

VFS, configuration paths, subshell, troubleshooting, references

VFS: browse “special paths” — mc(1)

Key	Action
Concept	VFS lets you <i>cd into</i> archives and remotes like directories.
C-x a	List active VFS directories — gist.
Tip	VFS can stack (for example, an archive stored on an sftp:// path).

Remote VFS — mc(1)

Key	Action
sh://	sh://[user@]machine[:port]/[remote-dir]
sftp://	sftp://[user@]machine[:port]/[remote-dir]
Example	sh://joe@somehost:2222/private
Example	sftp://joe@somehost:2222/private

Archives and EXTfs — mc(1)

Key	Action
Example	cd documents.zip/uzip:// (man page example).
Pattern	cd file.tar.gz/utar:// (extfs name varies).
Standalone	cd fsname:// (enter an extfs “filesystem”).

Undelete (optional ext2) — mc(1)

Key	Action
undel://	undel://DEVICEPART (for example, undel://sda2) if built with support.

Configuration paths — mc(1)

Key	Action
Main config	~/.config/mc/ini
Panels	~/.config/mc/panels.ini
Extensions	~/.config/mc/mc.ext.ini
User menu	~/.config/mc/menu
Keymap	~/.config/mc/mc.keymap
Highlighting	~/.config/mc/filehighlight.ini (if supported).

Subshell notes — mc(1)

Key	Action
-u / -U	Disable / force subshell.
Concept	Subshell shares your shell environment and aliases while mc runs.
bashrc	Often ~/.local/share/mc/bashrc (varies by install).

Troubleshooting quick hints

Key	Action
F10 stolen	Quit via menu (F9 <i>begin : math : text</i> rightarrowend : <i>math : text</i> Quit) or remap the terminal key.
Alt combos	Use Esc then key (Meta emulation).
tmux/screen	Try mc -g; then re-run Learn keys.
Display odd	Try mc -a (ASCII) or adjust terminal settings.

References (URLs)

Key	Action
mc(1)	https://source.midnight-commander.org/man/mc.html
gist	https://gist.github.com/samiraguiar/9cd4264445545cfd459d
site	https://midnight-commander.org/

Midnight Commander (mc) — one-stop cheatsheet

Midnight Commander is an orthodox (two-pane) terminal file manager—think “visual shell”: navigate directories, tag groups of files, and perform copy/move/rename/delete at speed, while also having built-in viewer/editor, a configurable user menu, background jobs, and a Virtual File System (VFS) that lets you browse archives and remote hosts (for example, sftp:// and sh://) as if they were local directories.

Legend / conventions

- C-x = Ctrl+x. A-x = Alt+x.
- No Alt/Meta? Press Esc, release, then type the character.
- Many terminals map Esc+L..9,0 → F1..F10.
- Esc Esc quickly dismisses menus and popups — gist.

Core model

- Current panel + other panel (destination default).
- Menu bar (focus with F9); command line at bottom.
- Tagged files: if any are tagged, most operations apply to the tagged set.

Launch & CLI options — mc(1)

- Start: mc or mc dir1 [dir2] (set panel dirs).
- Viewer: mc -v FILE Editor: mc -e [FILE].
- Subshell: mc -u (disable) mc -U (force).
- Color: mc -c (force) mc -b (B/W) mc -C ARG (palette).
- Mouse/tty: mc -d (no mouse) mc -g (oldmouse) mc -x (xterm).
- Keymap: mc -K FILE mc --nokeymap.
- Directory print: mc -P FILE (for mc.sh “cd after exit” wrapper).
- Info: mc -V (version) mc -h (help).

Core function keys — File menu

Key	Action
F1	Help (contextual).
F2	User menu (custom actions and macros).
F3	View file (Shift-F3 raw view; disregard extension).
F4	Edit file (Shift-F4 create new file).
F5	Copy selected or tagged to other panel directory.
F6	Move selected or tagged (Shift-F6 rename under cursor).
F7	Mkdir.
F8	Delete.
F9	Focus top menu bar.
F10	Quit.

Selection — gist

Key	Action
Insert/C-t	Select or deselect file.
*	Invert selection on files.
+	Selection options (including custom pattern).
-	Deselect options (pattern).

Quick navigation — gist

Key	Action
Tab/C-i	Jump to other panel.
A-c	Quick cd dialog.
A-?	Search dialog.
C-s	Search for item.
A-s	Incremental search (repeat A-s to next occurrence).
C-\	Directory hotlist.

Navigation, display, panels menu, and command prompt

Navigation keys — gist

Key	Action
<b>C-p/Up</b>	Move selection to previous entry.
<b>C-n/Down</b>	Move selection to next entry.
<b>A-g</b>	First visible item.
<b>A-r</b>	Middle item.
<b>A-j</b>	Last visible item.
<b>A-v/PgUp</b>	One page up.
<b>A-p/PgDn</b>	One page down.
<b>A-&lt;/Home</b>	Top (first entry).
<b>A-&gt;/End</b>	Bottom (last entry).

Directory history — gist

Key	Action
<b>A-y</b>	Previous directory in directory history.
<b>A-u</b>	Next directory in directory history.
<b>A-Shift-h</b>	Show path history.

