

modern linux cli tools

Patrick Drechsler





Patrick Drechsler

- software developer
- ☀️ dotnet / C#
- 🌎 Linux on the desktop 😎
- slides are online: see QR-Code





"modern" is relative...

Douglas Adams

I've come up with a set of rules that describe our reactions to technologies:

- Anything that is in the world **when you're born** is normal and ordinary and is just a natural part of the way the world works.
- Anything that's invented **between when you're fifteen and thirty-five** is new and exciting and revolutionary and you can probably get a career in it.
- Anything invented **after you're thirty-five** is against the natural order of things.





Target audience

- linux desktop CLI users
- linux admins
- docker users
- devops/cloud users
- ...

```
-----  
/ This is the year of linux on the desktop \  
|  
|           ...Windows10 has WSL ;-)          |  
\  
-----  
 \  ^__^  
  \  (oo)\----  
   (__)\       )\/\^  
     ||----w |  
     ||     ||
```



Linux tooling philosophy

- do one thing (and only one thing!) well
- chaining
- *sound familiar? (hint: functional programming...)*



Why? Improvements to...

- **productivity**
 - one cli command is better than multiple clicks in a GUI
 - cli commands are reproducible and easier to document (no screenshots: remember IIS?)
- **optics**
 - "unix porn" (``PS1``, ``ls``, ...)

Learn the basics

VS Code is cool, but it is not a CLI tool

■ Emacs and Vim:

- navigation within file
- cut, copy & paste
- navigation between files
- and how to exit
- pick one and become fluent

■ Learn basic cli commands: ``cd`` , ``ls`` , ``cat`` , ``less`` , ``find`` , ``grep`` , ``sed`` , ``tail`` , ``awk`` , ``dd`` , ``rsync`` , ...

■ Combine using pipes and redirection

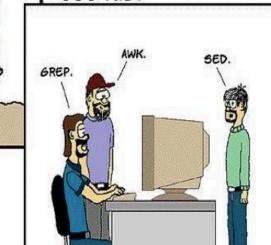


EVOLUTION OF LANGUAGE THROUGH THE AGES.

6000 B.C.

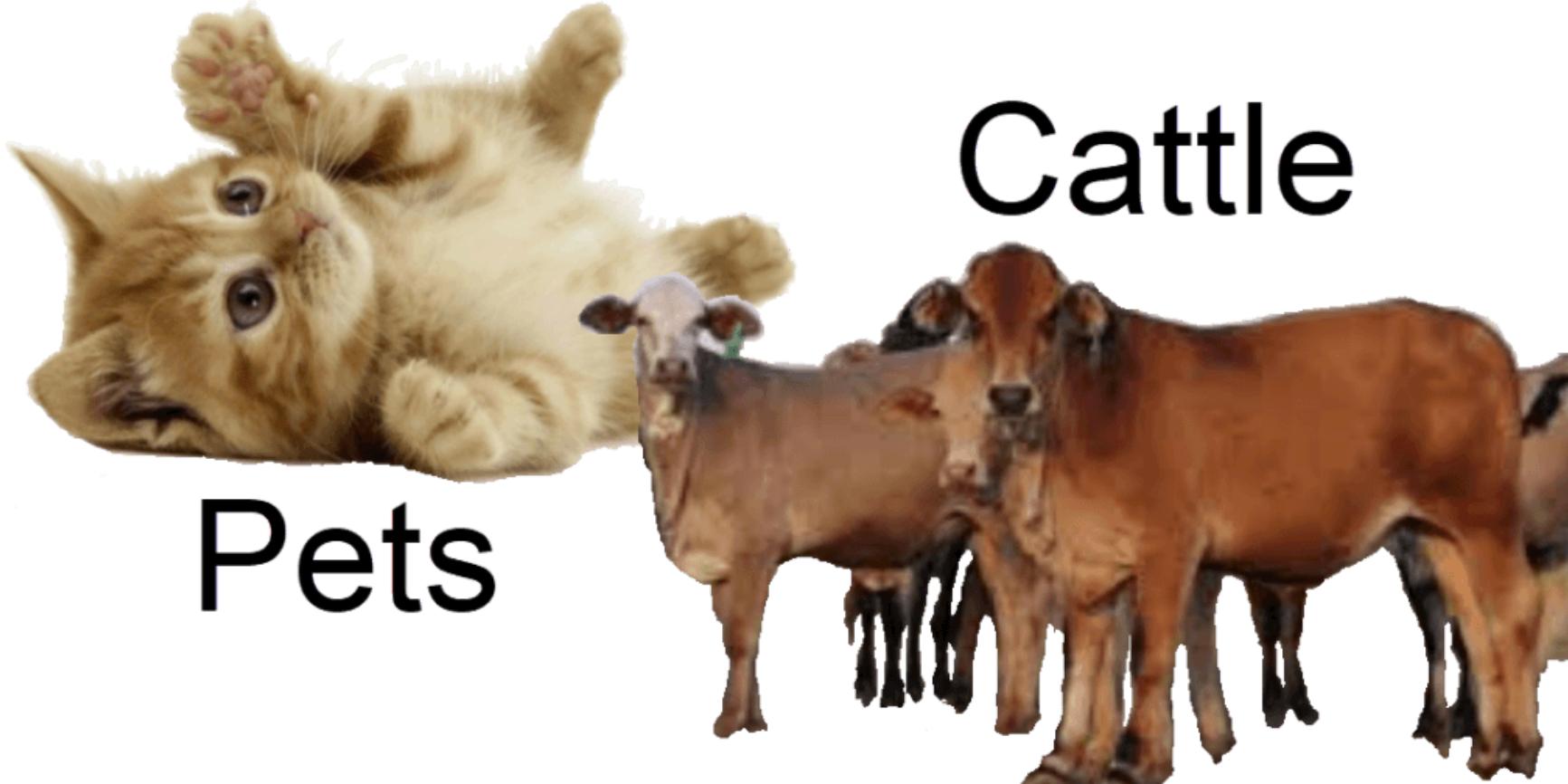


2000 A.D.





Disclaimer

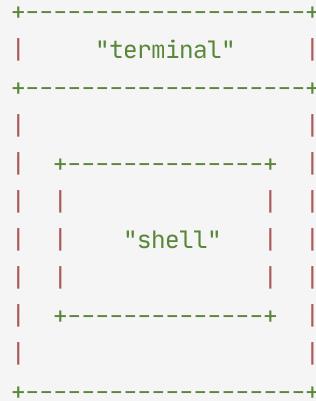


Cattle

Pets



terminal and shell: what's the difference?



terminal

- **colors** (16 or more),
- **fonts** (utf8, ligatures, emojis, ...)
- **interactions**
 - keyboard shortcuts
 - mouse interaction (copy & paste, scrolling, selection, ...)

shell

- **everything else** (f.ex. ``PS1``, scripting language)



What is the best terminal?

