

File permissions in Linux

Project description

The research team at my organization needs to update the file permissions for certain files and directories within the `projects` directory. The permissions do not currently reflect the level of authorization that should be given. Checking and updating these permissions will help keep their system secure. To complete this task, I performed the following tasks:

Check file and directory details

The following code demonstrates how I used Linux commands to determine the existing permissions set for a specific directory in the file system.

```
researcher2@5d738f0f927b:~/projects$ ls -la
total 32
drwxr-xr-x 3 researcher2 research_team 4096 Dec  2 15:27 .
drwxr-xr-x 3 researcher2 research_team 4096 Dec  2 15:27 ..
-rw--w--- 1 researcher2 research_team  46 Dec  2 15:27 .project_x.txt
drwx--x--- 2 researcher2 research_team 4096 Dec  2 15:27 drafts
-rw-rw-rw- 1 researcher2 research_team  46 Dec  2 15:27 project_k.txt
-rw-r----- 1 researcher2 research_team  46 Dec  2 15:27 project_m.txt
-rw-rw-r-- 1 researcher2 research_team  46 Dec  2 15:27 project_r.txt
-rw-rw-r-- 1 researcher2 research_team  46 Dec  2 15:27 project_t.txt
researcher2@5d738f0f927b:~/projects$
```

The first line of the screenshot displays the command I entered, and the other lines display the output. The code lists all contents of the `projects` directory. I used the `ls` command with the `-la` option to display a detailed listing of the file contents that also returned hidden files. The output of my command indicates that there is one directory named `drafts`, one hidden file named `.project_x.txt`, and five other project files. The 10-character string in the first column represents the permissions set on each file or directory.

Describe the permissions string

The 10-character string can be deconstructed to determine who is authorized to access the file and their specific permissions. The characters and what they represent are as follows:

- **1st character:** This character indicates the file type. It is either a `d`, for a directory or hyphen (`-`), for a regular file.

- **2nd-4th characters:** These characters indicate the read (`r`), write (`w`), and execute (`x`) permissions for the user. If one of these characters is a hyphen (`-`) instead, it indicates that the permission is not granted/allowed to the user.
- **5th-7th characters:** These characters indicate group permissions, read (`r`), write (`w`), and execute (`x`) permissions. When one of these characters is a hyphen (`-`) instead, it indicates that this permission is not allowed for the group.
- **8th-10th characters:** These characters indicate the read (`r`), write (`w`), and execute (`x`) permissions for the category of other. This owner type consists of all other users on the system not including the user and the group. If one of these characters is a hyphen (`-`) instead, that indicates that this permission is not granted for other.

For example, the file permissions for `project_t.txt` are `-rw-rw-r--`. Since the first character is a hyphen (`-`), this indicates that `project_t.txt` is a regular file, not a directory. The second, fifth, and eighth characters are all `r`, which indicates that user, group, and other all have read permissions. The third and sixth characters are `w`, which indicates that only the user and group have write permissions. No one has execute permissions for `project_t.txt`.

Change file permissions

The organization determined that the other section in the permissions shouldn't have write access to any of their files. To comply with this, I referred to the file permissions that I previously returned. I determined `project_k.txt` must have the write access removed for other.

The following code demonstrates how I used Linux commands to do this:

```
researcher2@5d738f0f927b:~/projects$ chmod o-w project_k.txt
researcher2@5d738f0f927b:~/projects$ ls -la
total 32
drwxr-xr-x 3 researcher2 research_team 4096 Dec  2 15:27 .
drwxr-xr-x 3 researcher2 research_team 4096 Dec  2 15:27 ..
-rw--w--- 1 researcher2 research_team  46 Dec  2 15:27 .project_x.txt
drwx--x--- 2 researcher2 research_team 4096 Dec  2 15:27 drafts
-rw-rw-r-- 1 researcher2 research_team  46 Dec  2 15:27 project_k.txt
-rw-r----- 1 researcher2 research_team  46 Dec  2 15:27 project_m.txt
-rw-rw-r-- 1 researcher2 research_team  46 Dec  2 15:27 project_r.txt
-rw-rw-r-- 1 researcher2 research_team  46 Dec  2 15:27 project_t.txt
researcher2@5d738f0f927b:~/projects$
```

The first two lines of the screenshot display the commands I entered, and the other lines display the output of the second command. The `chmod` command changes the permissions on files and directories. The first argument indicates what permissions should be changed (`o` for

other should take away (-) the write (w) permission), and the second argument specifies in which file or directory this should take place. In this example, I removed write permissions from other for the `project_k.txt` file. After this, I used `ls -la` to review the updates I made.

