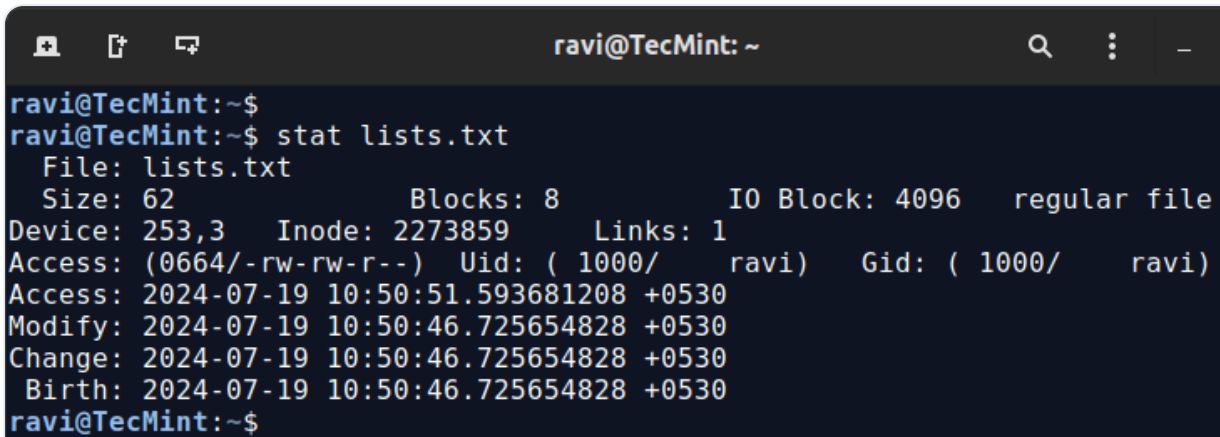
Hide Commands in Linux History

13. stat Command – Show File Status Information

The [stat command](#) in Linux displays the status information of a file or filesystem. The `stat` command shows a lot of information about the file whose name is passed as an argument.

Status information includes file size, blocks, access permissions, and the date and time of the last access, modification, and change.

```
stat lists.txt
```



```
ravi@TecMint:~$  
ravi@TecMint:~$ stat lists.txt  
  File: lists.txt  
  Size: 62          Blocks: 8          IO Block: 4096   regular file  
Device: 253,3    Inode: 2273859    Links: 1  
Access: (0664/-rw-rw-r--)  Uid: ( 1000/   ravi)   Gid: ( 1000/   ravi)  
Access: 2024-07-19 10:50:51.593681208 +0530  
Modify: 2024-07-19 10:50:46.725654828 +0530  
Change: 2024-07-19 10:50:46.725654828 +0530  
 Birth: 2024-07-19 10:50:46.725654828 +0530  
ravi@TecMint:~$
```

Show File Status Information

14. Using <Alt> + . and <Esc> + . to Recall Last Command Arguments

The above key combination is not actually a command but a tweak that puts the last command argument at the prompt, in the order of the last entered command to the previous entered command.

Just press and hold Alt or Esc and continue pressing...

If your last command was:

```
ls /home/user/documents
```

Pressing **Alt + .** or **Esc + .** in the terminal will insert `/home/user/documents` at the prompt.

