

# The ABC of Computational Text Analysis

## #4 INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMAND-LINE

Alex Flückiger  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences  
University of Lucerne

14 March 2025

# Lectures via Zoom

Date	Topic
22 February 2025	Introduction + Where is the digital revolution?
29 February 2025	Text as Data
07 March 2025	Setting up your Development Environment
14 March 2025	Introduction to the Command-line
21 March 2025	Basic NLP with Command-line
28 March 2025	Introduction to Python in VS Code
04 April 2025	<i>no lecture (Osterpause)</i>
11 April 2025	Working with (your own) Data
18 April 2025	Data Analysis of Swiss Media
<b>25 April 2025 (Zoom)</b>	Ethics and the Evolution of NLP
<b>02 May 2025 (Zoom)</b>	NLP with Python
09 May 2025	<i>no lecture (Christi Himmelfahrt)</i>
16 May 2025	NLP with Python II + Working Session
23 May 2025	Mini-Project Presentations + Discussion
30 May 2025	<i>no lecture (Fronleichnam)</i>

# Recap last lecture

- installation successful? 
- engineering approach   
instructions vs clicks, packages, open-source
- any questions ?

# Outline

- learn principles of the shell 
- perform shell commands ►
- get practice by solving exercises 

# What is a computer actually?



Your computer stores files and runs commands

# How to get started

## Open a Shell

macOS

- open `Terminal`
- shell type: `zsh`

Windows

- open `Ubuntu 22.04 LTS`
- shell type: `Bash`
- ~~open Windows Command Prompt~~

# The black window: Run commands

Say hello!

```
echo "hello world"      # print some text
man echo                 # get help for any command (e.g., echo)
```

