Rename a computer

This page explains how to change a system's `hostname` (i.e. rename a computer/server)

Executive summary: DebianMan: hostname(1) isn't enough.

Contents

Core networking

- Update `/etc/hostname`
- Update `/etc/hosts`, so local address(es) resolves with the new system

name.

- Reload the network configuration. You have two options:
    - Reload configuration files

        ⚠ This will temporarily disconnect your system from the network (`ssh` usually resists short disconnection)

        ⚠ This might definitively disconnect your system from the network because networking might not restore connections; please reboot, which is not lazy, but ensures that your setup is really correct

        ```
        invoke-rc.d hostname.sh start
        invoke-rc.d networking force-reload
        invoke-rc.d network-manager force-reload
        ```

        ToDo: is it useful to reload `network-manager`?
    - *or the lazy way:* Restart the system.

systemd

Versions of Debian with systemd installed can use "hostnamectl set-hostname mymachine". This tool depends on dbus so be sure to install that first.

Application specific

avahi

Avahi is used to publish (announce) local services. If you tweaked `/etc/avahi/*` you should run:

```
invoke-rc.d avahi-daemon force-reload
```

CUPS

CUPS is the Common Unix Printing System.

Adjust the `/etc/printcap` file.

You'll want to change the old hostname in any lines like this, hostname in bold: Kyocera_TASKalfa_3050ci|Kyocera TASKalfa 3050ci:rm=**debian**:rp=Kyocera_TASKalfa_3050ci: You'll need to restart the service for changes to take effect.

ejabberd

Refer to the 🌐 Change Computer Hostname section of the ejabberd Installation and Operation Guide.

Exim

Reconfigure Exim (this adjusts `/etc/exim4/update-exim4.conf.conf` and `/etc/mailname`):

```
dpkg-reconfigure exim4-config
```

Or adjust manually `/etc/exim4/update-exim4.conf.conf` (`hostname=`). You need to restart the service.

Mailname

Reconfigure Exim (see above) or adjust manually `/etc/mailname`. You don't need to restart the service.

Message Of The Day

Adjust `/etc/motd`. You don't need to restart a service.

OpenSSH server

Adjust `/etc/ssh/ssh_host_rsa_key.pub`, `/etc/ssh/ssh_host_dsa_key.pub`, `/etc/ssh/ssh_host_ed25519_key.pub` and `/etc/ssh/ssh_host_ecdsa_key.pub` (`root@hostname` at the end). You need to restart the service.

Self-signed SSL certificate

Recreate the self-signed certificate created by the DebianPkg: ssl-cert package using the hostname currently configured on your computer.

```
make-ssl-cert generate-default-snakeoil --force-overwrite
```

You need to restart the services using it, e.g. apache2.

ssmtp

Ssmtp is a light weight, send-only SMTP server.

Adjust `/etc/ssmtp/ssmtp.conf` (`hostname=`, etc.). You don't need to restart the service.

sysklogd

In order to make new hostname appear on syslog you should restart sysklogd service

fail2ban

fail2ban scan logs to detect connection failures and can ban IP on too many failures.

The hostname may be in the `sender` mail address in `/etc/fail2ban/jail.local`. You need to reload the service.

lvm

Logical Volume Manager (LVM) is a device mapper target that provides logical volume management.

Hostname appears in the backup configuration file `/etc/lvm/backup/<your Volume Group>`.

Idea of script to help you on

Intrusive script

Please understand that this script is **dangerous**. You should check if all the files listed by *grep -rl "$old" /etc* must really be modified **before** launching this script:

Toggle line numbers

```
 1 #!/bin/bash
 2 #
 3 usage() {
 4     echo "usage : $0 <new hostname>"
 5     exit 1
 6 }
 7
 8 [ "$1" ] || usage
 9
10 old=$(hostname)
11 new=$1
12
13 grep "$old" /etc/ -rl 2>/dev/null |
14 while read file
15 do
16         sed "s:$old:$new:g" "$file" > "$file.tmp"
17         mv -f "$file.tmp" "$file"
18 done
```

Take care you'd better do a grep before...

