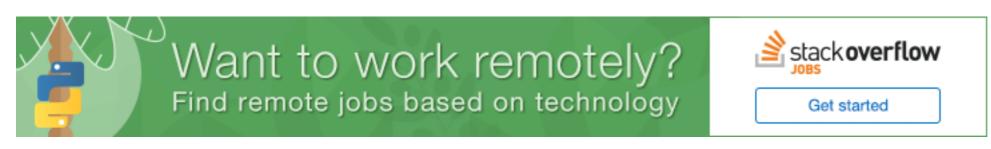
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export can't export variables permanently on Mac

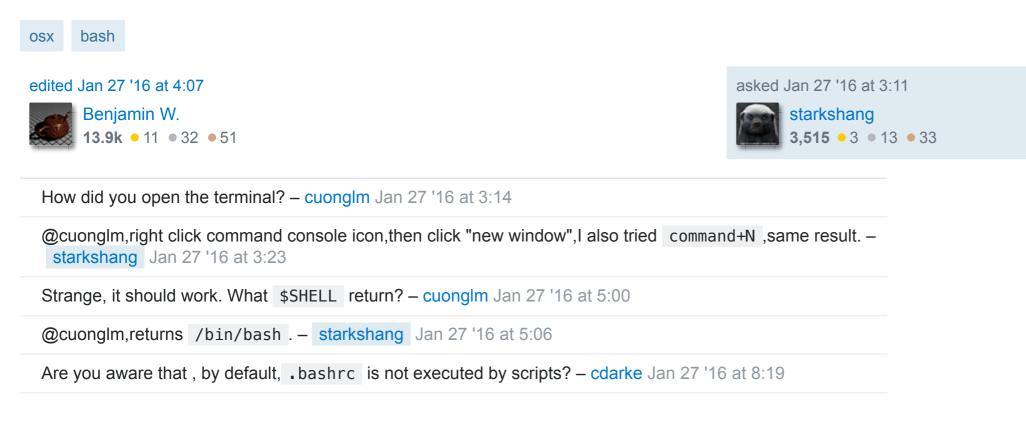


I want to set a env variable globally, so I add this to ~/.bashrc:

export MONGO_HOME=~/mongo

It works in this command console, but when I open another command console, it doesn't work; just after I type source ~/.bashrc it works, so I add this code to ~/.bash_profile and ~/.profile also, but same result.

Can anyone tell me why this happens and how can I save this variable permanently? I'm on Mac.



2 Answers

Scott Crook's answer provides an effective solution.

Here's some background:

- On OS X, all Bash instances created by Terminal.app are *login* shells (unlike the instances created by terminals on most Linux systems).
- Interactive Bash login shells, at the user level, source the *first* of the following files that exists: ~/.bash_profile, ~/.bash_login, ~/.profile; as interactive *login* shells, however, they do *not* also source ~/.bashrc.
- Thus, to ensure that ~/.bashrc is loaded in *all* interactive shells, it should be sourced from ~/.bash_profile, as Scott Crook's answer recommends.

Adding your export statements to ~/.bash_profile should have taken effect in any shell tabs/windows opened thereafter. To troubleshoot, simply add an echo "Loading <filename>" statement to the beginning of the initialization file(s) of interest.

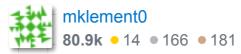
Note that even though you say *globally*, the above only takes effect:

- for *interactive* shell instances (notably not for shells created by applications behind the scenes).
- for the current user

To have environment-variable definitions take effect for *all* users, place them in <code>/etc/profile</code>, but not that, again, this will only take effect for *interactive* shells.

edited May 23 at 12:07 answered Jan 28 '16 at 7:12





1 thanks for your answer. – starkshang Jan 29 '16 at 5:44

but after I move the export statements to bash_profile it still not work. - starkshang Feb 4 '16 at 6:38

@FireSun: Have you tried adding an echo statement to ~/.bash_profile to see if it is even loaded? Are you using the Mac's default terminal application, Terminal.app? How are you opening a new terminal window? You've already confirmed that Bash is your default shell, via \$SHELL. At this point I suggest you ask a *new* question and describe all troubleshooting steps you've tried and their outcome. — mklement0 Feb 4 '16 at 13:25 \$\infty\$

```
if (dev.isBored() || job.sucks()) {
    searchJobs({flexibleHours: true, companyCulture: 100});
}

// A career site that's by developers, for developers.

Get started
Get started
```

The .bash_profile file in your home directory should contain the following code:

```
#!/bin/bash
test -f ~/.bashrc && source ~/.bashrc
```

Which does a quick check if your ~/.bashrc file exists, and sources the file only if it exists. Ensure that bit of code is present, and then reopen your terminal application. Your variable MONGO_HOME should then be present.

edited Jan 28 '16 at 7:05

answered Jan 28 '16 at 6:30



1 The shebang line is unnecessary and potentially confusing. ■bash_profile should not be executed by a subshell, ever, as that would defeat its purpose. — tripleee Jan 29 '16 at 6:07 ✓