# Bourne-again Shell

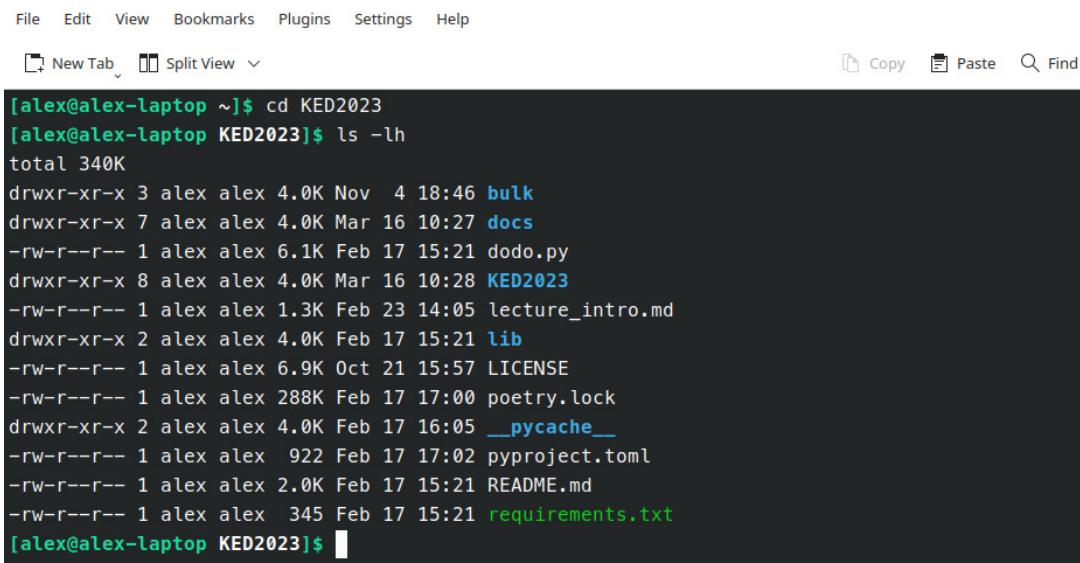
## Bash

- offers many built-in tools
- shell prompt

USER@HOSTNAME:DIRECTORY\$

- home directory
  - ~ refers to /home/USER
- case-sensitive 
- no feedback 😐

unless there is an issue



A screenshot of a terminal window titled 'Bash'. The window has a dark background with light-colored text. At the top, there's a menu bar with options: File, Edit, View, Bookmarks, Plugins, Settings, and Help. Below the menu is a toolbar with icons for New Tab, Split View, Copy, Paste, and Find. The main area of the terminal shows a command-line session:

```
[alex@alex-laptop ~]$ cd KED2023
[alex@alex-laptop KED2023]$ ls -lh
total 340K
drwxr-xr-x 3 alex alex 4.0K Nov  4 18:46 bulk
drwxr-xr-x 7 alex alex 4.0K Mar 16 10:27 docs
-rw-r--r-- 1 alex alex 6.1K Feb 17 15:21 dodo.py
drwxr-xr-x 8 alex alex 4.0K Mar 16 10:28 KED2023
-rw-r--r-- 1 alex alex 1.3K Feb 23 14:05 lecture_intro.md
drwxr-xr-x 2 alex alex 4.0K Feb 17 15:21 lib
-rw-r--r-- 1 alex alex 6.9K Oct 21 15:57 LICENSE
-rw-r--r-- 1 alex alex 288K Feb 17 17:00 poetry.lock
drwxr-xr-x 2 alex alex 4.0K Feb 17 16:05 __pycache__
-rw-r--r-- 1 alex alex  922 Feb 17 17:02 pyproject.toml
-rw-r--r-- 1 alex alex 2.0K Feb 17 15:21 README.md
-rw-r--r-- 1 alex alex  345 Feb 17 15:21 requirements.txt
[alex@alex-laptop KED2023]$
```

# Unix philosophy

Build small programs that *do one thing*  
and *do it well.* 😎

# General structure of commands

## Example parts of a command

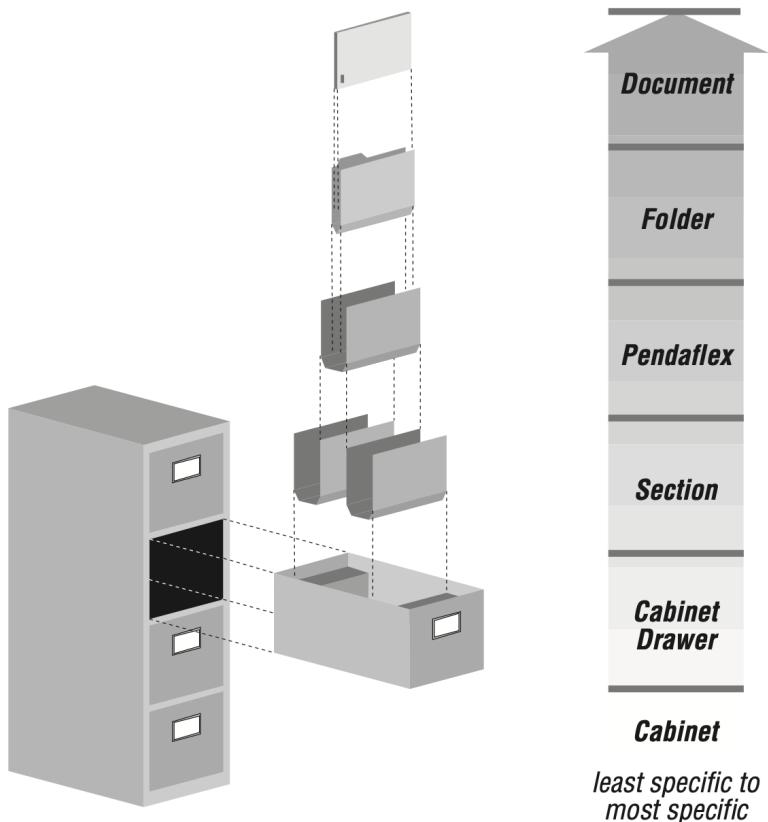
```
command -a --long_argument FILENAME      # non-working example command
```



# Storing files

# An analogue equivalent

Cabinet: Old-fashioned and, likely, you have never used one.

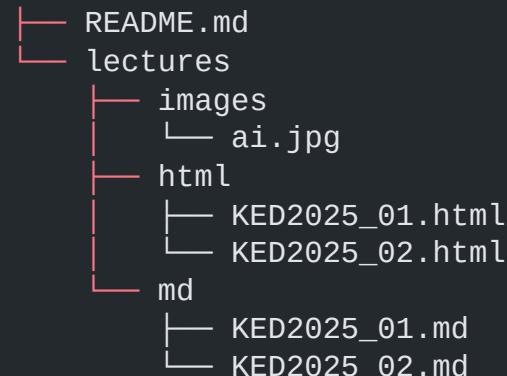


*Illustration of a file cabinet* (Powers et al. 2002)

# Where to find files?

A filesystem is hierarchical contains 

- folders/directories
- files with a suffix (e.g. .jpg)



# How to describe the location of a file?

- **absolute paths** start from top-level directory
  - begins with `/` (uppermost folder)
  - e.g. `/home/alex/KED2025/slides/KED2025_01.html`
- **relative paths** when looking from current directory
  - begins with the name of a folder or file
  - e.g. `KED2025/slides/KED2025_01.html`

# What is the path?

You are in `/home/myuser/documents` containing  
the subfolders `pictures` and `texts`.

- What is the **absolute path** to `texts`?
- What is the **relative path** to `texts`?



