

# What is the standard for documentation style in Bash scripts? [closed]

Asked 10 years, 2 months ago   Modified 5 years, 4 months ago   Viewed 17k times



27



3



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I am currently writing a Bash script that has a number of functions in it and would like to add docs to make other team members understand what the point of the function is.

Is there a standard "style" for documenting Bash scripts and the functions it contains?

[linux](#) [bash](#) [shell](#) [documentation](#)

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asked May 11, 2012 at 14:17



[linusthe3rd](#)

3,324   3   27   42



[man](#) pages for formatting and examples of style: [unix.stackexchange.com/questions/6891/...](https://unix.stackexchange.com/questions/6891/...)

– [Anton Tarasenko](#) Oct 23, 2017 at 21:01



Duplicate of [unix.stackexchange.com/q/128736/66439](https://unix.stackexchange.com/q/128736/66439) – [Kasper van den Berg](#) Jan 20, 2018 at 20:53

3 Answers

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I do understand I'm adding an answer to an old question, but I feel the tooling has improved lately and would like to give additional suggestions in order to help out others who are viewing this question.



I have recently found [TomDoc.sh](https://github.com/tomdoc/tomdoc), which uses TomDoc style comments in shell scripts. The tool provided can then extract information and generate markdown or plain text documents.



Other tools also exist. [BashDoc](https://github.com/robodoc/robodoc) is modeled after the Javadoc syntax, supporting a variety of tags. With [RoboDoc](https://github.com/robodoc/robodoc) you embed a C-style comment in your Bash code and it extracts the necessary information. Lastly, Apple uses [HeaderDoc](https://github.com/robodoc/robodoc) for its shell scripting. All three of these have a suggested style for the comments that you write.

If you wish to annotate your code more than generate documentation, [shocco.sh](https://github.com/shocco/shocco) may be what you'd prefer. It doesn't have a specific format and is designed for you to see human-readable text describing the shell commands that you are running.

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edited Mar 29, 2017 at 11:08

answered Oct 5, 2015 at 12:51



Potherca

12.1k 5 68 86



fidian

783 6 10

- 1 Ah, internet. This is at the bottom of the bashdoc link: "3 Mar 2004 - Finals suck. And there's lots more work too, so this is going to the back burner, if I've still got one of those left. :) Probably for a week or two." 12.5 years later, any updates? – JDS Oct 19, 2016 at 16:32



Usually, I try to follow guidelines that are analog to the ones I use with other languages like C.

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This includes a function header containing:



- function name, short description and purpose
- list of arguments and return values, with descriptions
- list of all side effects (e.g., changes in variables or files)

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answered May 11, 2012 at 14:22



moviciel

65.2k 11 108 140



To my understanding there is no standard for Bash doc. But typically you would:

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- include a header to your bash file, with your name, copyright, contact, and briefly what the script does
- a usage() function that explains how to launch and use your function.
- a comment at the top of each function to explain what the func does.

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answered May 11, 2012 at 14:31



[user1383162](#)

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