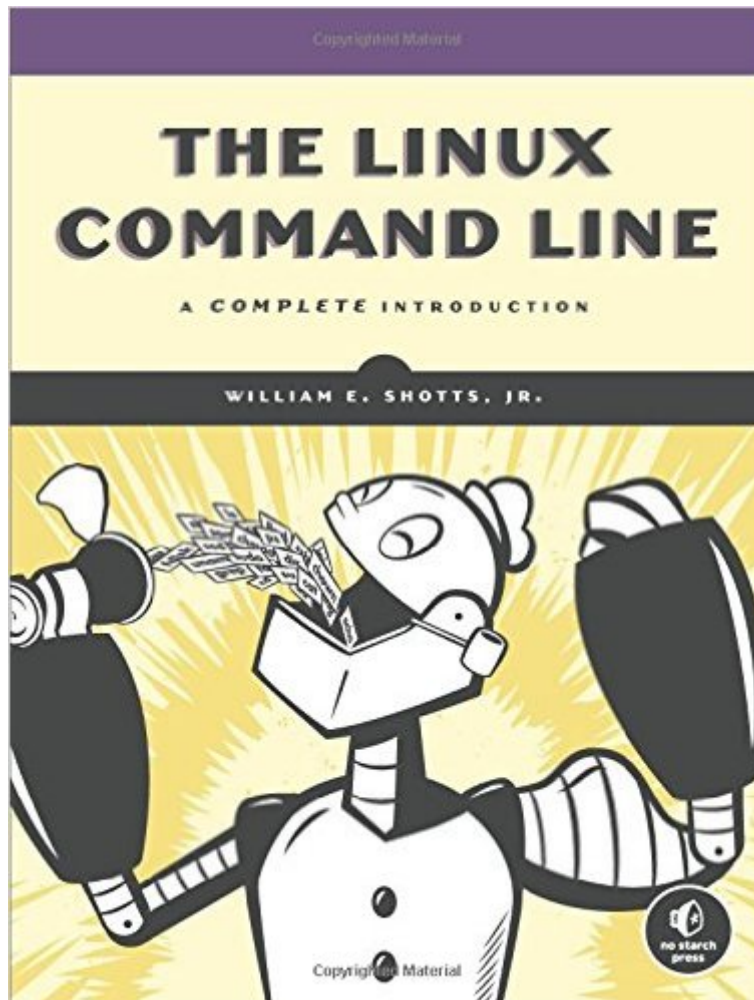


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The Linux Command Line: A Complete Introduction



Synopsis

You've experienced the shiny, point-and-click surface of your Linux computer—now dive below and explore its depths with the power of the command line. The Linux Command Line takes you from your very first terminal keystrokes to writing full programs in Bash, the most popular Linux shell. Along the way you'll learn the timeless skills handed down by generations of gray-bearded, mouse-shunning gurus: file navigation, environment configuration, command chaining, pattern matching with regular expressions, and more. In addition to that practical knowledge, author William Shotts reveals the philosophy behind these tools and the rich heritage that your desktop Linux machine has inherited from Unix supercomputers of yore. As you make your way through the book's short, easily-digestible chapters, you'll learn how to: Create and delete files, directories, and symlinks Administer your system, including networking, package installation, and process management Use standard input and output, redirection, and pipelines Edit files with Vi, the world's most popular text editor Write shell scripts to automate common or boring tasks Slice and dice text files with cut, paste, grep, patch, and sed Once you overcome your initial "shell shock," you'll find that the command line is a natural and expressive way to communicate with your computer. Just don't be surprised if your mouse starts to gather dust.

Book Information

Paperback: 480 pages

Publisher: No Starch Press; 1 edition (January 11, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1593273894

ISBN-13: 978-1593273897

Product Dimensions: 7 x 1.1 x 9.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.9 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 307 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #7,958 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #2 in Books > Computers & Technology > Networking & Cloud Computing > Network Administration > Linux & UNIX Administration #2 in Books > Computers & Technology > Operating Systems > Linux > Programming #3 in Books > Computers & Technology > Operating Systems > Linux > Networking & System Administration

Customer Reviews

Praise for The Linux Command Line "I can honestly say I have found THE beginner's guide to

Linux." •Linux Journal "Anyone who reads this book and makes use of the examples provided will not be able to avoid becoming a Unix command line pro by the time they've hit the end of the book." •ITworld "The most approachable tome on the subject." •Linux Magazine "If you're new to the command line there is definitely a lot that you can learn from this book." •Ubuntu Musings "This is exactly what a Linux beginner needs to get up to speed quickly. The book goes beyond simply walking through all of the command line utilities, and ventures into the realm of theory and how things work together." •Nicholas C. Zakas, web software engineer and author

