

VFS, configuration paths, subshell, troubleshooting, references

VFS: browse "special paths" — mc(1)

Key Action

Concept VFS lets you *cd into* archives and

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[:

sftp:// sftp://[user@machine[:

port]://[remote-dir]

sftp:// sftp://[user@machine[:

port]://[remote-dir]

Example sh://[oe@somehost:2222/private

Example sftp://[oe@somehost:2222/private

Archives and EXTs — mc(1)

Key Action

Example cd documents.zip/uzip:// (man page

Pattern cd file.tar.gz/utar:// (exits name

Standalone cd filename:// (enter an exits

"filesystem").

Undelete (optional ext) — mc(1)

Key Action

unde:// unde://DEVICEPART (for example,

unde://sda2) if built with support.

Configuration paths — mc(1)

Key Action

Main config ~/.config/mc/ini

Extensions ~/.config/mc/ext.ini

User menu ~/.config/mc/menu

Keymap ~/.config/mc/keymap

Hijhlighting ~/.config/mc/hijhlight.ini (if

supported).

Subshell notes — mc(1)

Key Action

-u / -U Disable / force subshell.

Concept Subshell shares your shell environment

bashrc Often ~/.local/share/mc/bashrc

(varies by install).

Troubleshooting quick hits

Key Action

F10 stolen Quit via menu (F9 begin : math : text

rightarrowend :

math : text

terminal key.

terminal key.

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

gist https://gist.githubub.com/samragu

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.

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

F6 Move selected or tagged (Shift-F6

directory.

F7 Rename under cursor).

F8 Delete.

F9 Focus top menu bar.

F10 Quit.

Selection — gist

Key Action

Insert/C-t Select or deselect file.

+ Invert selection on files.

- Deselect options (pattern).

Quick navigation — gist

Key Action

Tab/C-1 Jump to other panel.

A-? Search dialog.

C-5 Search for item.

A-s Incremental search (repeat A-s to next

occurrence).

C- Directory hoist.

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Navigation, display, panels menu, and command prompt

Navigation keys — gist

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

Directory history — gist

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

Display — gist

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

Panels menu — via F9 then Left/Right

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

Menus at a glance — F9

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

File and directory operations — gist

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

Command prompt — gist

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

Quit variants — gist

Key	Action
F10	Quit (normal).
Shift-F10	Quiet exit without confirmation.

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

File view — gist

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

Viewer (mcview): practical extras

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

Editor (mcedit): quick survival

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

Panelize: “virtual panels” from commands

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

Background jobs — gist

Key	Action
C-x j	Jobs list; inspect or cancel background operations.

User menu “@” commands — gist

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

User menu macros — mc(1)

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

Keymaps and Learn keys — mc(1)

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