10.5.2 Configuring Time Zone Settings

Click one of the buttons to take you to that part of the video.

Configure Time Zone Settings 0:00-0:25

In this demonstration we're going to discuss configuring time zone settings. When I initially installed this system, I was prompted to specify my time zone, and I did that. That is the time zone setting that is currently being used. But if we were to move this computer to a different location in the country or somewhere else in the world, then it's very likely we're going to have to update the current time zone.

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date Command 0:26-0:38

You can view the current time zone setting by running the 'date' command, and here you can see the current date and time, and we also see the time zone. We're in the Mountain Time zone. Well, let's suppose we move this system to the east coast of the United States.

TZ Environment Variable 0:39-1:02

If this happened, I would need to switch from the Mountain Time zone to the Eastern Time zone. This is done by manipulating the value of the TZ environment variable.

The question is, "What value do we need to use for that environment variable?" One way you can check is to go to the '/usr/share/zoneinfo/' directory.

Time Zone Files 0:55-1:48

We do an 'ls' command. We see a whole bunch of different time zone files that we can use. Notice over here there's a directory called /US; we 'cd' into that. We see additional time zone files. Some of these are duplicates. For example, EST is exactly the same as Eastern. MST is exactly the same as Mountain.

You could actually use either one of these. In fact, let's just go ahead and use EST for our purposes here today. To do this, I'm going to set the value of the 'TZ=' environment variable to 'EST'.

Let's verify that that was set: 'echo $TZ'. It's set to Eastern Standard Time. Let's go ahead and 'export TZ' it, so it's persistent across shell sessions.

Persistent Changes 1:49-3:24

Now if I run the 'date' command, we see that my time zone has changed from Mountain Time to Eastern Time. It's important to note that the change I just made is not persistent. If I were to reboot this system, it would go back to the default that I configured when I initially installed this particular Linux distribution.

To make it persistent, I need to edit one of my bash configuration files. There are two different ways I can do this.

If I wanted to make this change and apply it to all the users who log in to this system, then I would make the change to the appropriate bash configuration file in the /etc directory, whichever bash configuration file is used by my particularly distribution.

Or if I'm only concerned about making the change for my individual user account, then I can add the change to a bash configuration file within my /home directory. Let's go ahead with the second option for now. Let's use the 'vi' editor to edit. '~/.bash_profile' file within my /home directory.

The change I make here applies only to my user account. If another user were to log in to this system, it would use the default time zone setting.

Let's add the necessary commands by adding a new line. Enter 'TZ=EST' and then we want to 'export TZ' Escape 'exit' and write the changes to the file. Now whenever I boot the system and log in, my time zone will be set to Eastern Time.

Summary 3:25-3:44

That's it for this demonstration. In this demo, we talked about configuring time zone settings. We first looked at using the date command to determine what the current time is. Then we looked at the time zone files located in /usr/share zone info. We then learned how to set the value of the TZ environment variable to change time zones and then we talked about some things you can do to make those changes persistent.