15. Simulating Text with the pv Command

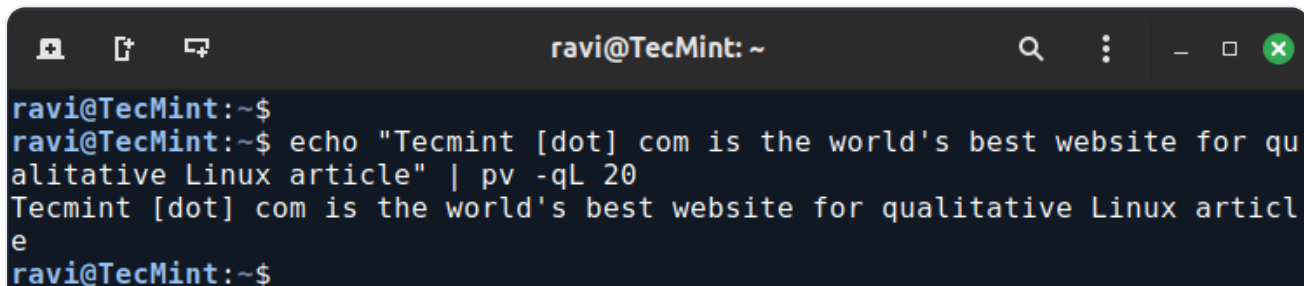
You might have seen text being simulated in movies, especially Hollywood movies, where it appears as if it is being typed in real-time. You can simulate any kind of text and output in this fashion using the [pv command](#), as shown in the example above.

The `pv` command might not be installed on your system, and you may need to use your package manager to install the required packages.

```
sudo apt install pv          [On Debian, Ubuntu and Mint]
sudo yum install pv          [On RHEL/CentOS/Fedora and Rocky/AlmaLinux]
sudo emerge -a sys-apps/pv   [On Gentoo Linux]
sudo apk add pv              [On Alpine Linux]
sudo pacman -S pv            [On Arch Linux]
sudo zypper install pv       [On OpenSUSE]
sudo pkg install pv          [On FreeBSD]
```

Now you can use `pv` in combination with `echo` to simulate the typing of a message. Here, `-q` suppresses the progress bar and `-L 20` sets the typing speed to 20 bytes per second.

```
echo "Tecmint [dot] com is the world's best website for qualitative Linux a
```



```
ravi@TecMint: ~
ravi@TecMint:~$ echo "Tecmint [dot] com is the world's best website for qu
alitative Linux article" | pv -qL 20
Tecmint [dot] com is the world's best website for qualitative Linux articl
e
ravi@TecMint:~$
```

Simulating Text in Terminal

16. Formatting Mounted Filesystems with `mount` and `column`

The command `mount | column -t` displays a list of all mounted filesystems in a neatly formatted table.

```
mount | column -t
```

This will show the list of mounted filesystems in a clean, organized format with columns properly aligned, making it easier to read and interpret the output.

```
ravi@TecMint:~$ mount | column -t
sysfs          on  /sys          type sysfs      (rw,nosuid,nodev,noexec,relatime)
proc           on  /proc         type proc       (rw,nosuid,nodev,noexec,relatime)
udev           on  /dev          type devtmpfs   (rw,nosuid,relatime,size=2973596k,n
devpts         on  /dev/pts      type devpts     (rw,nosuid,noexec,relatime,gid=5,mod
tmpfs          on  /run          type tmpfs      (rw,nosuid,nodev,noexec,relatime,siz
/dev/vda3      on  /             type ext4       (rw,relatime,errors=remount-ro)
securityfs     on  /sys/kernel/security type securityfs (rw,nosuid,nodev,noexec,relatime)
tmpfs          on  /dev/shm      type tmpfs      (rw,nosuid,nodev,inode64)
tmpfs          on  /run/lock     type tmpfs      (rw,nosuid,nodev,noexec,relatime,siz
cgroup2        on  /sys/fs/cgroup type cgroup2     (rw,nosuid,nodev,noexec,relatime,nsc
pstore         on  /sys/fs/pstore type pstore     (rw,nosuid,nodev,noexec,relatime)
bpf            on  /sys/fs/bpf   type bpf        (rw,nosuid,nodev,noexec,relatime,mod
systemd-1      on  /proc/sys/fs/binfmt_misc type autofs     (rw,relatime,fd=32,pgrp=1,timeout=0
debugfs        on  /sys/kernel/debug type debugfs    (rw,nosuid,nodev,noexec,relatime)
mqueue         on  /dev/mqueue   type mqueue     (rw,nosuid,nodev,noexec,relatime)
hugetlbfs     on  /dev/hugepages type hugetlbfs  (rw,nosuid,nodev,relatime,pagesize=2
tracefs        on  /sys/kernel/tracing type tracefs    (rw,nosuid,nodev,noexec,relatime)
configfs       on  /sys/kernel/config type configfs   (rw,nosuid,nodev,noexec,relatime)
fusectl        on  /sys/fs/fuse/connections type fusectl    (rw,nosuid,nodev,noexec,relatime)
tmpfs          on  /run/qemu     type tmpfs      (rw,nosuid,nodev,relatime,mode=755,
/dev/vda2      on  /boot/efi     type vfat       (rw,relatime,fmask=0077,dmask=0077,
binfmt_misc    on  /proc/sys/fs/binfmt_misc type binfmt_misc (rw,nosuid,nodev,noexec,relatime)
tmpfs          on  /run/user/1000 type tmpfs      (rw,nosuid,nodev,relatime,size=60184
portal         on  /run/user/1000/doc type fuse.portal (rw,nosuid,nodev,relatime,user_id=10
gvfsd-fuse     on  /run/user/1000/gvfs type fuse.gvfsd-fuse (rw,nosuid,nodev,relatime,user_id=10
ravi@TecMint:~$
```

