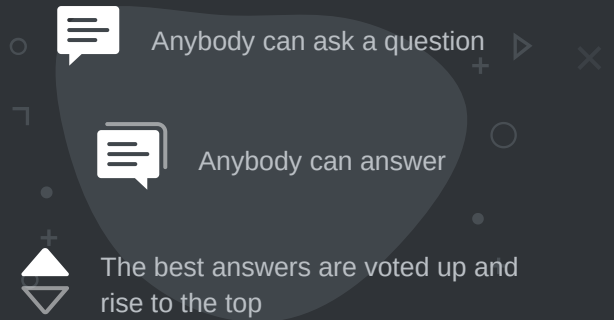Server Fault is a question and answer site for system and network administrators. It only takes a minute to sign up.

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serverfault

How to set the domain name on GNU/Linux?

Asked 10 years, 6 months ago   Modified 2 years, 7 months ago   Viewed 228k times

⏶

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⏷

Similarly to hostname that can be changed in different ways:

- temporarily using the `hostname` command

- permanently using `/etc/hostname` (or `/etc/sysconfig/network` or `/etc/HOSTNAME` , these files are used by the init scripts)

I want to change my domain name. I can use the `domainname` command, but is there a way to make it permanent across reboots? I think it can be configured in `/etc/resolv.conf` but this file is generally generated and I don't know exactly the difference between `search` and `domain` directives. And at what time exactly the information there is passed to the `domainname` program to set the domain name?

Do you have any ideas on that?

I'd like to be mostly compatible across distributions. So if if anyone has pointers on the different distributions flavours, I'd gladly accept them.

`linux`   `debian`   `redhat`   `hostname`   `domain-name`

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edited Mar 24, 2013 at 2:32
Stephane Rolland
449 ●2 ●7 ●14

asked Mar 23, 2013 at 21:29
Mildred
825 ●2 ●10 ●16

Every distribution does this differently. Which ones are you interested in? And did you read their documentation? – Michael Hampton Mar 23, 2013 at 21:30

1   Mostly RedHat and Debian flavours. And I couldn't find relevant information in the documentation. But perhaps I haven't looked hard enough, I admit I don't know exactly where in the documentation it could be (or even if it is in the docs). – Mildred Mar 23, 2013 at 22:21

2   That's fair. In Red Hat's documentation, it's buried in an appendix. While in Debian's it's not buried in an appendix, but it is confusing... – Michael Hampton Mar 23, 2013 at 22:28

2   @Michael This link on the debian mailing list is mostly useful, especially *So to finally answer your question, you configure your FQDN wherever you want names resovled. If you want it in files on the box itself, then it goes in /etc/hosts. If you run your own name server like I do (I run dnsmasq for simplicity) then you only have to record the information in* – Mildred Mar 25, 2013 at 9:16 ✏

1   On red hat 7 and derived systems you should use hostnamectl to set up the hostname. cyberciti.biz/faq/rhel-redhat-centos-7-change-hostname-command/… – Xavy Jun 10, 2018 at 13:17

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3 Answers

Sorted by: Highest score (default) ⇅

▲

Set FQDN

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I'm using Debian 7 and this is what worked for me; thanks to Fernando Ribeiro.

▼

🔖

↺

sudoedit /etc/hostname

```
server # here's where you put the server's host name
```

activate hostname

sudo hostname -F /etc/hostname

add domain name and address to the server

sudoedit /etc/hosts

```
192.168.1.2    server.domain server
```

VERIFY

```
> hostname --short
server

> hostname --domain
domain

> hostname --fqdn
```

```
server.domain

> hostname --ip-address
192.168.1.2
```

Share   Improve this answer   edited Jun 9, 2018 at 8:27   answered May 28, 2013 at 8:58

Follow   jason
                                                                                 571 ● 4 ● 5

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after changing server name in `/etc/hostname` you might not be able to edit `/etc/hosts`. In this case you have to use `xauth add` as stated in this answer stackoverflow.com/questions/20611783/… – Junior Mayhé Jun 15, 2015 at 11:58 ✎

1   you should not use `sudo vim`. set `$EDITOR` and use `sudoedit`. – törzsmókus Jun 8, 2018 at 8:09

When you use `redhat-base` systems, linux uses `/etc/sysconfig/network` file and you
should set variable `HOSTNAME` to `FQDN`, when you use `FQDN`, `linux` itself determines domain
name.

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For example:

```
HOSTNAME=web.mydomain.com
```

But when you use `debian-base` systems, you should fill `/etc/hostname` file with `FQDN`:

```
web.mydomain.com
```

NOTE: if you want to set `domain name` be sure set `FQDN` (Fully Qualyfied Domain Name)

When you set, `hostname -d` shows you the `domain name`.

Share   Improve this answer   edited Jun 15, 2015 at 12:16   answered Mar 23, 2013 at 21:58

Follow   Paul Haldane   PersianGulf
                                               4,517 ● 1 ● 21 ● 32   612 ● 8 ● 21

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1   Thank you, but I was under the impression that these files should only contain the hostname without
     the domain part. If I do what you suggest, hostname will return the fqdn directly (no difference between
     `hostname` and `hostname -f`). – Mildred Mar 23, 2013 at 22:22 ✎

     oh by the way, i forget to say you should set hostname by hand `hostname web.mydomain.com` after
     configure your files. because when you configure your file memory can't apply changes.(if it was
     useful, don't forget useful flag) – PersianGulf Mar 23, 2013 at 23:29 ✎

`man hostname`, being cited from its end to beginning

6

```
FILES
       /etc/hostname  Historically  this file was supposed to only contain the
hostname and not the full canonical
```

```
          FQDN. Nowadays most software is able to cope with a full FQDN here. This
      file is read at boot time  by  the
          system initialization scripts to set the hostname.

          /etc/hosts Usually, this is where one sets the domain name by aliasing the
      host name to the FQDN.
```

...

```
    THE FQDN
          The  FQDN (Fully Qualified Domain Name) of the system is the name that the
      resolver(3) returns for the host
          name, such as, ursula.example.com.  It is usually the hostname followed by
      the DNS domain  name  (the  part
          after the first dot).  You can check the FQDN using hostname --fqdn or the
      domain name using dnsdomainname.

          You cannot change the FQDN with hostname or dnsdomainname.

          The recommended method of setting the FQDN is to make the hostname be an
      alias for the fully qualified name
          using /etc/hosts, DNS, or NIS. For example, if the  hostname  was
      "ursula",  one  might  have  a  line  in
          /etc/hosts which reads

              127.0.1.1    ursula.example.com ursula

          Technically: The FQDN is the name getaddrinfo(3) returns for the host name
      returned by gethostname(2).  The
          DNS domain name is the part after the first dot.

          Therefore it depends on the configuration of the resolver (usually in
      /etc/host.conf) how  you  can  change
          it. Usually  the  hosts  file  is  parsed  before  DNS  or NIS, so it is
      most common to change the FQDN in
          /etc/hosts.

          If a machine has multiple network interfaces/addresses or is used in a
      mobile  environment,  then  it  may
          either  have  multiple  FQDNs/domain  names or none at all. Therefore avoid
      using hostname --fqdn, hostname
          --domain and dnsdomainname.  hostname --ip-address is subject to the  same
      limitations  so  it  should  be
          avoided as well.
```

I'd say it does describe the whole thing thoroughly.

Share   Improve this answer   Follow   answered Jun 10, 2018 at 14:47

                                                                          poige
                                                                          9,468 ● 2 ● 25 ● 52