

Command Line to Clipboard

FEB 22

Posted by **Gen2ly**

(<https://linuxtidbits.files.wordpress.com/2008/02/edit-paste-128.png>)

Update: Script has been updated to add pipe support. Thanks to [Nathan](http://madebynathan.com/2011/10/04/a-nicer-way-to-use-xclip/) (<http://madebynathan.com/2011/10/04/a-nicer-way-to-use-xclip/>) who allowed me to use his improvements.



It's really something to be learning Linux. The more I learn about Linux the more I learn it's about manipulating letters and numbers (well, this is more programming than anything but Linux is a lot about that). Bash I'm discovering is great; I'm just getting into it and now have made things a good deal easier by learning how to copy and paste text from the command line via the Xorg server clipboard. Here is a couple commands that can do it with examples, following them are a couple bash scripts that make this *easy as can beasy*.

The Programs

`xsel` and `xclip` are command line programs that can redirect the contents of the Xorg server clipboard. The Xorg server has two clipboards: the common **right-click > Copy**, and one for the middle-mouse click. For those that don't know of it yet, the middle-click clipboard allows quick copy and pasting without having to enter a menu or using **Ctrl + v**. Anytime you select text on the Xorg server there is a separate register that records this text, then clicking the middle-mouse button (sometimes called the mouse button three [usually done by clicking down the scroll wheel] will paste the text. The Xorg server defines the middle-click clipboard as **primary** and the right-click clipboard as **secondary**.

xclip

Here are the basics of using `xclip`. `xclip`, I prefer over `xsel` because I have found that `xsel` can have problems pasting to java apps.

`xclip` can be used in a variety of ways. First, for example, it can be piped to:

```
echo "hi" | xclip -selection clipboard
```

This will copy to the standard clipboard. For abbreviation, you can use `c` instead of `clipboard`. You can specify **primary** or `p` here too to copy to the middle-mouse button, but isn't necessary as this is the default for `xclip`.

```
echo "hello" | xclip
```

To direct a **file** to **xclip** the **-in** or **-out** options are needed:

```
xclip -in -selection c <filename>  
xclip -out -selection c <filename>
```

Which will respectively put a file into the clipboard, and write to a file from the clipboard contents.

To make the process quicker, I've created a couple scripts to automate the tasks called **cb-in** and **cb-out** and can be used like a standard command:

```
cb-in pack  
File pack copied to the clipboard
```

cb-in

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```
29 #!/bin/bash
30 # Copy file or pipe to Xorg clipboard
31
32 # Required program(s)
33 req_progs=(xclip)
34 for p in ${req_progs[@]}; do
35     hash "$p" 2>&- || \
        { echo >&2 " Required program \"$p\" not installed."; exit 1;
done