Show Mounted Filesystems in Table Format

17. Clearing Your Terminal with Ctrl+L Command

Before we proceed, let me ask you how you [clear your terminal](#). Do you type clear at the prompt? Well, the **Ctrl+L** keyboard shortcut performs the same action of clearing your terminal all at once.

Just press **Ctrl+L** and watch how it clears your terminal instantly.

18. Checking Unread Mail with curl Command

The [curl command](#) can be used to check your unread mail from the command line, which is especially useful for those working on headless servers.

Note that storing your password in the command line directly is not recommended. Instead, curl will prompt you for your password securely.

```
curl -u username:password https://mail.example.com/api/unread
```

In the above command, replace username, and password and adjust the URL to match your mail server's API endpoint.

19. Using 'screen' to Manage Long-Running Processes

The [screen command](#) makes it possible to detach a [long-running process](#) from a session that can again be reattached, as and when required which provides flexibility in command execution.

To run a process (long) we generally execute it as:

```
long_running_command
```

Which lacks flexibility and needs the user to continue with the current session, however, if we execute the above command as.

```
screen long_running_command
```

It can be de-attached or re-attached in different sessions. When a command is executing press "**Ctrl + A**" and then "**d**" to de-attach.

To attach run.

```
screen -r 4980.pts-0.localhost
```

Note: Here, the later part of this command is screen id, which you can get using the 'screen -ls' command.

20. Identify File Types Using file Command

The [file command](#) is used to determine the type of a file by examining its contents rather than its name or extension.

It analyzes the file's content and provides a description of its type.

```
file lists.txt
```

```
lists.txt: ASCII text
```

21. Find User and Group ID's

The `id` command displays information about the current user or a specified user, including their user ID (UID), group ID (GID), and group memberships.

```
id
```

A terminal window titled 'ravi@TecMint: ~' with standard window controls. The terminal shows the user 'ravi' at the 'TecMint' machine in the '~' directory. The user enters the command 'id'. The output is: 'uid=1000(ravi) gid=1000(ravi) groups=1000(ravi),4(adm),24(cdrom),27(sudo),30(dip),46(plugdev),122(lpadmin),135(lxd),136(sambashare)'. The prompt returns to 'ravi@TecMint:~\$'.

Show User and Group IDs

Conclusion

That's all for now. With the success of this article and the previous ones in the series, I hope you've enjoyed exploring these lesser known Linux commands. Stay tuned for more insightful content.

