

Copying Files in Bash

You will learn how to copy files via command line in this lesson.

cp

Definition:

This command is one of the most frequently used commands. It is used to copy files and directories. By default, `cp` copies files but not directories. Always be careful while choosing name for new files because the content might be lost if you use a file name that already exists. If you're placing the copied version in the same directory then it must have a different name than the original name.

Syntax:

```
cp [option] [file_name] new_file_name
```

Options:

Option	Meaning
-r or -R	Means <i>Recursive</i> . It is used to copy directories including all its content
-i	This option is only used to warn the user about overwrite issues
-b	Used to make backup copies
-f	Means <i>Force</i> . This option is used to force open the destination files

-u	Means <i>Update</i> . As the name suggests, it only updates the file if any changes are made in the file
-x	This option is to indicate <code>cp</code> to stay on the same file system
-s	By using this option you can only make references rather than deep copying everything

Example:

1. Copy three files in a different directory simulatenously with the same names

```
cp file1 file2 file3 my_directory
```

2. Copy all files from current directory to “my_directory” with only .txt extension

```
cp *.html my_directory
```

3. Copy all files from one directory to another directory using star *wildcard*

```
cp my_dir_1/* my_dir_2
```

Wildcards?

The above example uses a wildcard character i.e. `*` to run the command. Wildcards are commonly used in Shell commands. Some of the most frequently used are: `?`, `#`, `[]` etc. The star wildcard simply means “any” or “every”. Thus, the star wildcard, wherever used, would mean to return “any” of the possible result or object.

