How to set ulimit value permanently?

Asked 6 years, 4 months ago Active 1 year, 1 month ago Viewed 62k times

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On Debian Wheezy, `ulimit -a` gives:

```
open files                      (-n) 1024
```

I add this to /etc/security/limits.conf

```
*               hard    nofile          64000
```

then reboot.

And `ulimit -a` still gives a maximum number of open files of 1024. Anyone could throw some light on it?

debian ulimit

edited Jul 4 '14 at 9:31

asked Jul 4 '14 at 9:15

lcu
1,245 2 12 24

is this possibly a virtual host? – Dennis Nolte Jul 4 '14 at 9:49

no, it it's a mongodb server – lcu Jul 4 '14 at 11:24

3 Answers

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Option one: You did not set the softlimit higher aswell.

Possible solution:

in /etc/security/limits.conf add

```
* soft nofile 2048
```

test with

```
ulimit -n 2048
```

Option two: You are logged in as user and in some "config" file (profile, bashrc, something like this) the soft limit is set to a lower value.

Possible solution f.e. grep for ulimit in your etc folder and/or home folder.

Warning: Depending on the amount of files/directorys you have in there you might want to consider only specific directorys/files

ps: there are a lot of similiar question here you might want to read up.

Specially Hard vs Soft Limit

Read here for possible other solution which go more into detail Too Many Open Files

edited Apr 13 '17 at 12:14
Community ♦
1

answered Jul 4 '14 at 9:30
Dennis Nolte
2,699 4 24 33

2 Actually, I was trying to set only the hard limit to 64000. So the soft limit was still on 1024. Now I tried to set a soft limit to 64000 + hard = 72000. But it didn't work. I tried also "* - nofile 64000" and I get the same result. – lcu Jul 4 '14 at 9:39

After having read "Too Many Open Files", I thought a kernel setting would be overriding the limits.conf settings but: "fs.file-max = 4933738" – lcu Jul 4 '14 at 9:46

@lcu try the answers from this one aswell: serverfault.com/questions/93234/... might be related to your shell – Dennis Nolte Jul 4 '14 at 9:54

I added 'session required pam_limits.so' to /etc/pam.d/other and common-session but it doesn't help ... As an alternative, I added a 'ulimit -n' to my init script and it works but I wonder why I can't get the correct values in my shell. – lcu Jul 4 '14 at 11:11

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There is a bug in Debian. To increase `ulimit` you need to add this into the `/etc/pam.d/common-session` file:

```
session required pam_limits.so
```

and in `/etc/security/limits.conf` add:

```
*               soft    nofile          65535
*               hard    nofile          65535
```

Then reboot the system.

edited Jul 31 '15 at 16:43

Francesco Casula
173 1 1 6

answered Jun 27 '15 at 19:26

jpyzio
233 3 7

1 no need for me to make any change to the `/etc/pam.d/common-session` file. it worked just by adding the other two lines to the `limits.conf` file :-) – Francesco Casula Jul 31 '15 at 15:59

You shouldn't need to reboot. – David Goodwin Mar 17 '16 at 9:53

This is brutal. On debian 7 now, and this isn't working. Not sure what to do :(-- I might open a new question – NiCk Newman Jun 13 '16 at 14:44

12 Boom. `*` wildcard doesn't work for `root`. I added `root` instead of `*`, and it's working. Thank you! – NiCk Newman Jun 13 '16 at 15:25

@FrancescoCasula - which version of Debian was that? Just trying to figure out if this really is a bug, and if it still exists... – UpTheCreek Jan 10 '18 at 14:57

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In my case of Apache on Debian 10 the above didn't help though this worked:

```
echo "APACHE_ULIMIT_MAX_FILES='ulimit -n 16384'" >> /etc/apache2/envvars
service apache2 restart
```

I checked with:

```
cat /proc/$pid/limits
```

..where `$pid` is the process ID of one of the Apache processes.

answered Sep 19 '19 at 0:16

Neil Stockbridge
101 1