

Command-Line Productivity Guide

As a Ruby developer you will spend a good amount of time using the command-line. There is no reason to fear it or to let it slow you down. There are very powerful tools and shortcuts you can use to make your workflow much more productive.

Using Alias

An alias lets you define your own custom command that is a shortcut of another. If you find yourself typing a command very often then you could probably benefit from setting up an alias for it.

To setup a temporary alias you can type the following in your shell:

```
alias gis='git status'
```

Now if you type `gis` it will be the same as typing `git status`. If you want this alias to be permanent you have to add it your shell's configuration file.

In the case of bash (the default shell), you have to edit the `.bashrc` file in your home directory and add your aliases at the end. Once you have done that, whenever you open a new terminal it will have your new aliases ready to go.

Here are some aliases I use myself:

```
alias gis='git status -sb'
alias gil='git log --pretty=format:"%C(auto)%h - %an, %ar %n %s %n"'
alias gic='git checkout'
alias gim='git commit -a -m'
alias gas='git add .'
alias gir='git remote -v'

alias rs='rails s'
alias rc='rails c'
```

Using Shortcuts

There are a number of shortcuts you can use that let you quickly clear the screen or move faster while you are editing your current command.

It's worth noting that all of these shortcuts come from the [readline library](#). Many command-line applications with an interactive interface use this library, meaning that these same shortcuts apply to them too.

Most notably, `pry` and `irb` work this way, as well as the command-line interfaces for postgres (psql) and mysql.

Here is a table for your reference:

Shortcut	Description
CTRL + a	Move the cursor to the start of the line
CTRL + e	Move the cursor to the end of the line
CTRL + w	Delete one word
CTRL + u	Delete everything on the left
CTRL + k	Delete everything on the right
CTRL + y	Restore the last thing deleted by another shortcut
CTRL + l	Clear the screen
CTRL + r	Search the command history

Note: In the OS X terminal you may need to use Command + K for clearing the screen, instead of CTRL + L.

Try them out and see how much faster you can move around!

More Tips & Tricks

Auto-completion is a super useful feature that will have you typing a lot less. To trigger auto-completion all you have to do is to press the `<tab>` key twice.

For example:

```
ls /b<tab><tab>
```

In `bash` this will print a list of all the possible options, or auto-complete your input if only one option is left. Modern shells like `fish` will allow to actually navigate the list with your cursor keys and pick one.

Another useful trick is to go back to the last directory you were in. You can do that using `cd -`.

Fast Directory Navigation

Another thing that you do very often in the command-line is moving between directories. I think we can agree that the worst thing about directory navigation is having to type and remember the path of every single directory you want to work with.

The good news is that there is [a great tool](#) that takes care of this problem by recording the name of the directories that you `cd` into. Once a directory is in the program's database then you can jump into it using just part of the name (it uses a fuzzy search algorithm).

For example, if the path you want to move into is

`/Projects/rails/my_blog` then you can just say `j blog` and that should be enough for this program to take you there. If multiple directories match then the one you use the most often is the one that will be selected by `autojump`. You can use the command `autojump -s` to see the database entries and their assigned priority.

You can install `autojump` using your package manager. In Ubuntu:
`apt-get install autojump` and in OS X: `brew install autojump`. In
Ubuntu there is one additional step required to get this up and running.
You need to add `. /usr/share/autojump/autojump.sh` to your shell
configuration file `~/.bashrc`.