- start by using your default terminal
- but think about enriching your output!
- Emojis:
- Unicode, Emojis, Fonts, Image support (!)

me/patrick/cli-talk-demos/geek_and_poke_stable_data_model.png

some-project 11 ↗
geek_and_poke_stable_data_~.png 380 K
notes.md 149 B

HOW TO CREATE A STABLE DATA MODEL

some-project on main .NET v5.0.204 net5.0

> ls

rwxr-xr-X	1	patrick	10 B	Tue Jun 15 20:30:51 2021			
rwxr-xr-X	1	patrick	182 B	Tue Jun 15 20:32:20 2021			
rwxr-xr-X	1	patrick	414 B	Tue Jun 15 20:30:51 2021			
r--r--r--	1	patrick	1 KiB	Tue Jun 15 20:30:51 2021			
r--r--r--	1	patrick	2 KiB	Tue Jun 15 20:30:51 2021			
r--r--r--	1	patrick	2 KiB	Tue Jun 15 20:30:51 2021			
r--r--r--	1	patrick	3 KiB	Tue Jun 15 20:30:51 2021			
r--r--r--	1	patrick	7 KiB	Tue Jun 15 20:32:16 2021			
r--r--r--	1	patrick	47 B	Tue Jun 15 20:30:51 2021			
r--r--r--	1	patrick	224 B	Tue Jun 15 20:30:51 2021			
r--r--r--	1	patrick	352 B	Tue Jun 15 20:30:51 2021			

bin/
✓ git/.git/
✓ obj/
✓ ApplicativeDemo.fsproj
✓ Demo1.fs
✓ Demo2.fs
✓ Demo3.fs
✓ .gitignore
✓ Program.fs
✓ README.md
✓ TestHelper.fs

terminal - Retro style 🦄

- cool-retro-term: ⚭ 18k stars <https://github.com/Swordfish90/cool-retro-term>





modern alternatives

not the topic of this talk, but...

- kitty: ⚭ 20k stars <https://github.com/kovidgoyal/kitty>
- alacritty ⚭ 49k stars <https://github.com/alacritty/alacritty>
- wezterm ⚭ 10k stars <https://github.com/wez/wezterm>



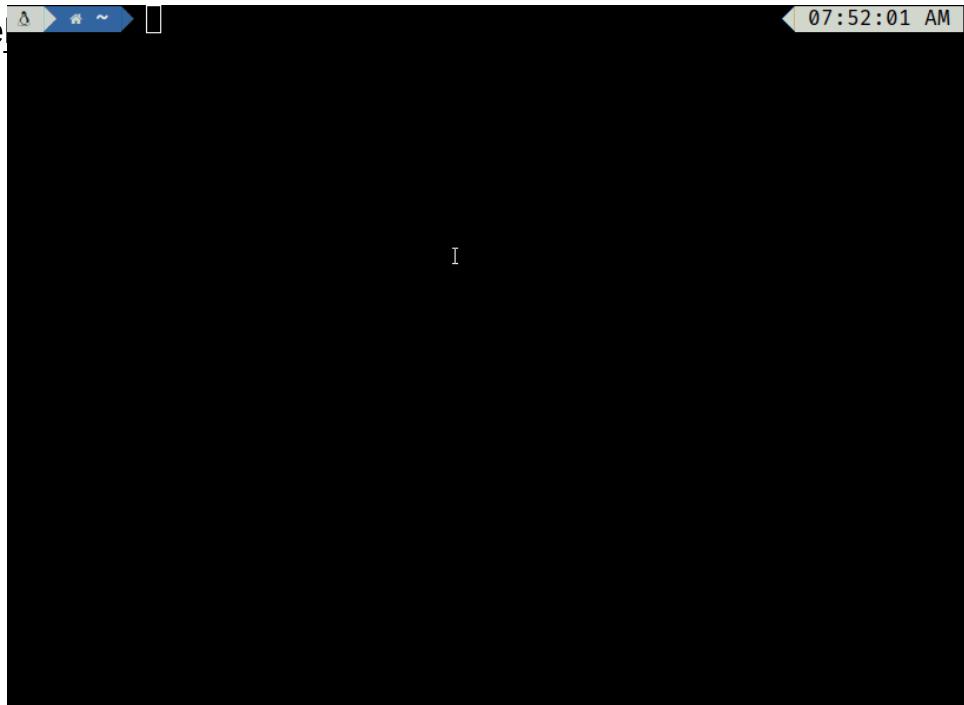
Popular shells

- bash
- zsh
- fish
- dash (embedded)

nushell: The new kid on the block

Everything is data

- keep an eye on it!
 - 26k stars <https://github.com/nushell/nushell>
- 100% **NOT** POSIX conform
- category: experimental





PS1: alias for "prompt string 1"

- default: `username@machinename:~/some/location \$`
- `"\$PWD` present working directory

Extra, nice-to-have information

- only show relevant parts (hide user/machine name on local machine)
- compact location (`"\$PWD`)
- git status
- environment infos (node / .NET / Java / Python / etc version)