In the meantime, you might find these articles interesting:

- [10 Lesser Known Commands for Linux – Part 3](#)
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Ravi Saive

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```
tecmint@tecmint ~/testing $ find . -type f \( -name "*.txt" -o -
name "*.sh" -o -name "*.c" \)
./emails.txt
./script-1.sh
./header.c
./examples.txt
./script.sh
./expenses.txt
```

Find Multiple Filenames (File Extensions) Using 'find' Command in Linux

How to Search Files by Name or Extension Using find Command

```
ravi@TecMint:~$ ss -tuln
```

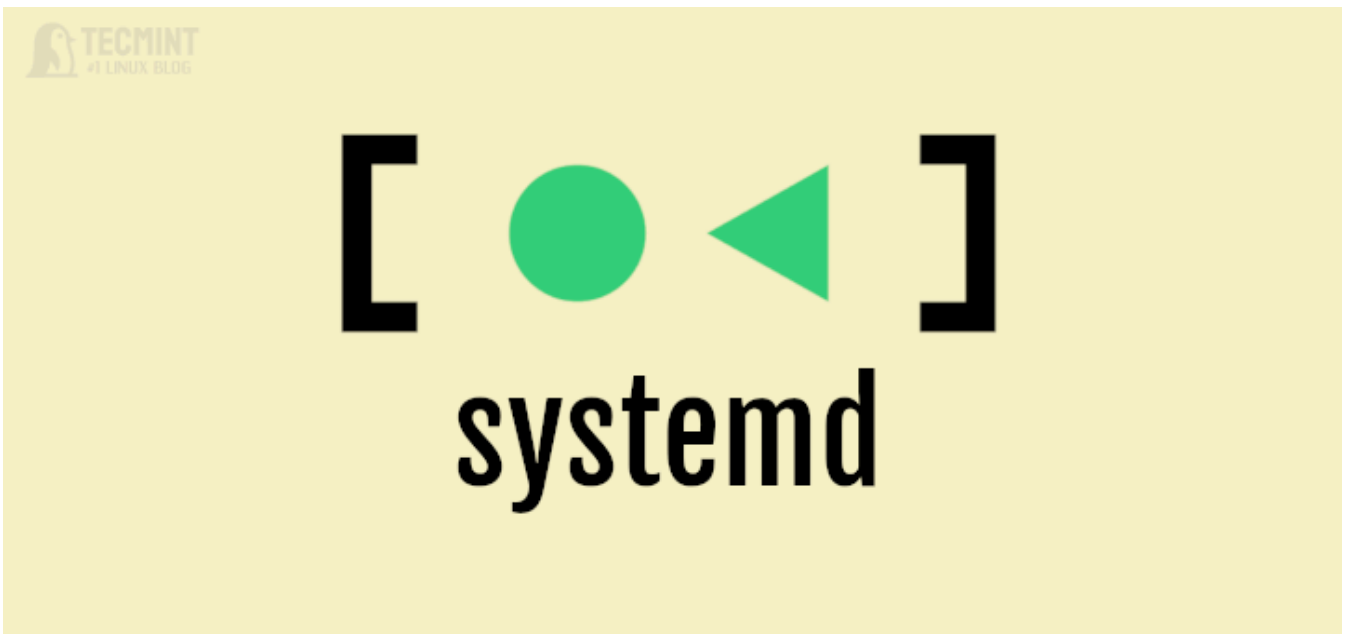
Netid	State	Recv-Q	Send-Q	Local Address:Port	Peer Address:Port
udp	UNCONN	0	0	127.0.0.54:53	0.0.0.0:*
udp	LISTEN	0	0	127.0.0.53%lo:53	0.0.0.0:*
udp	LISTEN	0	0	0.0.0.0:53307	0.0.0.0:*
udp	LISTEN	0	0	0.0.0.0:631	0.0.0.0:*
udp	LISTEN	0	0	224.0.0.251:5353	0.0.0.0:*
udp	LISTEN	0	0	0.0.0.0:5353	0.0.0.0:*
udp	LISTEN	0	0	:::5353	:::*