⚠ Only relative paths work across systems

# Important places in your file system

- shortcut names of directories
  - . current dir
  - .. parent dir
  - ~ home dir (e.g. `/home/alex`)
- find your files on Windows
  - `/mnt/c/Users/USERNAME/` (replace with your USERNAME)
  - shortcut via `documents`

# Navigating in a file system

```
pwd          # show absolute path of current directory

ls           # list content of current directory
ls -lh       # list with more information
ls dirname   # list content of directory dirname

cd ..        # change directory to go folder up
cd dir/subdir # go to folder dir/subdir (two folders down)
```

**When you are lost, open the file manager (GUI)**

```
open .        # open path in Finder (macOS)
explorer.exe . # open Explorer in WSL Ubuntu (Windows)
```

# Open text files

## Show within Shell

```
more text.txt      # print content (spacebar to scroll)  
head text.txt     # print first 10 lines of file  
tail -n 5 text.txt # print last 5 lines of file
```

# Useful key actions

- autocomplete: TAB
- history of used commands: 
- scrolling: SPACEBAR
- cancel: CTRL + C
- quit: q or CTRL + D

# Create files and directories

```
touch test.txt          # create a new file  
  
mkdir data             # make a new directory  
mkdir -p data/1999     # make a new directory with a subfolder
```

# Copy and move files

```
cp test.txt other_folder/      # copy file into other folder  
mv test.txt new_name.txt      # rename a file  
mv test.txt other_folder/      # move file into other folder
```

# Remove files

Watch out, there is no recycle bin. No way back!

```
rm old.txt          # remove a file  
rm -r old_data    # remove a folder with all its files
```

# In-class: Exercises I

1. Create a new directory called `tmp` in your home directory.
2. Change into that directory using `cd` and print its absolute path using `pwd`.
3. Use `touch` to create a new file called `magic.txt` in `tmp`.
4. Rename the file from `magic.txt` to `easy_as_pie.txt`.
5. Find the `easy_as_pie.txt` file using your graphical file manager (Windows: Explorer, Mac: Finder)
6. Check out the helper page of `mv` command.
7. Look around in the filesystem using `cd` and `ls`. Where are your personal files located?

# Follow conventions



- no spaces/umlauts in names
  - only: alphanumeric, underscore, hyphen, dot
- files have a suffix, folders don't
  - `text_1.txt` vs. `texts`
- descriptive file names
  - `SOURCE/YEAR/speech_party_X.txt`

How is that useful? 🤔  
We are getting there!

# Wildcards

## Placeholders to match ...

- any single character: ?
- any sequence of characters: \*

```
mv data/*.txt new_data/      # move txt-files from to another subfolder  
cp *.txt files/             # copy all txt-files in a single folder
```

# Searching

## List certain files only

```
# list all files with the suffix .txt (in current directory)
ls *.txt
```

## Find term across files

```
# find all files containing X in provided directory
grep -r "Europe" /path/to/dir
```

# Operators

# Combining commands

## Use shell operators to ...

- redirect output into file (overwrite): >
- append to existing file: >>
- stream to next command: | (pipe)

```
echo 'line 1' > test.txt      # write into file
more test.txt | tail -n 1     # pass output to next command
```

Learn more about operators 

# Merging files

```
cat part_1.txt part_2.txt      # concatenate multiple files  
cat *.txt > all_text.txt      # merge all txt into a single one
```



Questions?

# In-class: Exercises II

1. Create a new file with `touch`.
2. Write the following content into that file, one line at a time using the append operator:

```
How about making programming a little more accessible? Like:  
from human_knowledge import solution
```

3. Make sure that the content was written into that file using `more`.

# In-class: Exercises III

1. Navigate up and down in your filesystem using `cd` and list the respective files per directory with `ls`. Where can you find your personal documents? Print the absolute path with `pwd`.

Windows users may have a look at `/mnt/c/Users` since they are working on a Ubuntu subsystem.

2. Read `man ls` and write an `ls` command that lists your documents ordered

by recency (time)

by size

3. Use the `|` and `>` operators to write the 3 “last modified” files in your documents folder into a file called `last-modified.txt` on your desktop (desktop is also a directory). Write a single command performing multiple operations using operators.

# Additional resources

## Useful intros to Bash

- [Cheatsheet](#) for this course
- [Introduction to the Bash Command Line](#) by The Programming Historian
- [An Introduction to the Linux Terminal](#) by DigitalOcean
- [The Unix Shell](#) by Software Carpentry

# References

Powers, Shelley, Jerry Peek, Tim O'Reilly, and Mike Loukides. 2002. *Unix Power Tools, Third Edition*. 3rd edition. Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly Media.