Change file permissions on a hidden file

The research team at my organization recently archived `project_x.txt`. They do not want anyone to have write access to this project, but the user and group should have read access.

The following code demonstrates how I used Linux commands to change the permissions:

```
researcher2@3213bbc1d047:~/projects$ chmod u-w,g-w,g+r .project_x.txt
researcher2@3213bbc1d047:~/projects$ ls -la
total 32
drwxr-xr-x 3 researcher2 research_team 4096 Dec 20 15:36 .
drwxr-xr-x 3 researcher2 research_team 4096 Dec 20 15:36 ..
-r--r----- 1 researcher2 research_team  46 Dec 20 15:36 .project_x.txt
drwx--x--- 2 researcher2 research_team 4096 Dec 20 15:36 drafts
-rw-rw-rw- 1 researcher2 research_team  46 Dec 20 15:36 project_k.txt
-rw-r----- 1 researcher2 research_team  46 Dec 20 15:36 project_m.txt
-rw-rw-r-- 1 researcher2 research_team  46 Dec 20 15:36 project_r.txt
-rw-rw-r-- 1 researcher2 research_team  46 Dec 20 15:36 project_t.txt
researcher2@3213bbc1d047:~/projects$
```

The first two lines of the screenshot display the commands I entered, and the other lines display the output of the second command. I know `.project_x.txt` is a hidden file because it starts with a period (.). In this example, I removed write permissions from the user and group, and added read permissions to the group using the first arguments (user (u) removed (-) write (w) permission, group (g) removed (-) write (w) and added (+) read (r) permissions).

Change directory permissions

My organization only wants the `researcher2` user to have access to the `drafts` directory and its contents. This means that no one other than `researcher2` should have execute permissions.

The following code demonstrates how I used Linux commands to change the permissions:

```
researcher2@5d738f0f927b:~/projects$ chmod g-x drafts
researcher2@5d738f0f927b:~/projects$ ls -la
total 32
drwxr-xr-x 3 researcher2 research_team 4096 Dec  2 15:27 .
drwxr-xr-x 3 researcher2 research_team 4096 Dec  2 15:27 ..
-r--r----- 1 researcher2 research_team  46 Dec  2 15:27 .project_x.txt
drwx----- 2 researcher2 research_team 4096 Dec  2 15:27 drafts
-rw-rw-r-- 1 researcher2 research_team  46 Dec  2 15:27 project_k.txt
-rw-r----- 1 researcher2 research_team  46 Dec  2 15:27 project_m.txt
-rw-rw-r-- 1 researcher2 research_team  46 Dec  2 15:27 project_r.txt
-rw-rw-r-- 1 researcher2 research_team  46 Dec  2 15:27 project_t.txt
researcher2@5d738f0f927b:~/projects$
```

The output here displays the permission listing for several files and directories. Line 1 indicates the current directory (projects), and line 2 indicates the parent directory (home). Line 3 indicates a regular (hidden) file titled `.project_x.txt`. Line 4 is the directory (drafts) with restricted permissions. Here you can see that only researcher2 has execute permissions. It was previously determined that the group had execute permissions, so I used the `chmod` command to remove them. The `researcher2` user already had execute permissions, so they did not need to be added.

Summary

I changed multiple permissions to match the level of authorization my organization wanted for files and directories in the `projects` directory. The first step in this was using `ls -la` to check the permissions for the files in the directory. This informed my decisions in the steps that came after. I then used the `chmod` command multiple times to change the permissions on files and directories.