udp	LISTEN	0	0	:::51608	:::*
tcp	LISTEN	4096	4096	127.0.0.54:53	0.0.0.0:*
tcp	LISTEN	151	151	127.0.0.1:3306	0.0.0.0:*
tcp	LISTEN	4096	4096	0.0.0.0:631	0.0.0.0:*
tcp	LISTEN	70	70	127.0.0.1:33060	0.0.0.0:*
tcp	LISTEN	0	4096	127.0.0.1:631	0.0.0.0:*
tcp	LISTEN	0	4096	127.0.0.53%lo:53	0.0.0.0:*
tcp	LISTEN	0	4096	127.0.0.1:26257	0.0.0.0:*

Lesser Known Useful Linux Commands

11 Lesser Known Useful Linux Commands



26 Security Hardening Tips for Modern Linux Servers

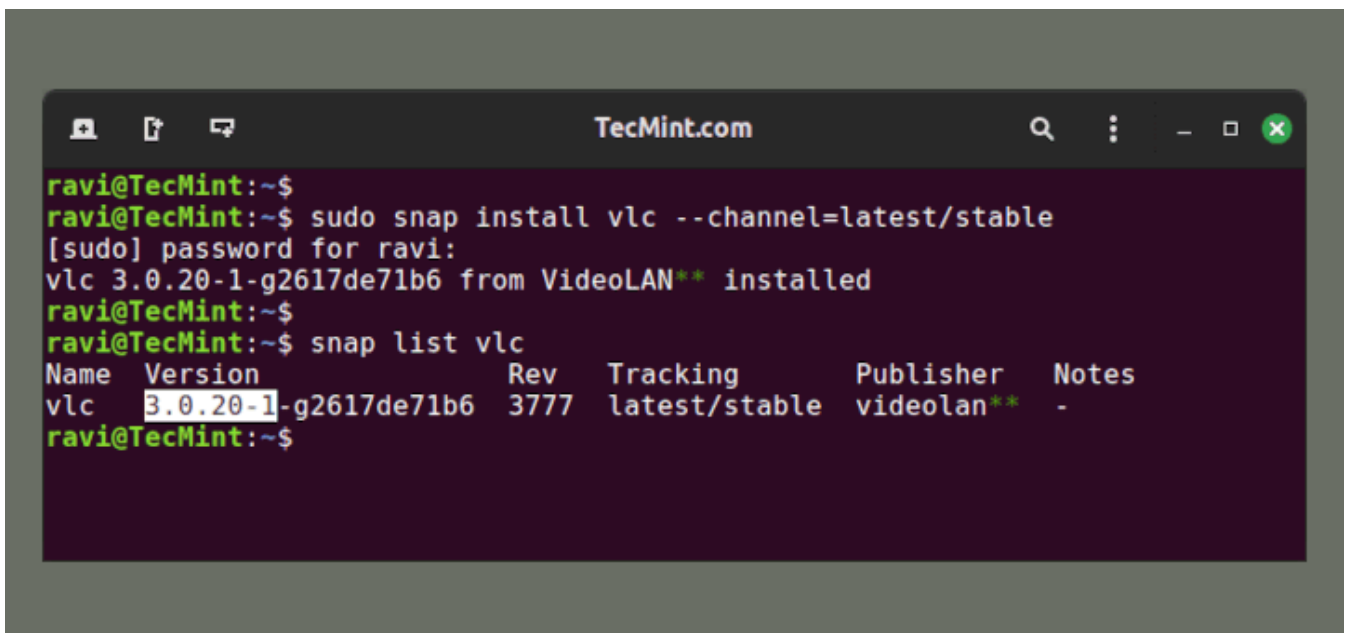


How to Remove Systemd Services on Linux

A terminal window titled 'TecMint.com' showing the configuration of glibc-2.39. The user is in the directory ~/glibc-2.39/builds and runs './configure --prefix=/usr/local/glibc-2.39'. The output shows various checks for build system type, host system type, gcc, g++, and various architectures. The configuration is successful for x86_64-pc-linux-gnu and several other architectures.