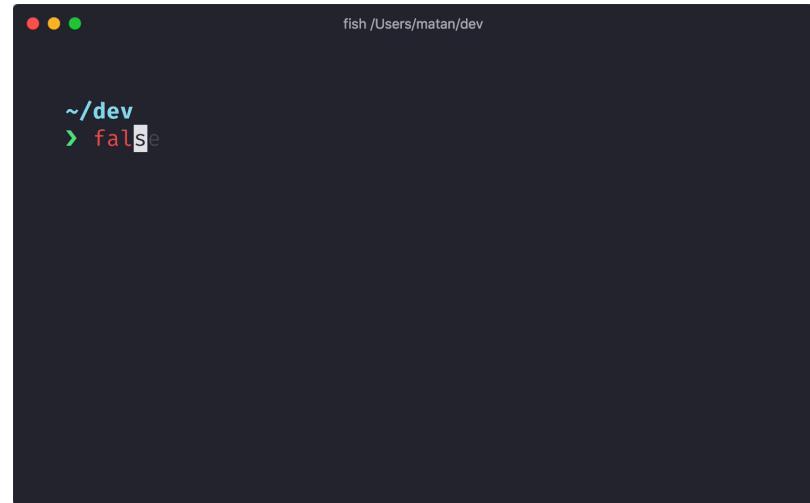
PS1: Starship

the new kid on the block

- 33k stars <https://github.com/starship/starship>
- cross-platform, cross-shell (even Windows cmd.exe)
- stylish
- great defaults for many environments
- easy to configure
- can look like powerline
- category: unix-porn



The minimal, blazing-fast, and infinitely customizable prompt for any shell!





terminal-independent shell UI

- ② 28k stars <https://github.com/tmux/tmux>
- terminal multiplexer
- "tabs" and "split screen" features: terminal independent
- detachable sessions
- plugin system & package manager (of course)
- customizable
- scriptable: f. ex. ``tmuxinator``



`tmux` -wrapper for non-vim users

- (mirrored repo: ~1k stars) <https://www.byobu.org/>
- Keybindings `F1` - `F12`
- Sensible defaults (layout, info line)
- category: productivity



⚠️ Warning about tiling everything ⚠️

don't forget about all the fun keybindings

Nesting can become a challenge...

Abstraction level

Keybinding Brain Overload

tiling **window manager** like `i3` or `sway`



tiling **terminal** like `kitty`



tiling **shell** like `nushell` or `tmux`



application like `emacs` or `vim`





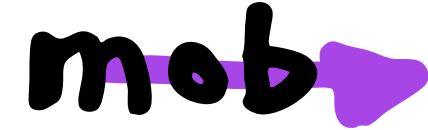
Smooth git handover

- 1k stars <https://mob.sh/>
- remote ensemble or pair programming using screen sharing

```
## first user
mob start 5
mob next

## second user
mob start 5
mob next

## any user, wanting to make a normal commit
mob done
```





file explorer / manager

- 13k stars <https://ranger.github.io>
- 2 layout options
 - miller columns ("mac" style)
 - multipane (similar to Midnight commander)
- powerful preview mode and program launcher (word, music, ...)
 - with image support for certain terminals (`iTerm2`, `urxvt`, `kitty`) not `gnome-terminal` (!)
- key bindings: see `~/.config/ranger/rc.conf` starting at line ~300...
- category: navigation, file system

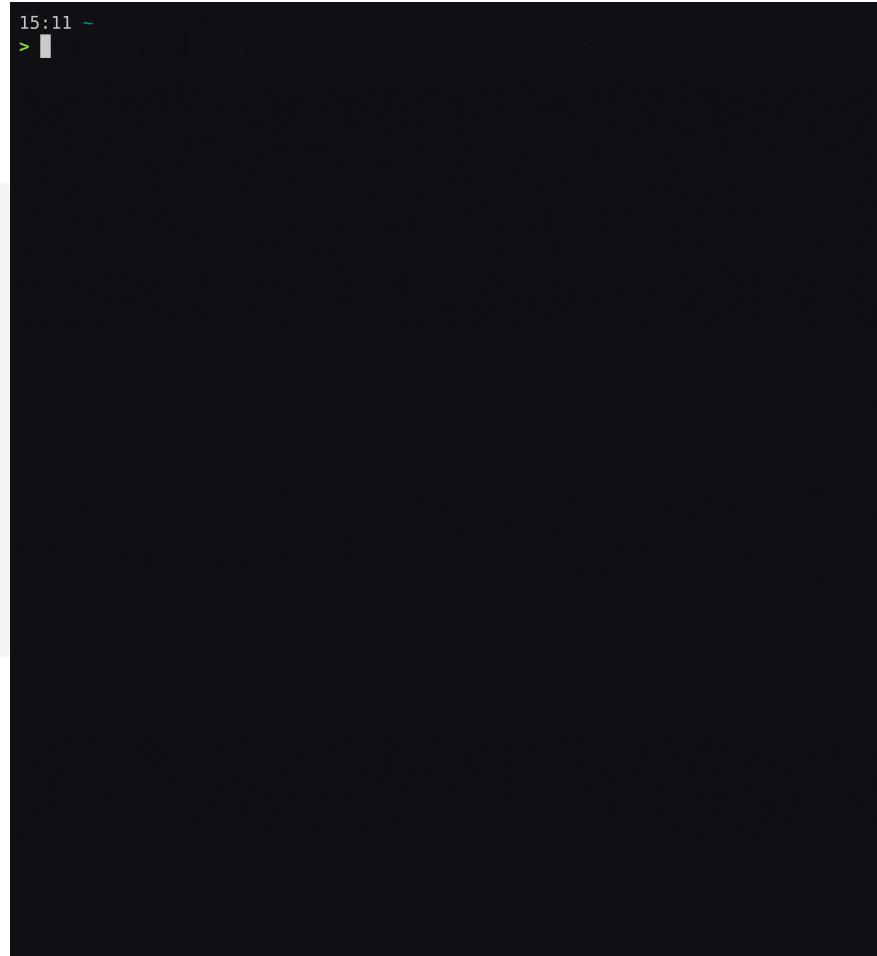


another terminal file manager

Most terminal file managers out there (if not all) are built using the TUI design principles, much like the superb `Midnight Commander` and `Ranger` . But clifm is built rather having the CLI design principles in mind: do not navigate through a big menu of files, just type it!, exactly as you do in your regular shell, but easier and faster.

For this reason, clifm does not need to be better: it's just different!