Display — gist

Key	Action
<b>C-r</b>	Refresh current panel.
<b>C-u</b>	Swap panels.
<b>A-,</b>	Toggle panel layout (horizontal/vertical).
<b>C-x i</b>	Toggle other panel to information mode.
<b>C-x q</b>	Toggle other panel to quick view mode.
<b>A-i</b>	Other panel shows same directory as current.
<b>A-o</b>	Show highlighted directory in the other panel.
<b>A-t</b>	Change panel view (full/brief/long).
<b>A-.</b>	Toggle "Show hidden files".

Panels menu — via F9 then Left/Right

Key	Action
<b>(menu)</b>	Listing mode: Full / Brief / Long / User-defined.
<b>(menu)</b>	Info, Quick view, Tree, Tree view.
<b>(menu)</b>	Sort order: name/ext/time/size/inode; reverse toggle.
<b>(menu)</b>	Filter (limit visible); Select group (tag by pattern).
<b>(menu)</b>	Rescan/reread directory; Panelize (fill from command output).

Menus at a glance — F9

Key	Action
<b>Left/Right</b>	Listing mode, sort, filter/select, quick view/info, tree, panelize, hotlist.
<b>File</b>	View/edit/copy/move/mkdir/delete, link tools, quit.
<b>Command</b>	Find file, quick cd, hotlist, compare directories, external panelize, jobs.
<b>Options</b>	Configuration, appearance/layout, key learning, confirmations (build dependent).

File and directory operations — gist

Key	Action
<b>C-x d</b>	Compare directories.
<b>C-x c</b>	Chmod dialog.
<b>C-x o</b>	Chown dialog.
<b>C-x C-s</b>	Edit symlink.
<b>C-x s</b>	Create symlink dialog.
<b>C-x l</b>	Create hard link dialog.
<b>C-x v</b>	Relative symlink tool on selected or tagged.
<b>C-x a</b>	List active VFS directories.

Command prompt — gist

Key	Action
<b>C-o</b>	Drop to the console (toggle panels).
<b>A-Enter</b>	Put highlighted file name on command line.
<b>C-x t</b>	Put selected or tagged item names on command line.
<b>C-Shift-Enter</b>	Put full path of highlighted file on command line.
<b>A-a/C-x p</b>	Put full path of panel directory on command line.
<b>A-h</b>	Show command history.
<b>A-n/A-p</b>	Move up or down through command history.
<b>C-x</b>	External panelize (fill panel with command output).
<b>C-x j</b>	Show background jobs.

Quit variants — gist

Key	Action
<b>F10</b>	Quit (normal).
<b>Shift-F10</b>	Quiet exit without confirmation.

Viewer/editor, panelize recipes, user menu macros, keymaps

File view — gist

Key	Action
<b>C-f</b>	View the next file.
<b>C-b</b>	View the previous file.

Viewer (mcview): practical extras

Key	Action
<b>/</b>	Search.
<b>n</b>	Next match.
<b>Shift-n</b>	Previous match.
<b>A-&lt;/A-&gt;</b>	Begin/end of file (common navigation).

Editor (mcedit): quick survival

Key	Action
<b>F2</b>	Save.
<b>F10</b>	Exit editor.
<b>F7</b>	Search.
<b>F4</b>	Replace.
<b>C-y</b>	Delete line.
<b>C-k</b>	Delete to end of line.

Panelize: “virtual panels” from commands

Key	Action
<b>C-x</b>	External panelize (fill panel with command output).
<b>Example</b>	git ls-files (repo file list).
<b>Example</b>	rg -l PATTERN (files matching a pattern).
<b>Example</b>	find -type f -size +100M -print (large files).
<b>Example</b>	ls -l   .. (pipelines that output one file per line).

Background jobs — gist

Key	Action
<b>C-x j</b>	Jobs list; inspect or cancel background operations.

User menu “@” commands — gist

Key	Action
<b>F2-@</b>	Run a command on the currently highlighted item.
<b>Example</b>	<b>F2-@ unzip</b> — unzip selected file.
<b>Example</b>	<b>F2-@ zip -r foo.zip</b> — zip current directory as foo.zip.
<b>Example</b>	<b>F2-@ 7za x</b> — extract selected file with 7zip.
<b>Example</b>	<b>F2-@ 7za a foo.7z</b> — 7zip current directory as foo.7z.
<b>File</b>	User menu file (common): ~/.config/mc/menu.

User menu macros — mc(1)

Key	Action
<b>%f, %p</b>	Current file (name/path).
<b>%d, %D</b>	Current directory / other panel directory.
<b>%t, %T</b>	Tagged files (this/other panel).
<b>%v, %V</b>	Tagged files with full paths.
<b>%s, %S</b>	Selected files (tagged if any else current).
<b>%cd</b>	Change directory (useful for VFS entryptoints).
<b>%view[args]</b>	Internal viewer (ascii/hex/nroff/...).
<b>%{ prompt }</b>	Prompt user for substitution text.
<b>% var{ ENV:default }</b>	Env var substitution with default.

Keymaps and Learn keys — mc(1)

Key	Action
<b>Learn keys</b>	Stores terminal sequences in ~/.config/mc/ini under [terminal:TERM].
<b>-K/-keymap</b>	Load a specific keymap file.
<b>MC_KEYMAP</b>	Environment variable that selects a keymap.
<b>~/.config/mc/mc.keymap</b>	Common user keymap location.