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How to Check and Set Timezone in Ubuntu 20.04 - Serverlab

~4 minutes

Overview

In this tutorial, you will learn how to check and set the timezone in Ubuntu 20.04 using the `timedatectl` command.

There are a variety of ways of checking your timezone, from using the `date` command to the `timedatectl` command. However, setting your timezone has been greatly simplified and improved with the `timedatectl` command.

The `timedatectl` command allows you to output detailed information about your system's date in time, from NTP info to comparisons between your date with the UTC date.

While we've limited the scope of this tutorial to strictly being about

setting your timezone, the `timedatectl` has additional functionality that is very useful for configurations around time and date.

Checking Your Current Timezone

The currently configured timezone is set in the `/etc/timezone` file. To view your current timezone you can `cat` the file's contents.

```
cat /etc/timezone
```

```
Etc/UTC
```

Another method is to use the `date` command. By giving it the argument `+%Z`, you can output your system's current time zone name.

```
date +%Z
```

```
UTC
```

To get the timezone name and offset, you can use the `date` command with the `+"%Z %z"` argument. The uppercase `Z` prints the timezone name, while the lowercase `z` outputs the time offset.

```
date +"%Z %z"
```

```
UTC +0000
```

The `timedatectl` command be used to get more details about your system's current time and date configurations.

```
timedatectl
```

```
                Local time: Sat 2020-09-05
03:09:26 UTC
                Universal time: Sat 2020-09-05
03:09:26 UTC
                RTC time: Sat 2020-09-05
03:09:26
                Time zone: Etc/UTC (UTC, +0000)
System clock synchronized: yes
                NTP service: active
                RTC in local TZ: no
```

Setting Your Timezone

To set your timezone the `timedatectl` command will be used. Before you set your new timezone you may want to know what timezones are available. You can list all available timezones using the `timedatectl list-timezones` command.

```
timedatectl list-timezones
```

```
Africa/Abidjan
Africa/Accra
Africa/Algiers
Africa/Bissau
Africa/Cairo
Africa/Casablanca
Africa/Ceuta
Africa/El_Aaiun
Africa/Johannesburg
Africa/Juba
Africa/Khartoum
Africa/Lagos
Africa/Maputo
Africa/Monrovia
Africa/Nairobi
Africa/Ndjamena
Africa/Sao_Tome
...
```

The timezone list is very extensive. To narrow the list down to only your region you can pipe the results to the `grep` command. For

example, to narrow our results to only the Americas, we would run the following command.

```
timedatectl list-timezones | grep America
```

```
...  
America/Santiago  
America/Santo_Domingo  
America/Sao_Paulo  
America/Scoresbysund  
America/Sitka  
America/St_Johns  
America/Swift_Current  
America/Tegucigalpa  
America/Thule  
America/Thunder_Bay  
America/Tijuana  
America/Toronto  
America/Vancouver  
America/Whitehorse  
America/Winnipeg  
America/Yakutat  
America/Yellowknife
```

Once you know the time zone you want to set your Ubuntu server to, you use the `timedatectl set-timezone` command to set it.

```
sudo timedatectl set-timezone America/Toronto
```

and then confirm your changes were applied by running the `timedatectl` command.

```
timedatectl
```

```
                Local time: Fri 2020-09-04
23:30:58 EDT
                Universal time: Sat 2020-09-05
03:30:58 UTC
                RTC time: Sat 2020-09-05
03:30:59
                Time zone: America/Toronto (EDT,
-0400)
System clock synchronized: yes
                NTP service: active
                RTC in local TZ: no
```