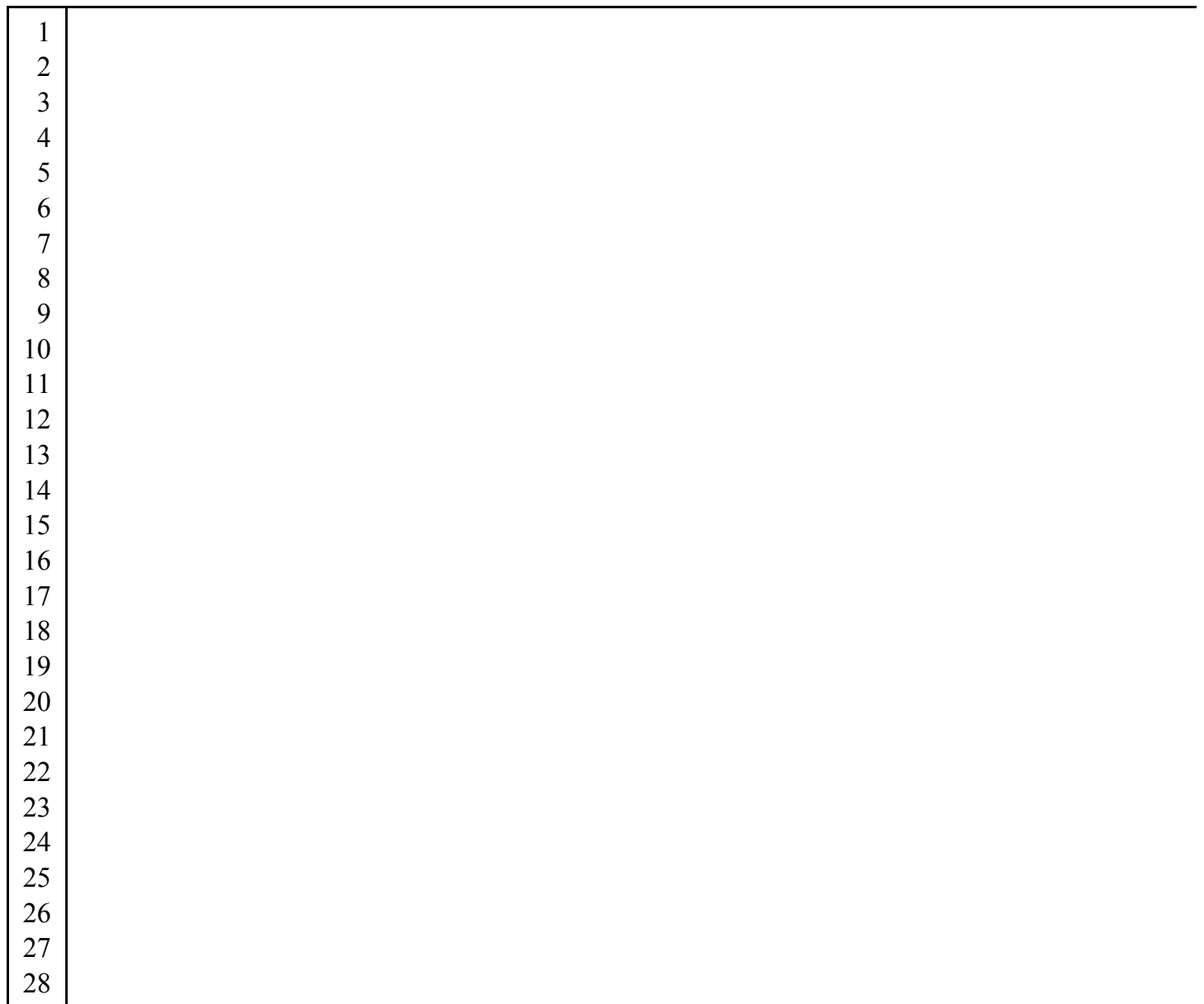
# Check user is not root (root doesn't have access to user Xorg
if [[ "$USER" == root ]]; then
    echo " Must be regular user to copy a file to the clipboard"
    exit
fi

# Copy stdin to clipboard
if ! [ -t 0 ]; then
    echo -n "$(< /dev/stdin)" | xclip -selection clipboard && \
    echo " Copied stdout to clipboard"
# Copy file to clipboard
else
    # Display usage if no parameters given
    if [[ -z "$@" ]]; then
        echo " ${0##*/} <filename> - copy a file to the clipboard
command | ${0##*/} - copy stdout to the clipboard" && exit
    fi
    # Copy file to clipboard
    if [[ ! -f "$@" ]]; then
        echo "$warn File ${txtund}$filename${txtrst} doesn't exist"
    else
        xclip -in -selection clipboard "$@" && \
        echo " Copied file \"$@" to the clipboard"
    fi
fi
fi
```



view raw **cb-in** hosted with ❤️ by **GitHub**

cb-out



```
29 #!/bin/bash
30 # Paste contents of Xorg clipboard to a file from the command line
31
32 filename=$@
33 pasteinfo="clipboard contents"
34
35 # Display usage if no parameters given
36 if [[ -z "$@" ]]; then
37     echo " ${0##*/} <filename> - paste contents of context-menu clipboard to file"
38     exit
39 fi
40
41 # If filename matches a directory name exit
42 if [ -d "$filename" ]; then
43     echo " Directory already has the name \"$filename\" && exit"
44 fi
45
46 # Check if file exists, prompt to append or override, else create
47 if [[ -f "$filename" ]]; then
48     echo " File \"${filename##*/}\" already exists - (e)xit, (a)ppend, (o)verwrite, or (q)uit?
49     read edit
50     case "$edit" in
51         [aA] ) xclip -out -selection clipboard >> "$filename"
52                 echo " File \"$filename\" appended with clipboard contents"
53                 ;;
54         [oO] ) xclip -out -selection clipboard > "$filename"
55                 echo " File \"$filename\" overwrote with clipboard contents"
56                 ;;
57         * ) exit
58     esac;
59 else
60     xclip -out -selection clipboard >> "$filename"
61     echo " File \"$filename\" created with clipboard contents"
62 fi
```



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xsel

To copy to the context-menu clipboard:

