

UNIX Commands

COMP 444/5201

Revision 1.4

January 25, 2005

Contents

- Shell Intro
- Command Format
- Shell I/O
- Command I/O
- Command Overview

Shell Intro

- A system program that allows a user to execute:
 - shell functions (internal commands)
 - other programs (external commands)
 - shell scripts
- Linux/UNIX has a bunch of them, the most common are
 - `tcsh`, an expanded version of `csh` (Bill Joy, Berkley, Sun)
 - `bash`, one of the most popular and rich in functionality shells, an expansion of `sh` (AT&T Bell Labs)
 - `ksh`, Korn Shell
 - `zsh`
 - . . .

Command Format

- Format: command name and 0 or more arguments:
% commandname [arg1] ... [argN]
- By % sign I mean prompt here and hereafter.
- Arguments can be
 - options (switches to the command to indicate a mode of operation) ; usually prefixed with a hyphen (-) or two (--) in GNU style
 - non-options, or operands, basically the data to work with (actual data, or a file name)

Shell I/O

- Shell is a “power-user” interface, so the user interacts with the shell by typing in the commands.
- The shell interprets the commands, that may produce some results, they go back to the user and the control is given back to the user when a command completes (in general).
- In the case of external commands, shell executes actual programs that may call functions of the OS kernel.
- These system commands are often wrapped around a so-called system calls, to ask the kernel to perform an operation (usually privileged) on your behalf.

Command I/O

- Input to shell:
 - Command name and arguments typed by the user
- Input to a command:
 - Keyboard, file, or other commands
- Standard input: keyboard.
- Standard output: screen.
- These STDIN and STDOUT are often together referred to as a terminal.
- Both standard input and standard output can be redirected from/to a file or other command.
- File redirection:
 - < input
 - > output
 - >> output append

Commands

man

- Manual Pages
- The first command to remember
- Contains info about almost everything :-)
 - other commands
 - system calls
 - c/library functions
 - other utils, applications, configuration files
- To read about man itself type:
% man man
- **NOTE:** unfortunately there's **no**
% man woman ...

which

- Displays a path name of a command.
- Searches a path environmental variable for the command and displays the absolute path.
- To find which `tcsh` and `bash` are actually in use, type:
% `which tcsh`
% `which bash`
- % `man which` for more details

chsh

- Change Login Shell
- Login shell is the shell that interprets commands after you logged in by default.
- You can change it with `chsh` (provided that your system admin allowed you to do so).
- To list all possible shells, depending on implementation:
% `chsh -l`
% `cat /etc/shells`
- % `chsh` with no arguments will prompt you for the shell.

whereis

- Display all locations of a command (or some other binary, man page, or a source file).
- Searches all directories to find commands that match `whereis`' argument
- `% whereis tcsh`

General Commands

passwd

- Change your login password.
- A very good idea after you got a new one.
- It's usually a paranoid program asking your password to have at least 6 chars in the password, at least two alphabetical and one numerical characters. Some other restrictions (e.g. dictionary words or previous password similarity) may apply.
- Depending on a privilege, one can change user's and group passwords as well as real name, login shell, etc.
- `% man passwd`

date

- Guess what :-)
- Displays dates in various formats
- `% date`
- `% date -u`
 - in GMT
- `% man date`

cal

- Calendar
 - for month
 - entire year
 - Years range: 1 - 9999
 - No year 0
 - Calendar was corrected in 1752 - removed 11 days
- | | |
|----------------|---------------------|
| • % cal | current month |
| • % cal 2 2000 | Feb 2000, leap year |
| • % cal 2 2100 | not a leap year |
| • % cal 2 2400 | leap year |
| • % cal 9 1752 | 11 days skipped |
| • % cal 0 | error |
| • % cal 2002 | whole year |

clear

- Clears the screen
- There's an alias for it: Ctrl+L
- Example sequence:
 - `% cal`
 - `% clear`
 - `% cal`
 - `Ctrl+L`

sleep

- “Sleeping” is doing nothing for some time.
- Usually used for delays in shell scripts.
- `% sleep 2` 2 seconds pause

Command Grouping

- Semicolon: “;”
- Often grouping acts as if it were a single command, so an output of different commands can be redirected to a file:
- `% (date; cal; date) > out.txt`

alias

- Defined a new name for a command
- `% alias`
 - with no arguments lists currently active aliases
- `% alias newcommand oldcommand`
 - defines a newcommand
- `% alias cl cal 2003`
- `% cl`

unalias

- Removes alias
- Requires an argument.
- `% unalias cl`

history

- Display a history of recently used commands
- `% history`
 - all commands in the history
- `% history 10`
 - last 10
- `% history -r 10`
 - reverse order
- `% !!`
 - repeat last command
- `% !n`
 - repeat command **n** in the history
- `% !-1`
 - repeat last command = !!
- `% !-2`
 - repeat second last command
- `% !ca`
 - repeat last command that begins with ‘ca’

apropos

- Search man pages for a substring.
- `% apropos word`
- Equivalent:
- `% man -k word`
- `% apropos date`
- `% man -k date`
- `% apropos password`

exit / logout

- Exit from your login session.
- `% exit`
- `% logout`

shutdown

- Causes system to shutdown or reboot cleanly.
- May require superuser privileges
- `% shutdown -h now` - stop
- `% shutdown -r now` - reboot

