CIS 18A
Introduction to Linux / Unix

Communication Utilities

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Topics

- Messaging with write and talk
- mail send mode
- mail receive mode

Communication with Other Users

- Linux is designed to be a multi-user system, so it is appropriate to have utilities that help users communicate within the system as well as outside the system.
- For quick communication with users within the system: write or talk
  - Useful for a quick message between users. The "original" instant messaging tool.
  - Require that both users are currently logged in.
  - Will take over the screen of both users.
    - Since this is not a GUI environment where you can have a window for your work and a different window for messages, when write or talk runs, your work screen will be suspended by messages from write or talk.
- To communicate with users within the system and outside the system: mail
  - This is an email tool.
  - Only the email sender needs to be currently logged in.

write

- To start write, type: write userID
  - your work screen is suspended and is reserved for write.
  - then you type your line of text message.
- The other user will:
  - see on screen a write request message with your userID and your text message.
- The other user can:
  - respond by typing write yourID and reply with his/her text message.
  - you both now are running write and can send messages to each other.
- Or the other user can:
  - ignore you, in which case you don't get a message back but you are still in write.
  - you can choose to write another message, or 'get the hint' and quit write.
- To end
  - control-d

talk

- To start talk, type: talk userID
  - Your work screen is suspended and is reserved for talk. It is split into 2 halves, for you and for the other person.
  - Then you type your line of text message.
- The other user will:
  - see a talk request message with your userID and your text message.
- The other user can:
  - respond by typing talk yourID and reply with his/her text message. His/her screen is also split into 2 halves to show the correspondence.
  - you both are now using talk to send messages.
- Or the other user can:
  - ignore you, in which case talk will keep requesting a response from this user until you choose to quit out of talk.
- To end:
  - control-c

mesg

- To prevent other users from interrupting your work with write or talk, use mesg (for **mes**sa**g**ing).
- 2 ways to use mesg:
  - With no argument: mesg
    - Checking messaging status, mesg will return:
      - y which means you can receive messages
      - n which means you refuse messages
  - With one argument:
    - mesg y set messaging to on so you can receive messages (only applies to current session).
    - mesg n set messaging to off so no messages will get through (only applies to current session).
    - See The Shell class notes to make this setting apply permanently.

mail

- mail: the "original" email tool. It is only for emailing text and cannot accept attachments.
- But it is the basic email that comes with every Linux system, so you can use it when "fancier" emails are not / cannot be installed.
- On voyager, you have an email account that comes with your Linux account. Your email address is: yourID@voyager.deanza.edu
- You can send email to someone within voyager as well as outside voyager.
- As with other email tool, and unlike write and talk, the user you send email to doesn't have to be currently logged in and his/her messaging status doesn't affect email.
- 2 modes: *send* and *receive*
- The mail commands in the next slides are either send mode commands or receive mode commands.

mail Send Mode: How to Send Mail

- Send mode is used to send mail.
- To start:
  - mail userID   for sending email to a user in the same system
  - mail full_email_address   for sending email to someone outside the system
- mail will respond with:
  - subject: you can fill in the subject or hit enter for no subject.
- Then start typing the text for your mail message.
- When done:
  - control-d   to send
  - mail will respond with cc: you can add addresses for cc, or hit enter to leave it blank
  - or
  - control-c   to cancel and not send (to "kill" a message in Linux).
  - you will be asked to do control-c twice to confirm.
  - a message that is killed will be appended to the file dead.letter in your home directory.

mail Send Mode: Commands

Send Mode commands:
- Each send mode command:
  - can be used in the body of the text message
  - has to appear on a line by itself
  - starts with ~
- ~v   use vi to edit or to view the mail message.
  - When done use :wq to exit out of vi and return to mail send mode.
- ~h   edit the header of the mail message.
  - You will be prompted to edit the fields: To, Subject, cc, bcc
- ~r filename   read (bring in) an existing text file into the current email message.
  - filename can have a path.
- ~m mesg_num   mail (bring in) an existing email into the current email message.
  - mesg_num is the number of the existing email in the receive mode.

mail Receive Mode: Check for Mail

- To start: mail
  - Without an argument, mail will be in receive mode.
- You will get a message no mail for yourID or you will see a mail receive mode header.
- The header has the fields:
  - status message_num senderID date size subject
  - The symbol > in front of one of the messages indicates it is the current message.
  - status: N for new, U for unread, blank for already read.
  - message_num : a number, the numbers are in the order that the mail was received.
  - senderID : email address of the person who sent the mail.
  - date : the time and date received.
  - size : number of lines / characters.
  - subject : what the sender put in the subject field.
- Following the header, you will get the prompt &, this means mail is ready for the mail receive mode commands.

mail Receive Mode: Message Number

- The receive mode commands can optionally accept a message number.
- If no message number is given, the command applies only to the current message.
- If there is a message number, it can follow the command immediately or with 1 or more space in between.
- How to use a message number:
  - 8   command will apply to message 8
  - 1,8,6   command will apply to messages 1,8,6
  - 2-5   command will apply to messages 2 to 5, inclusive
  - $ command will apply to last message
  - *   command will apply to all messages

mail Receive Mode: Commands (1 of 2)

Receive mode commands (the [ ] indicates optional field):
- To read a message   [message_num] <enter key>
  - The message will appear on screen and end with the & prompt.
- To see the mail header   h
  - The mail header shows all messages and their status.
- To delete   d [message_num]
- To undo a delete   u [message_num]
  - Can undo as many deleted messages as you have deleted in the session.
- To reply to sender only   R [message_num]
- To reply to all   r [message_num]
  - Both reply commands will take you to send mode, where you can type your reply.
  - When you send the reply and get out of send mode, you'll be back in the current receive mode.
  - To bring the original mail into your reply email, use ~m in your reply to bring it in.

mail Receive Mode: Commands (2 of 2)

Receive mode commands (the [ ] indicates optional field):
- To forward mail   m email_addr
  - This takes you to send mode.
  - Then use the ~m command of send mode to bring in the message you want to forward.
  - You can add any extra message of your own before send
  - When you send the forwarded message, you'll get out of send mode and be back in receive mode.

mail Receive Mode: Save Mail

- To save and email to a mail folder:
        s [msg_num] folder_name
  - A mail folder is a text file created by mail when you save a mail message.
  - If the folder_name is new, the new text file is created.
  - If folder_name already exists, mail will append the mail message to the text file.
  - This text file can be opened by any utility that can open a text file, but it can also conveniently be read by mail itself.
  - To use mail to read this mail folder:
         mail –f folder_name
    The option –f is for file.
    Each mail message in the file is displayed like in the mail receive mode.
  - This provides a convenient way for you to sort your email into separate folders and view it with mail.

mail Receive Mode: Exit

- To exit out of mail: x
  - When you exit, mail will act as if you had not opened the current mail session.
  - Messages with status N will still be N.
  - Messages with status U will still be U.
  - Messages that are deleted will be restored.
  - Messages that are read will keep their status (U or N).
  - However, messages that are sent or saved in a folder will still have been sent or saved in a folder.

mail Receive Mode: Quit

- To quit out of mail: q
  - When you quit, mail keeps track of the status of the current session.
  - Therefore messages will have updated status.
  - Messages that are read: go into a folder called mbox, created by mail automatically in your home directory.
    To see these messages, use mail to open the folder mbox:
         mail –f (with no argument)
  - Messages that are not read: stay in your inbox and marked with status U.
  - Messages that are saved: go to the folder that you saved in.
  - Messages that are deleted: gone.

Next Stop: The Shell