

Terminal Basics

From “Ditch Windows – Embrace Linux”, Chapter 8 & Appendix E

A handful of commands covers most of everyday Linux – on Ubuntu and all related distributions. From “Ditch Windows – Embrace Linux”, Chapter 8 & Appendix E.

Navigation & File Management

Command	What it does
<code>pwd</code>	Show current directory
<code>ls -la</code>	All files + details (incl. hidden)
<code>cd folder / cd .. / cd ~</code>	Change / up one level / go home
<code>mkdir -p a/b/c</code>	Create nested folders at once
<code>touch file</code>	Create an empty file
<code>cp -r source dest</code>	Copy a folder recursively
<code>mv old new</code>	Move or rename
<code>rm -i file</code>	Delete file with confirmation (no recycle bin!)

Viewing & Searching

Command	What it does
<code>cat file</code>	Output file contents
<code>less file</code>	View page by page (q = quit)
<code>head -20 file</code>	First 20 lines
<code>tail -f file</code>	Follow file live (Ctrl+C = stop)
<code>grep -r "text" .</code>	Search text recursively in a folder
<code>grep -i "text" file</code>	Search ignoring upper/lower case

System & Processes

Command	What it does
<code>df -h</code>	Show free disk space of drives
<code>free -h</code>	Show memory usage
<code>du -ah . sort -rh head</code>	Find the largest files in a folder
<code>ps aux</code>	Show all running processes
<code>htop</code>	Interactive process manager (q = quit)
<code>kill 1234 / pkill name</code>	End a process by PID or name
<code>sudo apt update && sudo apt upgrade</code>	Update system and programs
<code>chmod +x script.sh</code>	Make a file executable

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Pipe Tools: Chaining Commands

Tool	Function	Typical pattern
grep	Filter text	command grep "pattern"
grep -v	Exclude text	command grep -v "pattern"
awk	Extract / calculate columns	command awk '{print \$2}'
sed	Replace text	command sed 's/old/new/g'
sort -rn	Sort numeric descending	command sort -rn
uniq -c	Count duplicates	... sort uniq -c
wc -l	Count lines	command wc -l
column -t	Align as a table	command column -t
tee file	Display AND save output	command tee out.txt
xargs	Use output as arguments	find . -name "*.log" xargs rm

Two tips that save time immediately

The Tab key auto-completes commands and file names. The up/down arrows recall recently used commands – or search your history with Ctrl + R.