Files

ls

- List directory contents
- Has whole bunch of options, see `man ls` for details.
- `% ls`
 - all files except those starting with a “.”
- `% ls -a`
 - all
- `% ls -A`
 - all without “.” and “..”
- `% ls -F`
 - append “/” to dirs and “*” to executables
- `% ls -l`
 - long format
- `% ls -al`
- `% ls -lt`
 - sort by modification time (latest - earliest)
- `% ls -ltr`
 - reverse

cat

- Display and concatenate files.
- `% cat`
 - Will read from STDIN and print to STDOUT every line you enter.
- `% cat file1 [file2] ...`
 - Will concatenate all files in one and print them to STDOUT
- `% cat > filename`
 - Will take whatever you type from STDIN and will put it into the file filename
- To exit `cat` or `cat > filename` type **Ctrl+D** to indicate EOF (End of File).

more / less

- Pagers to display contents of large files page by page or scroll line by line up and down.
- Have a lot of viewing options and search capability.
- Interactive. To exit: 'q'

less

- `less` ("less is more") a bit more smart than the `more` command
- to display contents of a file:
 - `% less filename`
- To display line numbers:
 - `% less -N filename`
- To display a prompt:
 - `% less -P"Press 'q' to quit" filename`
- Combine the two:
 - `% less -NP"Blah-blah-blah" filename`
- For more information:
 - `% man less`

touch

- By *touching* a file you either create it if it did not exist (with 0 length).
- Or you update its last modification and access times.
- There are options to override the default behavior.
- `% touch file`
- `% man touch`

cp

- Copies files / directories.
- % `cp [options] <source> <destination>`
- % `cp file1 file2`
- % `cp file1 [file2] ... /directory`
- Useful option: `-i` to prevent overwriting existing files and prompt the user to confirm.

mv

- Moves or renames files/directories.
- `% mv <source> <destination>`
 - The `<source>` gets removed
- `% mv file1 dir/`
- `% mv file1 file2`
 - rename
- `% mv file1 file2 dir/`
- `% mv dir1 dir2`

rm

- Removes file(s) and/or directories.
- `% rm file1 [file2] ...`
- `% rm -r dir1 [dir2] ...`
- `% rm -r file1 dir1 dir2 file4 ...`

script

- Writes a log (a typescript) of whatever happened in the terminal to a file.
- `% script [file]`
- `% script`
 - all log is saved into a file named typescript
- `% script file`
 - all log is saved into a file named file
- To exit logging, type:
 - `% exit`

find

- Looks up a file in a directory tree.
- `% find . -name name`
- `% find . \(-name 'w*' -or -name 'W*' \)`

mkdir

- Creates a directory.
- `% mkdir newdir`
- Often people make an alias of `md` for it.

cd

- Changes your current directory to a new one.
- `% cd /some/other/dir`
 - Absolute path
- `% cd subdir`
 - Assuming `subdir` is in the current directory.
- `% cd`
 - Returns you to your home directory.

pwd

- Displays personal working directory, i.e. your current directory.
- `% pwd`

rmmdir

- Removes a directory.
- `% rmmdir dirname`
- Equivalent:
 - `% rm -r dirname`

ln

- Symbolic link or a “shortcut” in MS terminology.
- `% ln -s <real-name> <fake-name>`

chmod

- Changes file permissions
- Possible invocations
 - `% chmod 600 filename`
 - `-rw----- 1 user group 2785 Feb 8 14:18 filename`
(a bit not intuitive where 600 comes from)
 - `% chmod u+rw filename`
(the same thing, more readable)
 - For the assignment:
 - `% chmod u+x myshellscript`
(myshellscript is now executable)
 - `-rwx----- 1 user group 2785 Feb 8 14:18 myshellscript`

grep

- Searches its input for a pattern.
- The pattern can be a simple substring or a complex regular expression.
- If a line matches, it's directed to STDOUT; otherwise, it's discarded.
- `% echo "blah-foo" | grep blah`
 - Will print the matching line
- `% echo "blah-foo" | grep zee`
 - Will not.
- See a separate `grep` tutorial.

Pipes

- What's a pipe?
 - is a method of interprocess communication (IPC)
 - in shells a "|" symbol used
 - it means that the output of one program (on one side of a pipe) serves as an input for the program on another end.
 - a set of "piped" commands is often called a pipeline
- Why it's useful?
 - Because by combining simple OS utilities one can easily solve more complex tasks

More on UNIX Commands and Editors

- <http://www.cs.concordia.ca/help/>