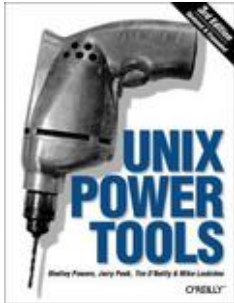


# Unix Power Tools 3rd edition by Shelley Powers et al.

Gianluca Pignalberi



Using a Unix system requires a lot of knowledge, and it's common to see Unix users and administrators spending a lot of time reading handbooks, tutorials and man pages to find out the "right" sequence of keystrokes. In the publishing world there is a little pearl, a single source of information about Unix and how to use it: Unix Power Tools, published by O'Reilly and Associates. O'Reilly is a well known publisher of Unix books; in this one, you'll see Tim O'Reilly himself as an author!

## The contents

This book collects a lot of the best practices, advice and rules of thumb for using Unix better, faster, and more effectively. The book's cover states that the authors are Shelley Powers (a new acquisition for this 3rd edition), Jerry Peek, Tim O'Reilly (himself!) and Mike Loukides. However, a work of this size required the effort of more than 40 contributors, all listed within the book. The book is made up of chapters, sections, notes within sections, and each piece has its author specified.

## Who's this book for?

This book is for everybody. It's much more than a handbook: it describes techniques and tricks to improve users' proficiency with Unix; it also reveals some of the deeper aspects of Unix, in order to explain why a particular version of Unix is better than another one.

It's much more than a hypertext; one section, for example, explains a command (or several commands) that can be used to perform a job, but also provides a link, which points to a set of related sections elsewhere in the book. So, you can jump through the book following your curiosity or your needs.

You can read this book in three ways: you can start from page one and go through to the end; you can open a random page and read—you'll find something interesting; or you can go to the index and pick a subject. In any case, following the proposed link is often a good idea.

## Pros

Suppose that you're working on a Unix workstation and have to solve a problem while using a tool (you name it: AWK, bash, CVS etc.). Which book would you look for? A set of one thousand, specialized books, or a single one-thousand-paged book? Moreover, in this book you will find information about several Unix flavours (including Linux, BSD, Mac OS X) and a collection of real tools you need to know in order to become a power user (for example: do you know how to down-case a bunch of files in a directory? There is a solution for you). This book is the best way to invest \$70.

## Cons

Compared to the 2nd edition, this book has some minor deficiencies. First of all, it doesn't have the CD-ROM; if you want to use the source code shown in the book, you'll have to go to the publisher's site and download it. The links are now grey, in the second edition, they were cyan: I found them more difficult to see in this new edition. The cover is now softer than the 2nd edition's, and some of the content has disappeared from the updated sections.

## In short

Title	Unix Power Tools 3rd edition
Author	Shelley Powers, Jerry Peek, Tim O'Reilly and Mike Loukides
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CD included	No
Mark (out of 10)	9

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