- ① 1.1k stars <https://github.com/leo-arch/clifm>
- `ranger` alternative
- category: navigation, file system

A screenshot of a terminal window with a dark background. At the top left, the time is shown as 15:11. To its right is a tilde (~). Below the time, there is a green greater-than sign (>) followed by a small black vertical bar. The rest of the terminal window is entirely black, indicating no further output or input.



another terminal file manager

nnn (n³) is a full-featured terminal file manager. It's tiny, nearly 0-config and incredibly fast.

- `ranger` alternative
- category: navigation, file system

A screenshot of the nnn terminal file manager. The interface is dark-themed. On the left, a file tree is displayed with icons for directories and files. Directories shown include demo/, dev/, documents/, downloads/, music/, onedrive/, pictures/, server/, share/, torrents/, videos/, vimwiki/, and wine/. To the right of the file tree, a list of files is shown with their icons and names: archive.tar.gz, document.docx, document.pdf, gif.gif, image.png, song.flac, and spreadsheet.xlsx. At the bottom of the screen, there is a status bar with the text "1/13 2021-04-13 01:20 drwxr-xr-x luuk:wheel 4K".

```
[1 2 3 4] ~
demo/
dev/
documents/
downloads/
music/
onedrive/
pictures/
server/
share/
torrents/
videos/
vimwiki/
wine/

archive.tar.gz
document.docx
document.pdf
gif.gif
image.png
song.flac
spreadsheet.xlsx

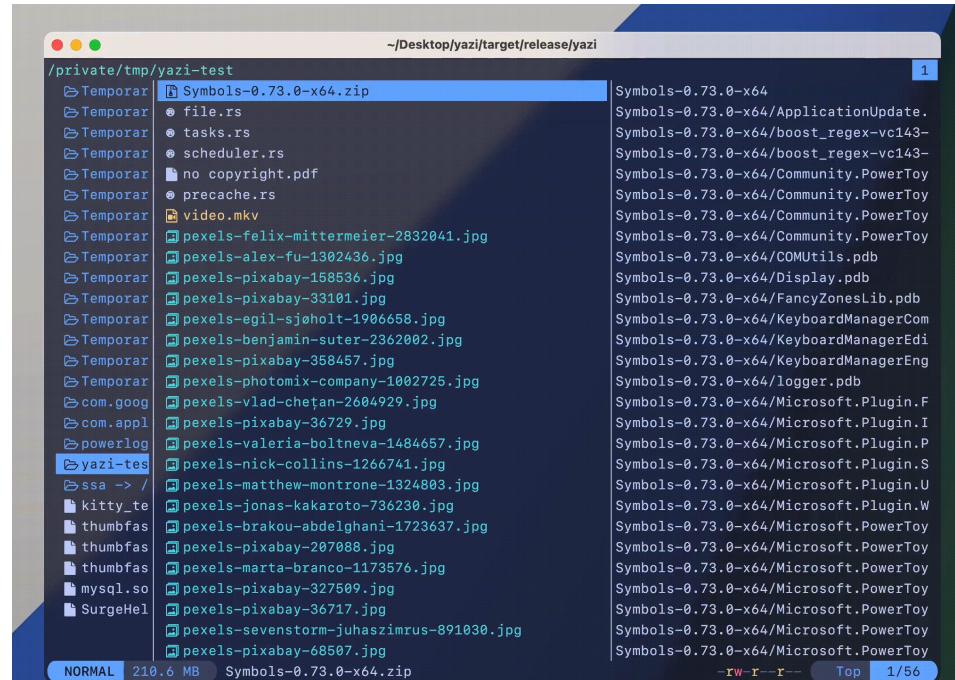
1/13 2021-04-13 01:20 drwxr-xr-x luuk:wheel 4K
```



fast terminal file manager

Yazi ("duck" in Chinese) is a terminal file manager written in Rust, based on non-blocking async I/O. It aims to provide an efficient, user-friendly, and customizable file management experience.

- 3k stars <https://github.com/sxyazi/yazi>
- `ranger` alternative
- category: navigation, file system





man pages can be difficult

- ② 44k stars <https://tldr.sh/>
- clients implemented in many languages
 - js, ruby, python, perl, haskell, etc.
- shared user-contributed knowledge-base



- ② 2k stars <https://github.com/dbrgn/tealdeer>
- ...in rust

```
~/cli-talk-demos
> tldr scp

scp

Secure copy.
Copy files between hosts using Secure Copy Protocol over SSH.
More information: https://man.openbsd.org/scp.

- Copy a local file to a remote host:
  scp path/to/local_file remote_host:path/to/remote_file

- Use a specific port when connecting to the remote host:
  scp -P port path/to/local_file remote_host:path/to/remote_file

- Copy a file from a remote host to a local directory:
  scp remote_host:path/to/remote_file path/to/local_directory

- Recursively copy the contents of a directory from a remote host to a local directory:
  scp -r remote_host:path/to/remote_directory path/to/local_directory

- Copy a file between two remote hosts transferring through the local host:
  scp -3 host1:path/to/remote_file host2:path/to/remote_directory

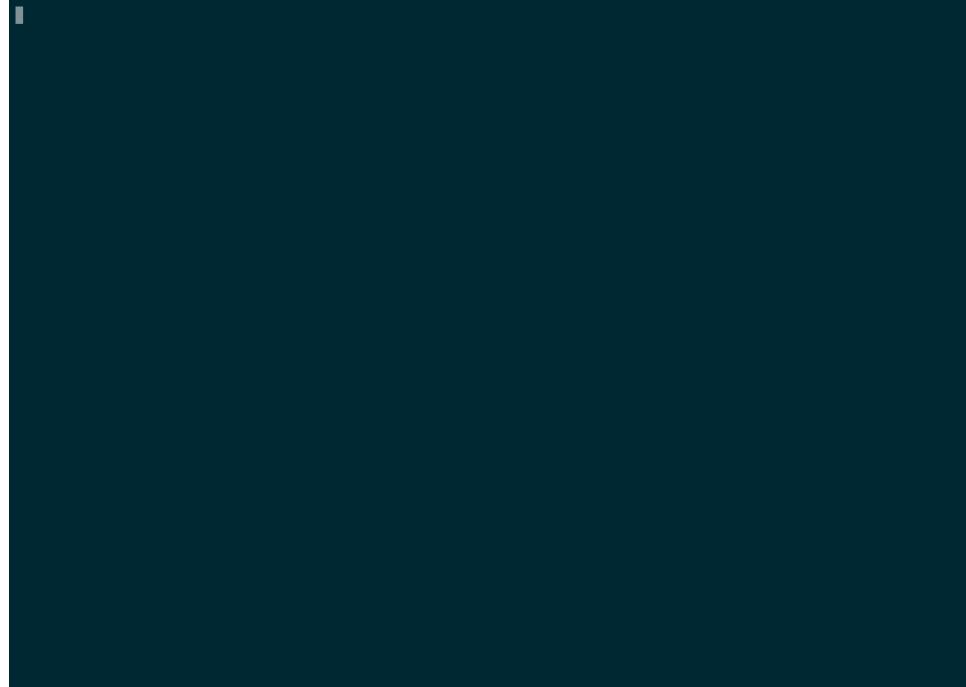
- Use a specific username when connecting to the remote host:
  scp path/to/local_file remote_username@remote_host:path/to/remote_directory

- Use a specific ssh private key for authentication with the remote host:
  scp -i ~/.ssh/private_key local_file remote_host:/path/remote_file
```



