



Unit 2

Running Commands and Getting Help



Running Commands

- **Commands have the following syntax:**
 - `command options arguments`
- **Each item is separated by a space**
- **Options modify a command's behavior**
 - Single-letter options usually preceded by -
 - Can be passed as **-a -b -c** or **-abc**
 - Full-word options usually preceded by --
 - Example: **--help**
- **Arguments are filenames or other data needed by the command**

Some Simple Commands

- `date` - **display date and time**
- `cal` - **display calendar**

Getting Help

- **Many levels of help**
 - **whatis**
 - ***command* --help**
 - **man** and **info**
 - `/usr/share/doc/`
 - Red Hat documentation

The whatis Command

- **Displays short descriptions of commands**
- **Uses a database that is updated nightly**
- **Often not available immediately after install**

\$ whatis cal

cal (1) - displays a calendar

The --help Option

- **Displays usage summary and argument list**
- **Used by most, but not all, commands**

\$ date --help

Usage: date [OPTION]... [+FORMAT] or: date [-u|--utc|--universal] [MMDDhhmm[[CC]YY][.ss]]

Display the current time in the given FORMAT, or set the system date. ...argument list omitted...

Reading Usage Summaries

- **Printed by** `--help`, `man` **and others**
- **Used to describe the syntax of a command**
 - Arguments in `[]` are optional
 - Arguments in CAPS or `<>` are variables
 - Text followed by `...` represents a list
 - `x|y|z` means "x or y or z"
 - `-abc` means "any mix of -a, -b or -c"

The man Command

- **Provides documentation for commands**
- **Almost every command has a man "page"**
- **Pages are grouped into "chapters"**
- **Collectively referred to as the Linux Manual**
- `man [<chapter>] <command>`

The info Command

- **Similar to** man, **but often more in-depth**
- **Run** info **without args to list all page**
- info **pages are structured like a web site**
 - Each page is divided into "nodes"
 - Links to nodes are preceded by *
 - **info [*command*]**

Extended Documentation

- **The /usr/share/doc directory**
- **Subdirectories for most installed packages**
- **Location of docs that do not fit elsewhere**
 - Example configuration files
 - HTML/PDF/PS documentation
 - License details

Red Hat Documentation

- **Available on Red Hat website**
<http://www.redhat.com/docs/>
 - Installation Guide
 - Deployment Guide
 - Virtualization Guide
- **Knowledge base: <http://kbase.redhat.com>**
 - Common questions and their solution