

Introduction to the Linux OS

Peter Huszár

KFA: DEPARTMENT OF ATMOSPHERIC PHYSICS

Pavel Řezníček

ÚČJF: INSTITUTE OF PARTICLE AND NUCLEAR PHYSICS

September 30, 2025

Programs available in shell or in the executable PATHs.

- General structure: `[path/]command [options] [arguments]`
- List of options and arguments (e.g. for `systemctl` command):
 - `command --help`, resp. `command -h`: basic syntax and options of the command
 - `man command`: manual pages with more detailed info
 - `info command`: interactive manual pages (jump to references etc.)
 - `command -v`, resp. `command --verbose`: be verbose about what is being done
- Run in background, while continuing work in shell: `command ... &`
- `fg`: Put command already running in background back to foreground of the shell
- `Ctrl+z`: Suspend process / command (stops processing)
- `bg`: Put command into background (typically used to let suspended command running again in the background)
- When command / program ends, it usually returns a *return code*
 - 0 ... usually means "no error"
 - non-zero is usually indication of premature exit of the command because of some problem
- Find full path to a command: `which command` (or search for it in aliases: `command alias` lists existing aliases)

Sequence of commands can be put into script files.

- **#** are used for comments
- Special header "comment": **#!/usr/bin/zsh** instructs the script to be run by the **zsh** shell. Not only for shells, but also for interpreters like **python**
- **exit** [**number**] to quit script [and possibly return a *return code*]
 - Not needed at the very end of a script, it will end by itself
- **set -x** command inside a script instruct to show the commands being run by the script
- Two ways how to run a script:
 - **./script.sh**: starts a new shell and runs the script in it
 - **source ./script.sh** (or also **. ./script.sh**: runs the commands from the script one by one in the current shell → i.e. as if one would write them manually in the current terminal
 - PS: The **'./'** makes sure it runs **script.sh** in the current directory, and not somewhere from the **\$PATH** paths

```
#!/bin/sh
echo $SHELL
sleep 0.5
```



- **login**: Login user to the session, normally not directly invoked
- **logout**: Logout user from the session
- **exit**: Exit from the terminal/shell/script
- **id** [user]: User and group id information about myself
- **groups** [user]: List groups user is in
- **whoami**: Return user-name
- **who**: Show who is logged in
- **w**: Show who is logged in and what is he/she doing
- **last**: Show list of last logged-in users
- **su/sudo**: Become superuser
 - **su** - to make sure superuser paths are set
 - **sudo -i** to start superuser shell

- **ls** [path/file]: List files/directories
 - **ls -l**: List one file/dir per line
 - **ls -l**: List full information:

```
-rw-r--r--  1 reznicek reznicek 15360 Oct 14 19:40 osnova_Uvod_do_Linuxu.doc
drwxr-xr-x 18 reznicek reznicek  4096 Jan 31 2019 skola
```

- File type (file='-', dir='d', ...), access rights
- Number of links (copies)
- User name
- Group name
- Size in bytes
- Date and time of last modification
- File name
- **ls -h**: Human readable file size
- **ls -a**: List also hidden files and directories (.*)
- **ls -d**: Show information about directory instead of listing its content
- **ls -R**: List recursively also content of sub-directories
- **ls -t**: Sort by modification time
- **ls -r**: Reverse sort order (name, time)
- **stat file**: Disk-storage info about file
 - Physical place on disk
 - Creation, modification and access times

- **cd** [path]: Change directory
 - **cd ../**: Go one directory up
 - **cd ./**: Go to (stay in) current directory
 - **cd /**: Go to root (top filesystem) directory
 - **cd ~**, **cd**: Go to home directory
 - **cd -**: Go to previous directory (back from last cd command)
 - Change directory *relatively* to the current dir or *absolutely* specified path from the root dir
 - *relative* path example: **cd work/papers** or **cd ../work/papers**
 - *absolute* path example: **cd /home/username/work/papers**
- **pwd**: Print current directory
- **readlink -f file**: Print full path to the given **file**
- **cat file**: Dump content of **file** on the screen
- **less file**: Browse **file** content on the screen
 - Enhanced **more** command (also on Windows)
 - Search for content ('/' key)
- **touch file**: Update *modification time*
- **diff file1 file2**: Show difference between two files, GUI versions exist too (**meld**, **diffuse**)
- File and directory manipulations (see later lectures in details):
 - **cp**, **mv**, **rm**: copy, move/rename, remove files
 - **mkdir**, **rmdir**: create directory, remove (empty!) directory
- Terminal-based file browser: **mc**

Work on Remote Machine via SSH

Secure Shell Connection, assuming the host PC is running **sshd** server (just install the ssh-server package...)