```
xsel --clipboard < /etc/fstab
```

To copy a text to the middle mouse button clipboard:

```
xsel < /etc/fstab
```

xsel can be piped too:

```
echo "a-bit-of-text" | xsel -b  
cat /etc/make.conf | xsel -b
```

To output directly to the terminal:

```
xsel --clipboard
```

And to redirect and append to a file:

```
xsel --clipboard > Baada-Boom.txt  
xsel --clipboard >> ~/.Baada-Boom
```

cp2clip (xsel)

```
#!/bin/bash
# cp2clip - copy to the clipboard the contents of a file

# Program name from it's filename
prog=${0##*/}

# Text color variables
bldblu='\e[1;34m'      # blue
bldred='\e[1;31m'      # red
bldwht='\e[1;37m'      # white
txtblu=$(tput bold)    # bold
txtund=$(tput sgr 0 1) # underline
txtrst='\e[0m'        # text reset
info=${bldwht}*${txtrst}
pass=${bldblu}*${txtrst}
warn=${bldred}!${txtrst}

filename=$@

# Display usage if full argument isn't given
if [[ -z $filename ]]; then
    echo " $prog <filename> - copy a file to the clipboard"
    exit
fi

# Check that file exists
if [[ ! -f $filename ]]; then
    echo -e "$warn File ${txtund}$filename${txtrst} doesn't exist"
    exit
fi

# Check user is not root (root doesn't have access to user Xorg server)
if [[ $(whoami) == root ]]; then
    echo -e "$warn Must be regular user to copy a file to the clipboard"
    exit
fi

# Copy file to clipboard, give feedback
xsel --clipboard < "$filename"
echo -e "$pass ${txtund}"${filename##*/}"${txtrst} copied to clipboard"
```

clippaste (xsel)

```
#!/bin/bash
# clippaste - Paste contents of clipboard to file in terminal.
# use 'xclip -out -selection primary' for middle click clipboard

# Program name from it's filename
prog=${0##*/}

# Text color variables
bldblu='\e[1;34m'      # blue
bldred='\e[1;31m'      # red
bldwht='\e[1;37m'      # white
txtbld=$(tput bold)    # bold
txtund=$(tput sgr 0 1) # underline
txtrst='\e[0m'        # text reset
info=${bldwht}*${txtrst}
pass=${bldblu}*${txtrst}
warn=${bldred}!${txtrst}

filename=$@
pasteinfo="clipboard contents"

# usage if argument isn't given
if [[ -z $filename ]]; then
    echo "clippaste <filename> - paste contents of context-menu click"
    exit
fi

# check if file exists, prompt to append or override, else create it
if [[ -f $filename ]]; then
    echo -en "$warn File ${txtund}$filename${txtrst} already exists -"
    read edit
    case "$edit" in
        [aA] ) xsel --clipboard >> $filename
                echo -e "$pass File ${txtund}$filename${txtrst} appended"
                ;;
        [oO] ) xsel --clipboard > $filename
                echo -e "$pass File ${txtund}$filename${txtrst} overwritten"
                ;;
        * ) exit
    esac; else
    xsel --clipboard >> $filename
    echo -e "$pass File ${txtund}"$filename"${txtrst} created with"
fi
```


About Gen2ly

<3's *linux*

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Colin Zwiebel | 2009-07-17 at 9:05 pm

Great to find out about xsel! Unfortunately two of you examples are wrong:

```
echo "a-bit-of-text" | xsel -c
```

```
cat /etc/make.conf | xsel -c
```

do not copy "a-bit-of-text" or /etc/make.conf to the clipboard. They should be written:

```
echo "a-bit-of-text" | xsel -clipboard
```

```
cat /etc/make.conf | xsel -clipboard
```

or, as I prefer, with the -b flag (equivalent to -clipboard, 8 characters shorter)

```
echo "a-bit-of-text" | xsel -b
```

```
cat /etc/make.conf | xsel -b
```

The xsel -c flag does exist and is useful. It clears the clipboard. Forexample:

```
xsel -c -b
```

Or, if you want to clear the X Server clipboard (middle click clipboard), simply type

```
xsel -c
```

Enjoy!

Gen2ly | 2009-07-18 at 10:52 am

Huh, hmm that did work the last time I used it. Wonder if xsel option have changed since, looks like it does. Thanks for the tip Colin. I use xclip now so it's a good time to update post.

wozza xing | 2009-08-24 at 3:01 am

Awesome, thanks for the info

I really need this to copy between the primary and the clipboard for apps which don't know about the primary eg netbeans.

kaluG | 2009-09-07 at 4:17 am

Very nice Gen2ly, thanks for the idea!

```
#!/bin/bash
```

```
# Paste the contents of the clipboard to a file.
```

```
FILENAME=$@
```

```
if [[ ! -z $FILENAME ]]; then
echo "clipb-pasted into $FILENAME ";
xsel -b > $FILENAME;
chmod 755 $FILENAME;
else
echo "no filename declared."
exit;
fi
```

chanux | 2009-09-12 at 7:24 am

Neat. Thanx.

Gen2ly | 2009-09-12 at 4:06 pm

Thank you.

jonathan | 2009-10-07 at 10:26 am

This is awesome, thakns so much!

AMB | 2010-10-19 at 8:15 pm

!#/really/good/blog

