



I call this tutorial “Building an Empire.” It’s called this because I see two main ways of organizing your computing environment.

The first is the passive approach. You can accept the tools that are given to you, and accept them in the default configuration. You will learn how to use them well, but possibly not exploit them to their full potential.

The second is the active approach. In the active approach, you learn all the customization options of a piece of software and tailor it to your specific needs.

The active approach is what many of us would like to do, but simply don’t have the time. It might sound obvious, but a piece of software customized to you is better than a plain vanilla configuration.

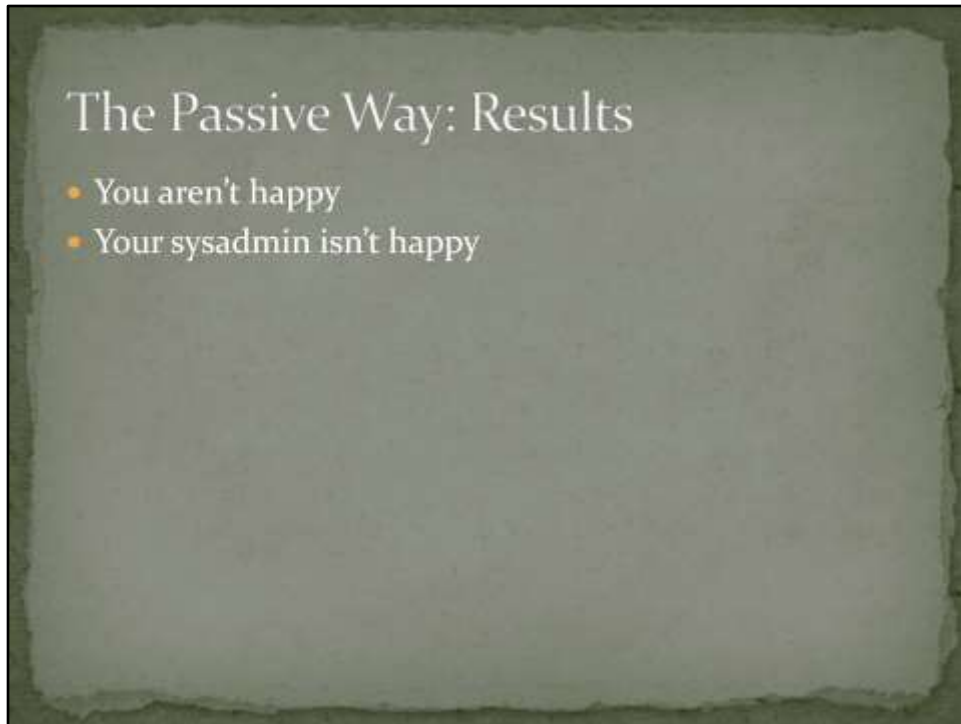
## This isn't a lecture

- Follow along
- Type these commands
- Ask questions when you're stuck
- An end product

## The Passive Way

- Accept the defaults
- Don't investigate better tools
- When something's wrong, live with it
- When things change, you must repeat the process

- Some defaults are good
- Many programs have cool features that are turned off by default
- Many neat features have to be configured to be useful
- Ever-changing industry
- "If you're not ahead, you're behind."
- You can't fix your own problems.
- The machine you're working on changes
- Everything ripped out from under you



The result of all this is that you are not happy when software doesn't work the way you want it to, and your sysadmin isn't happy with having to install things that you want when most users won't be using it.

Solving this problem is the inspiration for this tutorial.

## The Active Way (Goals)

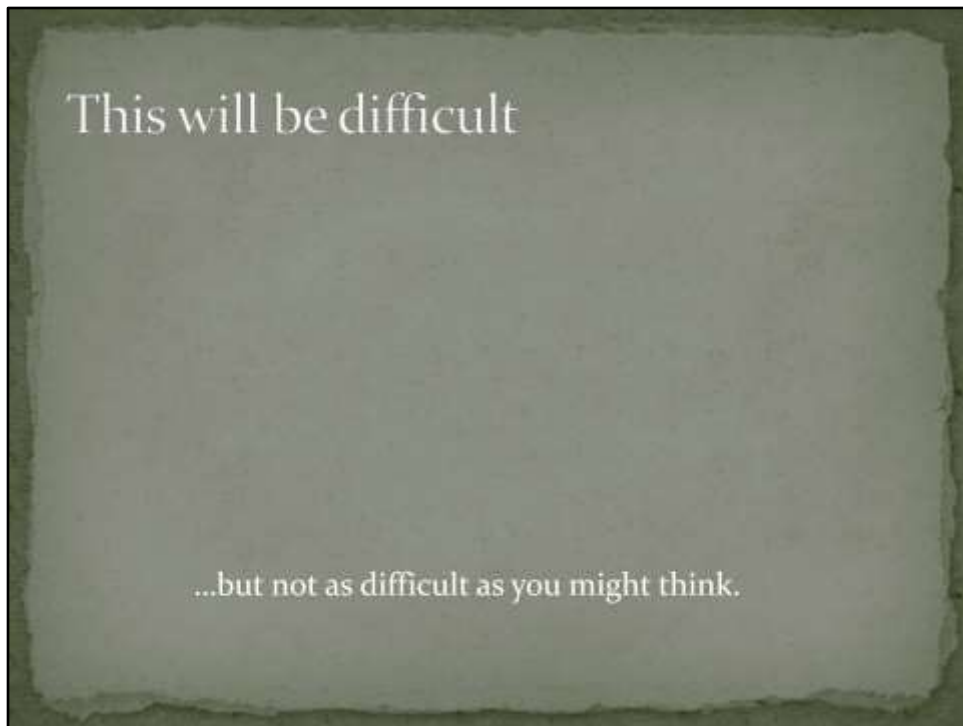
- Learn to help yourself
- Learn to customize
- Create a portable computing environment



Our customizations will take place under UNIX-like operating systems. Possible under Windows, but just more difficult. These principles apply to any computing environment.

## Getting Help

- `man bash`
- `info bash`
- Online documentation



This will require commitment, attention to detail.

And you'll have to be careful.

But the end product is worth it.



## The End Product

A portable environment  
for UNIX-like machines