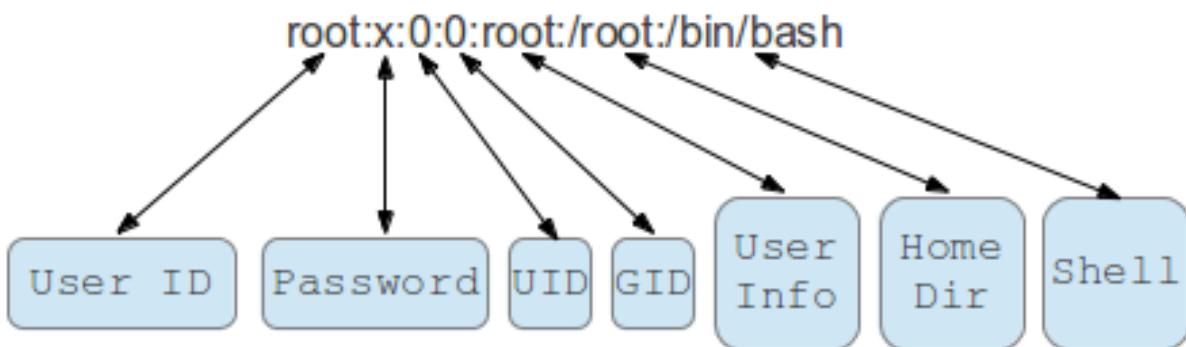


Understanding /etc/passwd File

/etc/passwd file stores essential information, which is required during login i.e. user account information. /etc/passwd is a text file, which contains a list of the system's accounts, giving for each account some useful information like user ID, group ID, home directory, shell, etc. It should have general read permission as many utilities like ls use it to map user IDs to user names, but write access only for the root account

Understanding fields in /etc/passwd

The /etc/passwd contains one entry per line for each user (or user account) of the system. All fields are separated by a colon (:) symbol. Total seven fields as follows. Generally, passwd file entry looks as follows



Username: It is used when user logs in. It should be between 1 and 32 characters in length.

Password: An x character indicates that encrypted password is stored in /etc/shadow file. Please note that you need to use the passwd command to compute the hash of a password typed at the CLI or to store/update the hash of the password in /etc/shadow file.

User ID (UID): Each user must be assigned a user ID (UID). UID 0 (zero) is reserved for root and UIDs 1-99 are reserved for other predefined accounts. Further UID 100-999 are reserved by system for administrative and system accounts/groups.

Group ID (GID): The primary group ID (stored in /etc/group file)

User ID Info: The comment field. It allows you to add extra information about the users such as user's full name, phone number etc. This field is used by the finger command.

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Home directory: The absolute path to the directory the user will be in when they log in. If this directory does not exist then the user's directory becomes /

Command/shell: The absolute path of a command or shell (/bin/bash). Typically, this is a shell. Please note that it does not have to be a shell.