magic shell history

- 23k stars <https://github.com/atuinsh/atuin>
- powerful history search (``ctrl+r``)
- uses SQLite under the hood
- also allows synchronizing between machines
- cross-shell
- Example: `dotnet tool`





a smarter cd command, inspired by z and autojump.

- 26k stars <https://github.com/ajeetdsouza/zoxide>
- cross-shell
- interactive mode
- integrates nicely with other tools such as `fzf`, `ranger`, `yazi`, `atuin`



``cat`` & ``less`` with syntax highlighting

- ① 40k stars <https://github.com/sharkdp/bat>
- hint: can be used as preview by ``ranger`` ...
- category: file preview



very fast `\grep` replacement

- ① 37k stars <https://github.com/BurntSushi/ripgrep>
- `\ripgrep` recursively searches directories for a regex pattern
- sensible defaults: respect `\.gitignore`, ignores hidden files & folders
- command: `\rg`
- category: search
- use `\rg --hidden -g '!.\git' "your search"` to search all hidden folder except `\.git`
 - create an alias (maybe `\rgh` ?)...

 ripgrep-all

ripgrep, but also search in PDFs, E-Books, Office documents, zip, tar.gz, sqlite (!), etc

- 5k stars <https://github.com/phiresky/ripgrep-all>
- command: `rga`
- faster than `pdffgrep` (see website for a benchmark)
- category: search
- Demo: search in Manning books folder



simple alternative to `find`

- ① 27k stars <https://github.com/sharkdp/fd>
- "The command name is 50% shorter than `find`"
- Convenient syntax `fd PATTERN` (instead of `find -iname '*PATTERN*'`)
- Sensible defaults: `~.gitignore`, ignore hidden files/folders
- fast
- category: search



interactive fuzzy search

- 51k stars <https://github.com/junegunn/fzf>
- excellent integration with other tools: Install it and it will be used by many other tools
- ``Alt+c`` : quick ``cd`` navigation
- nice helper methods. ``<cmd> **<TAB>``, for example:
 - ``cd **<TAB>``
 - ``ssh **<TAB>``
 - ``unset **<TAB>``, ``export **<TAB>``, ``unalias **<TAB>``
 - ``kill -9 <TAB>`` careful...
- Things you can do with fzf: <https://andrew-quinn.me/fzf>
- category: search



"sql for json" (and other data formats)

jq

- lightweight and flexible command-line JSON processor
- ⚡ 26k stars <https://github.com/jqlang/jq>

jqp

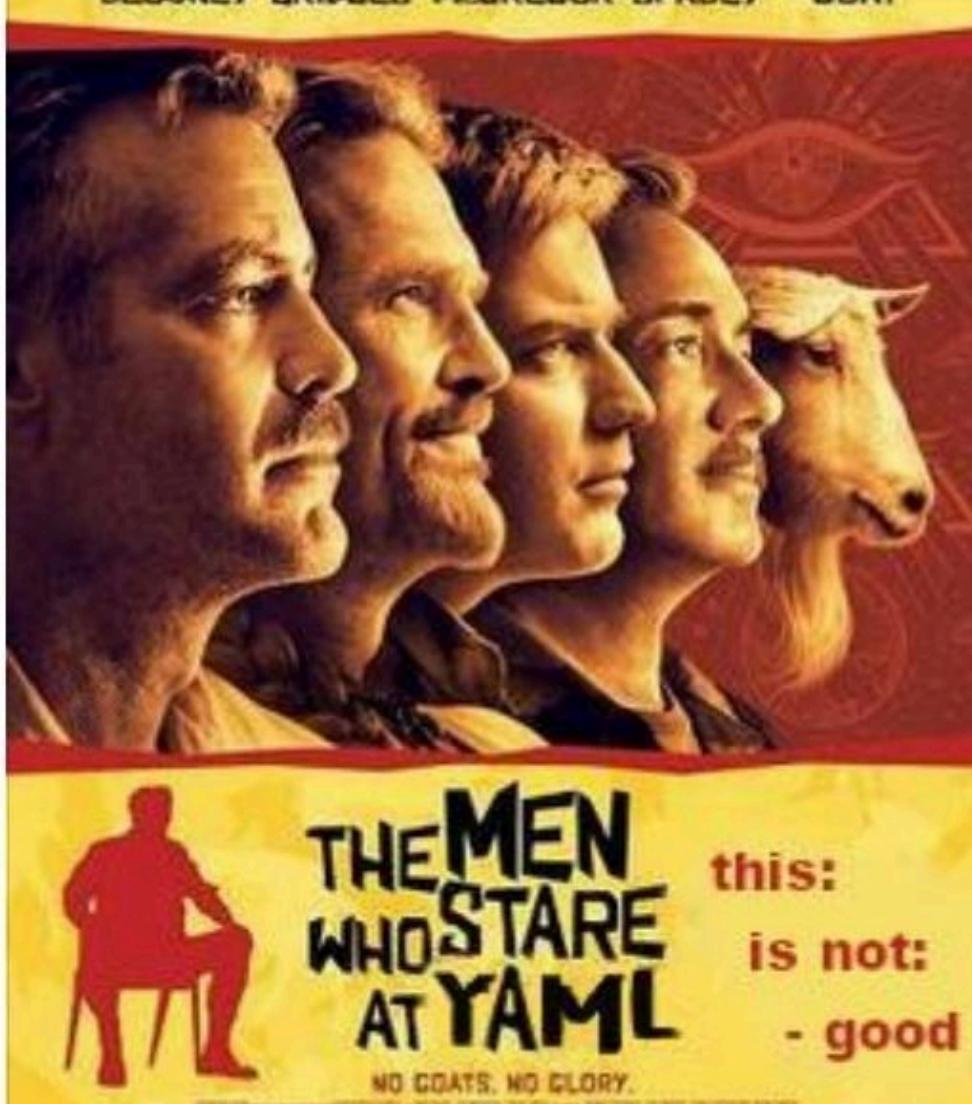
- TUI for `jq`
- ⚡ 1.8k stars <https://github.com/noahgorstein/jqp>