Improved intrusive script

This script will do the same stuff like the one above but it will ask you with a shell dialog which files you want modify before editing them.

Toggle line numbers

```
 1 #!/bin/bash
 2 #
```

```
   3
   4 # Fetching new and old hostname
   5 OLD_HOSTNAME=$(hostname)
   6 NEW_HOSTNAME=$1
   7
   8 WHIPTAIL_TITLE="Changing hostname"
   9 WHIPTAIL_BACKTITLE="ShrimpDev <dev@csoellinger.at>"
  10 WHIPTAIL_TEXT="Below you will find a checklist with al
  11
  12 not_root() {
  13     echo "ERROR: You have to be root to execute this s
  14     exit 1
  15 }
  16
  17 usage() {
  18     echo "usage : $0 <new hostname> [Optional:--backup
  19     exit 1
  20 }
  21
  22 # Check if user is root
  23 [ $EUID != 0 ] && not_root
  24
  25 # Check if we have at least one parameter
  26 [ "$1" ] || usage
  27
  28 [ "$1" == "--backup" ] && usage
  29 [ "$1" == "--debug" ] && usage
  30
  31 DEBUG="NO"
  32 BACKUP="NO"
  33
  34 if [ "$2" == "--debug" ] || [ "$3" == "--debug" ]; the
  35     DEBUG="YES"
  36 fi
  37
  38 if [ "$2" == "--backup" ] || [ "$3" == "--backup" ]; t
```

```
 39        BACKUP="YES"
 40 fi
 41
 42 [ "$DEBUG" == "YES" ] && echo "DEBUG (NO FILES WILL BE
 43 [ "$BACKUP" == "YES" ] && echo "BACKUP MODE ON"
 44
 45 # Grep all possible targets
 46 TARGETS=($(grep "$OLD_HOSTNAME" /etc/ -rl))
 47 let TARGETSLENGTH=${#TARGETS[@]}
 48
 49 CHECKLIST=()
 50 for ((i=0; i<${#TARGETS[@]}; i++)); do
 51        CHECKLIST+=("${TARGETS[$i]}" "" "ON")
 52 done
 53
 54 CHECKLIST_RESULT=$(whiptail --clear --fb --title "$WHI
 55 CHECKLIST_RESULT=${CHECKLIST_RESULT//\"/}
 56 CHECKLIST_RESULT_ARR=(`echo $CHECKLIST_RESULT | tr ' '
 57
 58 clear
 59
 60 for CHECKLIST_ITEM in "${CHECKLIST_RESULT_ARR[@]}"; do
 61        echo "sed \"s:${OLD_HOSTNAME}:${NEW_HOSTNAME}:g\"
 62        [ "$DEBUG" == "NO" ] && sed "s:$OLD_HOSTNAME:$NEW_
 63
 64        if [ "$2" == "--backup" ]; then
 65            echo "cp \"${CHECKLIST_ITEM}\" \"${CHECKLIST_I
 66            [ "$DEBUG" == "NO" ] && cp "$CHECKLIST_ITEM" '
 67        fi
 68
 69        echo "mv -f \"${CHECKLIST_ITEM}.tmp\" \"${CHECKLIS
 70        [ "$DEBUG" == "NO" ] && mv -f "$CHECKLIST_ITEM.tmp
 71
 72        echo ""
 73 done
 74
```

```
 75 exit 0
```

Not-so intrusive script

```bash
#!/bin/bash
#
usage() {
    echo "usage : $0 <new hostname>"
    exit 1
}

[ "$1" ] || usage

old=$(hostname)
new=$1

for file in \
    /etc/exim4/update-exim4.conf.conf \
    /etc/printcap \
    /etc/hostname \
    /etc/hosts \
    /etc/ssh/ssh_host_rsa_key.pub \
    /etc/ssh/ssh_host_dsa_key.pub \
    /etc/motd \
    /etc/ssmtp/ssmtp.conf
do
    [ -f $file ] && sed -i.old -e "s:$old:$new:g" $file
done
```

See also

* DebianMan: hostname(1), DebianMan: hostname(7)