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Purpose of email at the end of SSH public key

Asked 7 years, 3 months ago Modified 7 years, 3 months ago Viewed 31k times



I was adding one of my public keys to the `authorized_keys` on one of my servers when I realized that at the end of my public SSH key there is my email:

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```
$ cat .ssh/id_rsa.pub  
ssh-rsa AAAA[...lots of characters...]bpL johndoe@gmail.com
```



- Why is my email address at the end of the key?
- Does it have any specific purpose?
- Can I write anything I want in my `authorized_keys` file? Like for instance:

```
ssh-rsa AAAA[...lots of characters...]bpL John Doe (Home PC)
```

[ssh](#) [authentication](#)

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asked Jul 23, 2016 at 11:09



Enrique Moreno Tent

3,319 11 41 66

- 1 This is the comment field, so yes, you could put anything there. Its purpose is solely to help the user identify keys, particularly after they are concatenated into an `authorized_keys` file on a server. – [user4556274](#) Jul 23, 2016 at 11:19

1 Answer

Sorted by: Highest score (default)





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1. Most likely to identify who created the key.

2. It is just a comment. But as said at 1: probably so you know you created it. Useful when more than 1 administrator is administrating the system.

3. Yes, you can add anything in place of your e-mail. And since it is the last part of it you do not have to use anything special for spaces etc.

Extra: `ssh-keygen -c` to change it for RSA1 keys (only works for RSA1).

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edited Jun 12, 2020 at 14:37

answered Jul 23, 2016 at 11:17

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