miller

- similar to `jq`, but also for CSV, TSV, JSON, etc.
- ⚡ 8k stars <https://github.com/johnkerl/miller>

fq

- `jq`, but for binary data
- ⚡ 8k stars <https://github.com/wader/fq>
- for example: audio, video, images, etc.



yq

- `jq`, but for YAML
- ⚡ 13k stars

<https://github.com/mikefarah/yq>



benchmarking tool

- 15k stars

<https://github.com/sharkdp/hyperfine>

```
## comparing `fd` with `find`
hyperfine --warmup 3 \
  'fd -e jpg -uu' \
  'find -iname "*.jpg"'
```

- category: benchmarking



monitor any kind of "copy"

- 6k stars <https://github.com/Xfennec/progress>
- attach to any kind of copy, even after the fact (!)
- category: monitoring

```
No command currently running: cp, mv, dd, tar, cat, rsync, grep, fgrep, egrep, cut, sort, md5sum,  
sha1sum, sha224sum, sha256sum, sha384sum, sha512sum, adb, gzip, gunzip, bzip2, bunzip2, xz,  
unxz, lzma, unlzma, 7z, 7za, zcat, bzcat, lzcat, split, gpg, or wrong permissions.
```



Rainbows and unicorns

- 5k stars <https://github.com/busyloop/lolcat>
- category: fun, unix porn

```
~/cli-talk-demos
> lc | lolcat
  rwxr-xr-x  1  patrick   182 B    Thu Jun 17 07:24:41 2021  ➔ search-project/
  rwxr-xr-x  1  patrick   872 B    Wed Jun 16 01:30:02 2021  ➔ search-project-pdf/
  rwxr-xr-x  1  patrick   196 B    Tue Jun 15 20:32:18 2021  ➔ some-project/
  rw-r--r--  1  patrick   379 KiB   Tue Jun 15 20:39:21 2021  📜 geek_and_poke_stable_data_model.png
  rw-r--r--  1  patrick    23 B     Tue Jun 15 22:01:28 2021  📄 live-notes.md
  rw-r--r--  1  patrick   149 B    Tue Jun 15 16:40:27 2021  📄 notes.md
  rw-r--r--  1  patrick   2 GiB    Wed Jun 16 01:28:31 2021  📕 ubuntu-20.04.2.0-desktop-amd64.iso

~/cli-talk-demos
> lc | lolcat
  rwxr-xr-x  1  patrick   182 B    Thu Jun 17 07:24:41 2021  ➔ search-project/
  rwxr-xr-x  1  patrick   872 B    Wed Jun 16 01:30:02 2021  ➔ search-project-pdf/
  rwxr-xr-x  1  patrick   196 B    Tue Jun 15 20:32:18 2021  ➔ some-project/
  rw-r--r--  1  patrick   379 KiB   Tue Jun 15 20:39:21 2021  📜 geek_and_poke_stable_data_model.png
  rw-r--r--  1  patrick    23 B     Tue Jun 15 22:01:28 2021  📄 live-notes.md
  rw-r--r--  1  patrick   149 B    Tue Jun 15 16:40:27 2021  📄 notes.md
  rw-r--r--  1  patrick   2 GiB    Wed Jun 16 01:28:31 2021  📕 ubuntu-20.04.2.0-desktop-amd64.iso
```

no-more-secrets 🦄

when the tv team comes in your office

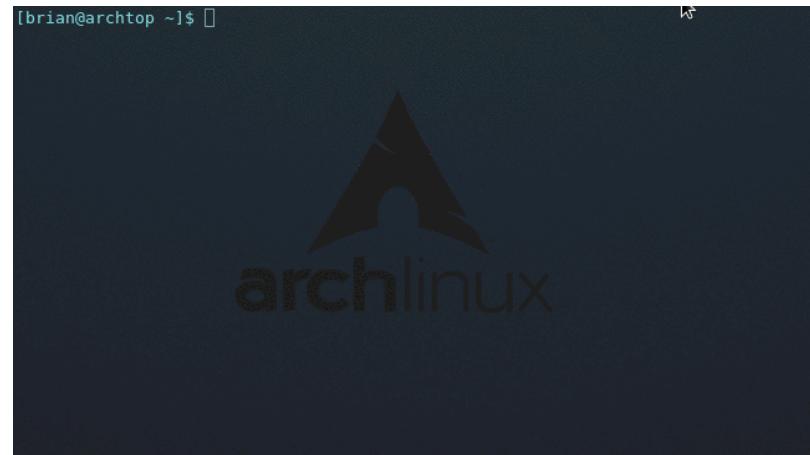
- 5k stars <https://github.com/bartobri/no-more-secrets>
- pipe something to `nms` or just run `sneakers`
- category: fun, unix porn



