**Filesystem Hierarchy Standard**

By placing files in the same general place across Linux distributions, the FHS simplifies distribution-independent software development. The FHS is also used in the Linux Standard Base. The FHS allows both users and software to predict the location of installed files and directories. An FHS-compliant filesystem assumes that the operating system supports the basic security features found in most UNIX filesystems.

**The two independent FHS categories**

At the core of the FHS are two independent characteristics of files:

**Shareable vs. unshareable**

Shareable files can be located on one system and used on another, while unshareable files must reside on the system on which they are used.

**Static vs. variable**

Static files change only through system administrator intervention, such as installing or upgrading a package, and include documentation, libraries, and binaries. Variable files are all other files, such as logs, spool files, databases, and user data, which are subject to change by users and by system processes.

These distinctions allow files with different sets of characteristics to be stored on different filesystems. Table 1 is an example from the FHS document showing a layout that would be FHS-compliant.

**Table 1. FHS example**

|  | **Shareable** | **Unshareable** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Static** | /usr /opt | /etc /boot |
| **Variable** | /var/mail /var/spool/news | /var/run /var/lock |