

Working with Text Files



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Overview



UNIX is text oriented

- System administration
- Log files
- Software configuration

List file contents

Edit text files

Filenames

- Limitations and best practices
- Quoting special characters

Editing Text Files



Listing Text Files

cat

- Best for small files
- No paging
- May mess up your terminal
- Use “reset” to fix terminal

less

- Pager with lots of features
- See “man less”
- Space moves 1 page down
- “b” moves 1 key up
- Exit with “q”



Editing Text Files

Nano

- Small, easy to use
- On almost any system
- Shows commands on screen

Vi

- Fast and powerful
- Installed everywhere
- Insert mode: **i**
- Command mode: **Esc**
- Save: **:w**
- Exit: **:q**
- Exit without save: **:q!**

Editing Text Files

Emacs

- Menu: F10
- Exit Ctrl-x, Ctrl-c

Tip: learn how to use Emacs or Vi

- Increase your productivity



Opening Other Files

On Mac Os

Open program associated w. this file

Html file: browser

```
open index.html
```

Current folder in Finder

```
open .
```

Picture: Preview

```
open -a Preview picture.jpg
```

On Linux

No default "open" command

Best guess

```
xdg-open index.html
```

Call the correct program directly

```
firefox index.html
```

```
gimp picture.jpg
```

Creating Files

Create one or more empty files

On existing file: update timestamp

```
touch somefile
```

```
touch file1 file2 file3
```

Create and edit a new file (if it does not exist yet)

```
nano new_file.txt
```



Creating Folders

Create one or more folders

```
mkdir ~/notes
```

```
mkdir ~/notes ~/diary
```



More about Filenames



Filenames and Characters



Filenames can contain just about anything

- Except /
- Hidden files start with a dot



```
cd My Documents # Error: No such file
```

```
cd 'My Documents'
```

```
cd My\ Documents
```

Handling special characters

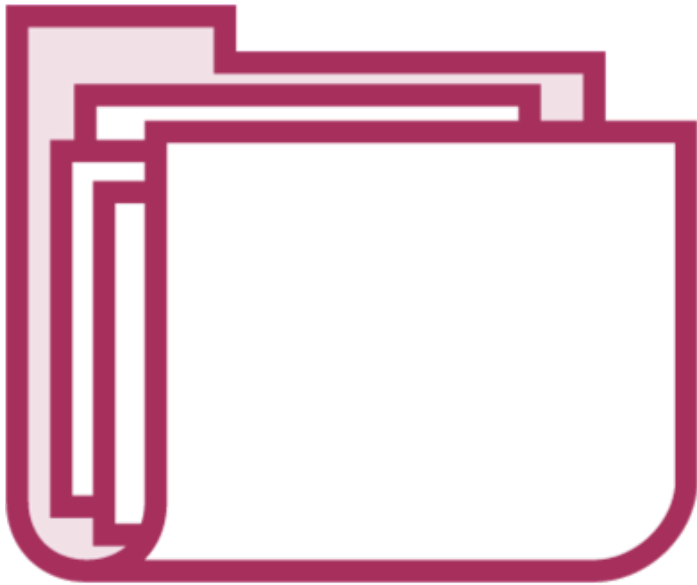
Single quotes

Backslash escapes a single character

Double quotes (don't use for now)



Case Sensitivity, Extensions



Case sensitivity

- “hello” vs “Hello”
- Linux filenames are case sensitive
- Mac OS filenames are not
- But those are *defaults*; depends on system configuration

Extensions (.exe, .zip) are optional

- “file” command shows file type

Best Practices



Use letters, numbers, dots, - and _

- Want to be really safe? Only use lowercase

Be careful with spaces

- Especially trailing spaces

Characters to Avoid

Quotes: ` ' "

Brackets, parens: { } () < > []

Interpunction: ! ? & | : ; \ ^

Other: \$ @ ~ * #

Whitespace: tab delete backspace newline



Up Next: Becoming a Poweruser