[brian@archtop ~]\$

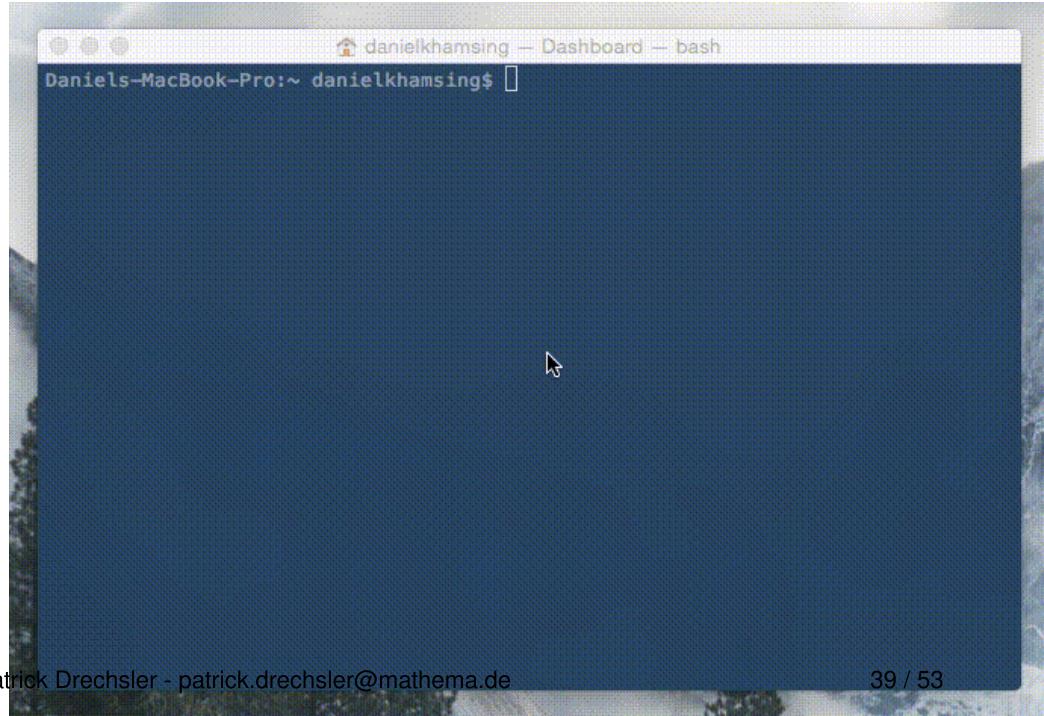


[brian@archtop ~]\$





- ① 3k stars <https://github.com/mtoyoda/sl>
- typo ``sl`` (instead of ``ls``) → show steam locomotive
- can we pipe it to ``lolcat``? of course
- category: fun, unix porn





GitHub CLI

- 32k stars <https://github.com/cli/cli>
- Example: push current git folder to new private github repo:
 - `gh repo create --source . --push --private`
- create PRs
- view issues



static analysis tool for shell scripts

- 37k stars <https://github.com/koalaman/shellcheck>
- plugins available for most IDEs
- written in Haskell ;-)



- ① 12k stars <https://github.com/go-task/task>
- task runner / simpler Make alternative
- single binary
- cross-platform
- written in Go

```
version: '3'

vars:
  GREETING: Hello, World!

tasks:
  default:
    cmds:
      - echo "{{.GREETING}}"
    silent: true

  test:
    cmds:
      - dotnet test
```



Command suggestions, command-not-found and ``thefuck`` replacement written in Rust

- 200 stars <https://github.com/iffse/pay-respects>
- category: productivity

A screenshot of a terminal window with a dark background. The prompt shows a green greater-than sign (>) followed by a blue square bracket character [.



Is on steroids

`ls` problem: **sort by name and time and size** at the same time...

Use colors!

- `colorls` ("the original" in ruby: <https://github.com/athityakumar/colorls>)
- `lsd` (in rust: <https://github.com/Peltrophe/lspd>)
- `exa` (in rust: <https://github.com/ogham/exa>)
- `eza` (in rust: <https://github.com/eza-community/eza>)

Required: font providing all symbols

- Example: NerdFonts <https://github.com/ryanoasis/nerd-fonts>



- 7k stars <https://github.com/eza-community/eza>
- category: unix porn

```
drwxr-xr-x  patrick patrick 17 Jun 2023 | gh-pages
drwxr-xr-x  - patrick patrick 19 Jun 2023 | gh-pages
drwxr-xr-x  - patrick patrick  4 Jun 2023 + main
drwxr-xr-x  - patrick patrick 23 Jun 2023 | gh-pages
drwxr-xr-x  - patrick patrick 17 Nov 2023 | gh-pages
drwxr-xr-x  - patrick patrick 12 Dec 2023 | it-tage-.
drwxr-xr-x  - patrick patrick 10 Jan 05:35
drwxr-xr-x  - patrick patrick  4 May 2023 | main
drwxr-xr-x  - patrick patrick 28 Apr 22:50 | 2024-mag...
drwxr-xr-x  - patrick patrick 13 Apr 02:03 | main
drwxr-xr-x  - patrick patrick  6 Jul 2022 - -
drwxrwxr--  - patrick patrick 19 Feb 21:18 | main
drwxr-xr--  - patrick patrick  8 Jan 02:58 | master
drwxr-xr-X  - patrick patrick 26 Jun 2023 | main
drwxr-xr-X  - patrick patrick 22 Oct 2019 - -
drwxr-xr-X  - patrick patrick  3 Apr 2023 | main
drwxr-xr-X  - patrick patrick  8 Feb 2023 | main
drwxr-xr-X  - patrick patrick 10 Dec 2018 | master
drwxrwxr-X  - patrick patrick 31 Aug 2020 - -
drwxrwxr-X  - patrick patrick  5 Nov 2023 - -
drwxrwxr-X  - patrick patrick 27 Aug 2018 - -
drwxrwxr-X  - patrick patrick 14 Feb 09:33 - -
.rw-r--r--  87K patrick patrick 27 Aug 2018 - -
.rw-r--r--  9.5M patrick patrick 14 Feb 09:33 - -
```