```
if
i had to say one thing it's
thank you
else
i would not speak truly
fi
```

manech | 2011-03-18 at 6:07 am

If you use xclip in conjunction with truecrypt you should be careful and use
truecrypt .pass /media/pass
cat /media/pass/password | xclip
truecrypt -d .sec

instead of
 xclip -in /media/pass/password

because otherwise xclip will lock the file and you will get the following error message, when truecrypt tries to unmount the volume:
 umount: /media/pass: device is busy.

Todd Partridge (Gen2ly) | 2011-10-10 at 2:57 am

A more thoroughly thought out cp2clip:

<http://madebynathan.com/2011/10/04/a-nicer-way-to-use-xclip/>

Todd Partridge (Gen2ly) | 2012-06-07 at 7:06 am

Updated post.

kayackhella | 2012-09-05 at 10:45 am

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truongco | 2012-09-28 at 2:54 am

It help me much. Thank!

Illelmyptomi | 2012-11-16 at 8:41 am

onemanga wallflower

BUCCILSRISORY | 2012-12-02 at 4:24 am

Сетевые online and offline systems for gaming, arcade emulator, watch videos of programmy.http : / / http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-fcO8eE_5I&noredirect=1

BUCCILSRISORY | 2012-12-02 at 4:24 am

Network online and offline systems for gaming, watching a video of programmy.http : / / http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-fcO8eE_5I&noredirect=1

Vardievalsar | 2013-01-27 at 4:01 pm

Мы устанавливаем натяжные потолки в
Серпухове не дорого, с гарантией!

bulikclv | 2013-04-09 at 11:43 pm

[url=http://shkatulka.net.ru/#k57x]Marlboro[/url] [url=http://psiport.ru/#eq7z]Cheap Cigarettes[/url]
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[url=http://resortbulgaria.ru/pages/turi-v-bolgariu/mejdunarodnii-molodejnii-tentr-cocteilclub.html#br7z]menthol cigarettes[/url] [url=http://motto5.ru/?page_id=126#eq1h]
[url=http://cigbase.com/[/url]

Rooncance | 2013-04-10 at 12:15 am

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[url=http://nikefreeshoesblue.blogspot.com/]nike free shoes[/url] That company must also be able to adjust its strategy in the event that search engine rankings drop Since search engine marketing is an on-going process, your positions must be constantly monitored If you want your search engine optimization company to do this for you, request a sample of a monthly report It is essential that this report should show rankings for the most popular search engines Don't be impressed by a report that only shows great results for a limited number of small search engines

<http://nikefreerun3leathershoes.cabanova.com/>.

[url=http://cheapnikefreesale.blogspot.com/]cheap nike free[/url] If you bury your message inside a very thick and dense text, then you can very well lose the chance of getting a passerby or any of your target clients to get your message without having to work through your words If it is too much work to get to your message, then it is probably not worth to pick them up in the first place Generally, here are the guidelines you need to pick up yourself if you want your brochure printing copy to pique the interest of your target clients1 Speak directly to your target audience

[url=http://nikefreesalecheap.weebly.com/]nike free sale[/url] Offloading the administrative work maximizes the organization's resources Offer access to expertise Organizations that outsource gain access to know-how they probably do not possess They tap into a broad network of experienced people and best practices There are, however, some common misconceptions about outsourcing, including the belief that it can and will in every situation: Cut costs.

ARokproorb | 2013-06-12 at 4:34 pm

Свисните где драйвер motherboard sony nw e002f драйвер загрузить

И не нужно кривить свою модерскую харю херох workcentre 3119 драйвер принтера драйвер на mini dv драйвер radeon 5800 драйвер для принтера brother dcp 7030r

Знакомства Екатеринбург | 2013-08-05 at 5:24 pm

This is the perfect site for everyone who really wants

to understand this topic. You realize a whole lot its almost hard to argue with you (not that I personally would want to...HaHa).

You definitely put a brand new spin on a topic which has been written about for many years. Wonderful stuff, just great!

Othexiadiah | 2013-08-09 at 5:30 pm

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Yzipadomu.Comxa.Com | 2013-08-10 at 7:55 pm

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Gollumelit | 2013-09-20 at 7:20 am

Contraction de gollum et de élite, la gollumelite est une maladie assez rare, qui continue de faire en général le sommet de certaines pyramides mal concues, torturant le malade avec une sorte de déséquilibre schyzophreniquo-égoïste couplé d'une sorte de syndrome de la tourette... " Mon précieux... butin passera avant tout mes principes " ou " maintenons les personnes dans l'ignorance pour leur vendre ce qui demeure gratuit " sont le genre de phrasioles dégluties par les personnes en phase terminales de la maladie. Cette maladie pousse la victime à l'illusion de la réussite quand bien même en vérité c'est vers leffroyable echec qu'elle se précipite. La gollumelite developpe l'égo surdimentionnel et orgeuilleux des gens atteintes.

chinchvan | 2013-10-08 at 6:10 am

Natural gas poses amazing some transportation problems and is mainly shipped through pipelines

ray | 2014-02-02 at 12:12 pm

Many thanks, that's nice, focused information.

JankaTeefe | 2014-07-21 at 3:32 am

Вот фотки,в котором он сейчас состоянии: <http://www.gansi.ru>

Видно, как он пытается перевернуться с помощью своей клешни.

voyance | 2014-07-30 at 10:36 am

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inpughisguh | 2014-08-27 at 11:19 pm

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homepage | 2014-08-29 at 3:36 am

They are all equally important, so ensure you don't miss any certainly one of them. The American researchers discovered that the tea contains polyphenols can kill the bacteria causing smelly breath.

Experimental proof, drinking tea in vivo immune cell response to viruses is half a dozen times faster than drinking coffee.

Thus, you'll find countless homemade remedies to obtain rid of gnats, keeping your house clean and shielded from these tiny creatures.
homepage

news | 2014-08-29 at 3:36 am

If you're operating over a dark road, generally there bollards will help for safety work in roadways and would make traveling safer and simpler to suit your needs. Most with the injuries happen from falls, particularly at home if elderly or disabled folks are living in there. news

estetykacjala.com | 2014-10-22 at 3:33 am

If you are going for best contents like me, only pay a quick visit this web page everyday because it presents feature contents, thanks

Torri | 2014-11-09 at 7:27 am

What's up to every body, it's my first visit of this webpage; this weblog carries awesome and actually excellent data in favor of readers.

Sivadoss Ram | 2014-11-10 at 5:02 am

Good thread, very useful, keep it up, thanks!!

Car Security | 2014-12-26 at 7:18 am

whoah this weblog is wonderful i really like studying your posts. Stay up the great work! You realize, many individuals are looking round for this info, you could aid them greatly.

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