Client can:

- **ssh -Y username@hostname**
- Gains access to login shell on remote machine
- Can send graphical windows (e.g. xterm)
 - **-Y** allows to transfer graphics
- With sudo/su commands can manage the computer (including reboots, poweroff etc.)
- Configure automatic options for ssh via **\$HOME/.ssh/config** file:

```
Host lxplus
  user reznicek
  Hostname lxplus.cern.ch
Host ipnp-stick
  User mlive
  Hostname 10.77.0.11
```

At MFF there is a faculty computing Linux cluster **chimera** for all faculty members:

<https://www.mff.cuni.cz/en/hpc-cluster/general-information>



Manipulation with users and groups

Users:

- Users stored in `/etc/passwd`

```
student:x:1001:1001:Student linuxu,T11,1234,5678,Poznamka:/home/student:/bin/bash
```

- `adduser`: add new user, copy `/etc/skel` content to the newly created home directory. Default options in `/etc/adduser.conf`
- `deluser`: remove user (home directory is kept by default)
- `usermod`: modifications to user settings (home dir, id, password-expiry, groups, shell, lock-password)
- `chfn`: changer user information (full name etc.)
- `passwd`: change user password
- `chsh`: change user shell

Groups:

- Groups stored in `/etc/group`
- `groupadd`: add new group
- `groupdel`: delete group
- `groupmod`: name, id
- `gpasswd`: groups can have passwords, administrators

Change ownership of a file/dir

Users:

- **chown username:groupname file**: change user and group ownership of a file/dir
 - **chown -R**: recursively for all sub-directories
 - **chown --dereference**: for symbolic links "jump" to the real file the link is pointing to
- **chgrp groupname file**: changer group ownership of a file/dir
- Username change mostly only for superuser, user cannot "give" file to another user. But owner can modify group =_i give file for r/w to other users via groups

Change read/write/execute/access rights to files/dir

```
meop35 exam # ls -lai
total 21
1433763 drwxr-xr-x  5 petr petr    288 Oct  9 11:59 .
      4350 drwxr-xr-x 11 petr users  976 Oct  9 11:57 ..
1434761 -rw-r--r--  1 petr petr   13643 Oct  8 21:37 FILESYSTE.win
1434763 lrwxrwxrwx  1 petr petr    11 Oct  9 11:59 core -> /proc/kcore
1434735 drwxr-xr-x  2 petr petr    48 Oct  9 11:57 doc
1434764 srwxrwxrwx  1 petr petr     0 Oct  9 11:59 gpmctl
1434757 drwxr-xr-x  2 petr petr    72 Oct  9 11:58 hudba
1434758 -rw-----  1 petr petr    31 Aug 21 13:52 hymna.mp3
1434756 drwxr-xr-x  2 petr petr    80 Oct  9 11:58 prednasky
1416878 crw-rw---- 1 root tty    2, 190 Oct  9 11:59 ptyae
1434762 lrwxrwxrwx  1 petr petr     9 Oct  9 11:58 sym_link -> hymna.mp3
meop35 exam #
```

Command `chmod`

● `chown ugoa+/-rwxst file`

- **u**: user rights
- **g**: group rights
- **o**: rights of others
- **a**: rights of all (user, group, others), not specifying who defaults to "all"
- **+**: add rights
- **-**: remove rights
- **r**: read rights
- **w**: write/modify rights, for dirs only works when 'x' is set too
- **x**: executable (file), directory enter and listing allowed (directories)
- **s**: setuid bit, allows to run command with file-owner privileges (`/etc/passwd`)
- **t**: sticky bit for directory (o+t): everyone can create files, but files can be deleted only by the owners (Despite the "xw" rights for all in the directory - e.g. `/tmp`)

Change read/write/execute/access rights to files/dir

```
meop35 exam # ls -lai
total 21
1433763 drwxr-xr-x  5 petr petr    288 Oct  9 11:59 .
   4350 drwxr-xr-x 11 petr users   976 Oct  9 11:57 ..
1434761 -rw-r--r--   1 petr petr   13643 Oct  8 21:37 FILESYSTEM.win
1434763 lrwxrwxrwx   1 petr petr     11 Oct  9 11:59 core -> /proc/kcore
1434735 drwxr-xr-x  2 petr petr     48 Oct  9 11:57 doc
1434764 srwxrwxrwx   1 petr petr      0 Oct  9 11:59 gpmctl
1434757 drwxr-xr-x  2 petr petr     72 Oct  9 11:58 hudba
1434758 -rw-----   1 petr petr     31 Aug 21 13:52 hymna.mp3
1434756 drwxr-xr-x  2 petr petr     80 Oct  9 11:58 prednasky
1416878 crw-rw----   1 root tty    2, 190 Oct  9 11:59 ptyae
1434762 lrwxrwxrwx   1 petr petr      9 Oct  9 11:58 sym_link -> hymna.mp3
meop35 exam #
```

Command **chmod**

- **chown 0644 file**
- Rights can be also defined by octal numbers:
 - 777 = (binary) 111 111 111 = rwx rwx rwx
- Default permissions driven by **umask** (022 = files are 644, dirs are 755 = i.e. it is subtracted from 666 and 777)
- Some filesystems support more advanced file-attributes (e.g. immutable, nodeletable, no copy, no write, ...) via commands **chattr** (and listing these attributes via **lsattr**)