2023-06-06 cloudand-modern-linux-cli-tools
■ 2023-06-dwx-fp-csharp-to-fsharp
■ 2023-06-my-coding-zone-error-handling
■ 2023-06-socrates-day-franken-modern-linux-cli-tools
➡ 2023-12-it-tage-fp-intro-csharp-fsharp
■ 2023-fp-intro-csharp-fsharp
■ 2023-gregor
■ 2023-mathema-sample-sliddev
■ 2023-modern-linux-cli-tools
■ 2024-04-mathemacampus-approval-testing
■ _other_people
■ abstracts
■ abstracts.orig
■ draptik
■ ideas-workshop-testing
■ jeopardy-questions
■ mathema-teamday-opensource
■ reveal-js-template
■ template
■ tmp
■ drechsler-profile.jpg
▷ 'Mathema Campus-ppt-Vorlage.pptx'



Everything lazy*

■ lazydocker

- ⚡ 27k stars <https://github.com/jesseduffield/lazydocker>

■ lazygit

- ⚡ 35k stars <https://github.com/jesseduffield/lazygit>

```
Status
lazydocker

Services
running api 0.01%
running mysql 0.13%
running quote-fetcher 0.00%
running redis4.0 0.31%

Standalone Containers
exited (1) migrate 0.00%
running guard 0.00%
running rails-console 0.00%

Images
<none> <none> 1
<none> <none> 1
bumper latest 9
<none> <none> 5

Volumes
local 68473898e49e0e4d2c5998f68c79
local 90d4357f8a93810ee8f2a59671e7
local b9a432a2d4d6366f9a9434aff8a
local bc80a55695b8d780db6fbe54f31a

PgUp/PgDn: scroll, esc/q: close, x: menu, ← → ↑ ↓: navigate           Donate unversioned
```

```
github.com/jesseduffield/lazygit test-branch ✘
▶
```

 du alternatives 

‘du’ in the name

- ncdt - we all know this
 - <https://dev.yorhel.nl/ncdu>
 - ○ 2k stars gdu: <https://github.com/dundee/gdu>
 - ○ 6k stars dust: <https://github.com/bootandy/dust>





- <https://github.com/dustinkirkland/hollywood>
- random crazy stuff in the terminal
- category: unix porn
- Live demo



Everything *top

- btop 😎
- apachetop
- ngxtop
- mtp
- pg_top
- powertop
- iotop
- iftop
- nethogs



Why didn't I show this presentation in a shell?

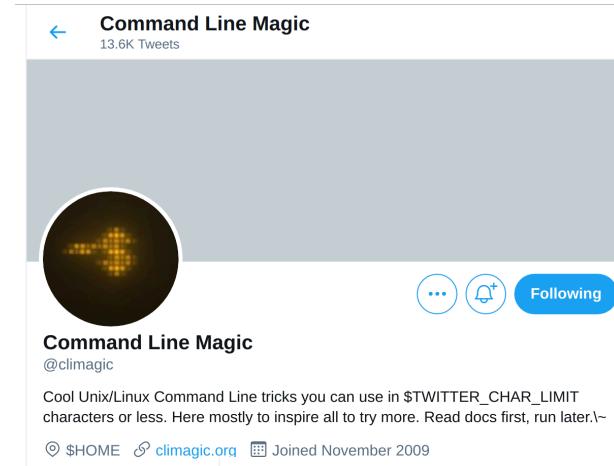
I've done it 😊

- 5k stars <https://github.com/mfontanini/presenterm>

Resources

- [@climagic](https://mastodon.social/@climagic)
- [@nixCraft](https://mastodon.social/@nixCraft)
- [r/commandline](#)
- [r/unixporn](#)
- search for "awesome-cli"

This talk was inspired by Martin Leyrer's session at Gulaschprogrammiernacht 19 (CCC).



Command Line Magic
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@climagic

Cool Unix/Linux Command Line tricks you can use in \$TWITTER_CHAR_LIMIT characters or less. Here mostly to inspire all to try more. Read docs first, run later.:-)

⌚ \$HOME ⌚ climagic.org Joined November 2009

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I forgot your favorite tool?

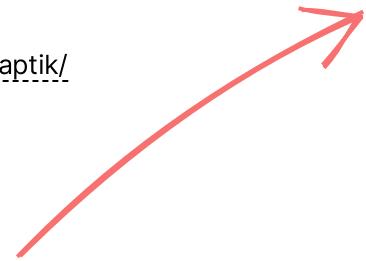
- git-fuzzy <https://github.com/bigH/git-fuzzy>
- forgit <https://github.com/wfxr/forgit>
- mosh (robust replacement for ssh) <https://mosh.org/>
- fish_config (web-based configuration tool for fish shell)
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- xclip (cli to X clipboard) 403 stars
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<https://github.com/dylanaraps/neofetch>
- expect <https://likegeeks.com/expect-command/>
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- http-prompt (cli http client) 7.6k stars <http://http-prompt.com/>
- pywal (color schemes for terminal) 3.4k stars
<https://github.com/dylanaraps/pywal>
- ytfzf <https://github.com/pystardust/ytfzf> find YT videos and downloads them using youtube-dl
- figlet <http://www.figlet.org/> ascii art
- toilet <http://caca.zoy.org/wiki/toilet> ascii art
- apt-iselect (interactive ncurses package search for debian)
<https://www.rot13.org/~dpavlin/apt-iselect.html>
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<https://github.com/insanum/gcalcli>
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<https://github.com/skorokithakis/pastebinit>
- MapSCII (ascii google maps in the terminal)
<https://github.com/rastapasta/mapscii>
- alwaysontop (always move prompt to top of screen) 160 stars
<https://github.com/swirepe/alwaysontop>
- wttr.in (ascii weather report) <https://github.com/chubin/wttr.in>
- gpt4free <https://github.com/xtekky/gpt4free>
- Fig <https://fig.io/> Autocomplete on-steroids
- xkcd.xsh <https://gist.github.com/Lassi-Koykka/9fb934732a871ca3c8bc9396983a3310>
- fx (json cli viewer) <https://github.com/antonmedv/fx>



Thank You!

- patrick.drechsler@mathema.de
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Slides



- QR Code or
- <https://draptik.github.io/2025-09-socrates-at-modern-linux-cli-tools>