```
ravi@TecMint:~/glibc-2.39/builds$  
ravi@TecMint:~/glibc-2.39/builds$ ../configure --prefix=/usr/local/glibc-2.39  
checking build system type... x86_64-pc-linux-gnu  
checking host system type... x86_64-pc-linux-gnu  
checking for gcc... gcc  
checking for suffix of object files... o  
checking whether the compiler supports GNU C... yes  
checking whether gcc accepts -g... yes  
checking for gcc option to enable C11 features... none needed  
checking for g++... g++  
checking whether the compiler supports GNU C++... yes  
checking whether g++ accepts -g... yes  
checking for g++ option to enable C++11 features... none needed  
checking whether g++ can link programs... yes  
checking for sysdeps preconfigure fragments... aarch64 alpha arc arm csky hppa i386 loong  
arch m68k microblaze checking for grep that handles long lines and -e... /usr/bin/grep  
checking for egrep... /usr/bin/grep -E  
mips nios2 orlk powerpc riscv s390 sh checking for grep that handles long lines and -e...  
(cached) /usr/bin/grep
```

How to Install and Run Multiple glibc Libraries in Linux

A terminal window titled 'TecMint.com' showing the installation of VLC using Snap. The user runs 'sudo snap install vlc --channel=latest/stable'. The output shows the installation of vlc 3.0.20-1-g2617de71b6 from VideoLAN. The user then runs 'snap list vlc' and the output shows the installed version and tracking channel.

```
ravi@TecMint:~$  
ravi@TecMint:~$ sudo snap install vlc --channel=latest/stable  
[sudo] password for ravi:  
vlc 3.0.20-1-g2617de71b6 from VideoLAN** installed  
ravi@TecMint:~$  
ravi@TecMint:~$ snap list vlc  
Name Version Rev Tracking Publisher Notes  
vlc 3.0.20-1-g2617de71b6 3777 latest/stable videolan** -  
ravi@TecMint:~$
```

How to Install Particular Versions of Packages with Snap

 **26 Comments**

[Leave a Reply](#)



David Ramirez

January 27, 2017 at 11:31 pm

Vijay – always a new trick for my hat! Thanks!

[Reply](#)

Arun Kumar

March 28, 2016 at 6:11 pm

Hi Avishek..'

18th command curl is not working for me ...i just followed by ur command but is not work...

[Reply](#)

Author



Ravi Saive

March 29, 2016 at 11:25 am

@Arun,

What error you getting on the screen after execution of curl command? do you share with us so that we can check and get back to you with solution. Also the curl package installed on the system?

[Reply](#)

Gunnar

December 21, 2013 at 4:38 pm

Screen is a nice tool indeed, although tmux is worth a look. The session management is far more stable imo. Thanks for showing the other commands, didn't know all of them yet :)

[Reply](#)



Avishek Kumar

December 22, 2013 at 10:11 am

Thanks @ Gunnar, for your feedback, sure would write an article on tmux, You can also contribute an article on tmux, if you are very much familiar with the application.

And there exists a lot of things in/about Linux, none of us know :)

[Reply](#)

Unnikrishnan

November 20, 2013 at 6:11 pm

command is not working. In history , the command is showing with white space :) :P
am in centos 6

[Reply](#)



Avishek Kumar

November 29, 2013 at 2:19 pm

@ Unnikrishnan

add

HISTCONTROL="ignorespace"

to your ~/.bashrc

[Reply](#)

Vijay

November 9, 2013 at 3:09 am

Liked column -t and pv

[Reply](#)



Avishek Kumar

November 29, 2013 at 2:14 pm

Thanks @ Vijay for your Feedback.

[Reply](#)



Admin

November 3, 2013 at 8:52 am

The "pv" is the one :) Thanks a bunch for this post, awesome examples!

[Reply](#)**Avishek Kumar**

November 3, 2013 at 9:46 pm

@ Admin (dont know what's your Real name) Thanks for your valueable feedback.

comment of such kind makes us feel "Awesome" (Specially me, as a writer.)

[Reply](#)**Eddie G.**

November 2, 2013 at 10:25 am

Thanks for these...although some of them didn't work...is it because I'm using Fedora Linux?...or is there something I need to type before the prompt?...should I be running these as root...or do I have to do the "sudo" thing before typing them?...thanks anyway!!

[Reply](#)**Avishek Kumar**

November 3, 2013 at 9:44 pm

@ Eddie G. please let us know which commands didn't work for you so that we resolve your issue, in details please.

Also make sure your shell is BASH.

[Reply](#)**Kenyon Ralph**

November 1, 2013 at 10:07 am

"12" is not a command, it's a non-default feature of the shell, which I'm assuming is bash here. Look for the HISTCONTROL variable in the bash reference manual.

[Reply](#)**Denver**

November 1, 2013 at 8:22 am

For "12. Command" isn't really cheating the history command and is likely due to either the HISTCONTROL variable being set to "ignorespace" or setting HISTIGNORE to include white space with the bash shell.

-denver

[Reply](#)**Croitoru Radu-Bogdan**

November 1, 2013 at 7:34 am

```
% stat -c "%a %n" * | column -t
```

[Reply](#)**hesco**

November 1, 2013 at 1:48 am

screen is nice, but I left it behind for tmux.

See: <http://tmux.sourceforge.net/>

which I find a bit easier to use.

Both permit remote pairing in a shared session.

Both are complex and featureful.

Pragmatic Programmer offers an excellent book:

<http://pragprog.com/book/bhtmux/tmux>

Well worth even a minimal investment in its learning curve.

And the more time I spend with that book
(which I still have not read cover-to-cover)
the more I get out of it.

— Hugh

[Reply](#)**Wilecoyote7**

November 1, 2013 at 12:48 am

No love for the 'type' command? If you want to know where a command is in the system, or if it's an internal command, use 'type' and the name of the command:

type bash

or

type help

It will show you where the command resides. It is similar to the 'whereis' command that finds files as well (but shows any files that contain the name:

whereis bash

whereis fdisk

Just my two cents.....

[Reply](#)

Prasad

October 31, 2013 at 2:41 pm

Thanks for sharing. file command also use for check binary file 32 bit or 64 bit. Please let me know how to use "column" command.

[Reply](#)



Avishek Kumar

October 31, 2013 at 11:29 pm

Welcome @ Prasad.

well were not we very clear with above commands specially 'column' command. Please read the column command description above as well as man page, and let us know where we could help you.

[Reply](#)

**Jed**

October 31, 2013 at 1:05 am

Thanks for these tips! I really like the "column -t" command. Amazing things are tucked away in /usr, aren't they?

[Reply](#)**Avishek Kumar**

October 31, 2013 at 11:26 pm

Thanks for your Feedback @ Jed.

[Reply](#)**Rony B Chandran**

October 31, 2013 at 12:24 am

Thx a ton...

sudo !! : were re-typing in agony :) before

shuf : were using 'sort -R |head -n1'

mount | column -t : looked like a pile of ..it before

history cheat : didn't work; don't know why. happy with HISTFILE=/dev/null

[Reply](#)

**Avishek Kumar**

October 31, 2013 at 11:26 pm

Welcome @ Rony B Chandran.

will you please, provide us with details of input/output of the command not working on your box, so that we could understand it better.

[Reply](#)**Rony B Chandran**

November 1, 2013 at 9:41 pm

```
sparc@sputnik ~ $ uname
Linux
sparc@sputnik ~ $ date
Fri Nov 1 16:06:48 IST 2013
sparc@sputnik ~ $ echo eee
eee
sparc@sputnik ~ $ history
1 top
2 ps -ef
3 ls -lh
4 uname
5 date
6 echo eee
7 history
sparc@sputnik ~ $
```

[Reply](#)

Rony B Chandran

November 1, 2013 at 9:51 pm

oops... the formating (spaces) is gone by posing here.
It works after giving HISTCONTROL="ignorespace"

[Reply](#)

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