"Anyone who reads this book and makes use of the examples provided will not be able to avoid becoming a Unix command line pro by the time they've hit the end of the book. It provides an excellent introduction to the command line that takes students from knowing nearly nothing to using impressively sophisticated commands." •Computerworld

I have run a Linux system for almost 15 years....got sick of the cost of Window and its upgrades, not to mention the unexplained crashes...and get along good with PCLinuxOS. Once in a while though, I need to correct something that's not doing what I want. Since I only learn about such things that directly affect me and/or my computer, it's often easier to use this book than to sort thru Google and its suggestions and certainly easier than going to classes for computers. I'm 79 years old, high school education, started messing with computers in my mid 60's, and don't even have Windows on my computer anymore. So, don't tell me Linux is intended for "kids" and techs; I'm way more into gardening, horses, saddlemaking, domestic rabbits, chickens and such. If I can make my Linux system do what I want....with the help of this book....so can you. Try it.

What if you had a book that took you from the very beginning of the Linux command line options, and it took you through progressively interesting and relevant topics so that you really could develop a mastery of the shell? Oh, and what if it were written in a fun style that was less wonkish and easier to embrace and follow along with? Less tech, mode dude. William E. Shotts, Jr.'s "The Linux Command Line" manages to do that. Let's face it, learning the entirety of the Linux command line can take years. It's unlikely most will walk through the book page by page and work through each example, but with this book, it feel like you could do exactly that and not get bored. The first part of the book walks the user through the many commands that are relevant to all systems and all shells; the navigation options through directories, showing files, getting your head around terminals, finding

and opening files, moving files and directories around, links (both literal and symbolic), learning about commands and how to learn more about them. All of this, as well as redirection, using pipelines, creating filters, expansions, and so on. A wonderful metaphor and explanation made in this section is that Windows is like a GameBoy, and Linux is like the world's biggest Erector Set. While Windows is nice and shiny and makes for pretty applications, it's difficult (relatively speaking) to roll your own applications without a fair bit of knowledge and packaged tools. Linux, on the other hand, right off the bat gives you all the tools you need to build just about anything in just about any conceivable way you might want to build it. Part 2 covers configuration of the shell and the environment variables that it keeps track of. Shell variables like `DISPLAY`, `EDITOR`, `LANG`, `PS1`, `TERM` and many others are explained and we get to see how simple shell scripts are implemented allow us to access and modify these values. We also get introduced to a variety of text editors, but with an emphasis on `vi` (and a mellow focus at that). The section is rounded out by learning how to modify the command prompt that we see and make it show us more details (directories, colors, etc.). Part 3 is a grab bag of all sorts of things that we often look at separately, but when taken together, make a lot of sense. We start with package management and making sure systems are up to date. Next we cover understanding file systems and the variety of commands that helps to mount disks, examine file systems, check and repair systems, get online and check the network for connectivity, copying files over a network and connecting via secure shell, performing archive and backup steps. The section end with a broad discussion on regular expressions, text formatting and processing and, finally, printing out files and compiling applications. Part 4 ties it all into the true big bad voodoo of the command line, the ability to write shell scripts. The section starts out with a fairly basic script formatting and then moves on to create a program that displays system information in HTML format. Along the way, we get to see how to use the shell and all of its properties and the huge toolkit of Linux commands to structure our work, and get an introduction to "top down design". Subsequent chapters carry us through common development topics such as reading input from the command line, strings, numbers, variables and constants, and the variety of flow control ranging from simple branches to looping and case statements and arrays. The section ends with a grab bag of interesting topics including subshells, traps and error handling, asynchronous execution and named pipes. Each section starts with the commands it will cover, walks through careful and thorough examples of each command, and then wraps with a simple explanation of the section covered, with sidebars aplenty. Seeing as this is a command line book, you bet that you are seeing a lot of the actual commands, and how they interact, how to apply permissions, manipulate text and manage processes. If you want practice with these things and not their graphical counterparts (and

really, what "command line" book worth its salt wouldn't make that its prime focus), well, you get your wish! Bottom Line: There are a lot of books that talk about the various Linux Shells, but you'd be hard pressed to find one that does so this entertainingly. Again, it's the less tech (but not so much that the meat of the matter isn't covered well) and more "dude" (but not to the point of being embarrassing or insulting) that makes this book a joy and a treasure. If you're a novice Linux player, or just want to get beyond the pretty graphical wrapper of your MacBook, put this book at the top of your list.

This book covers more than typical command line introduction books. You see the typical examples of the common commands but the examples go into greater depth. The author gives these with short tutorials, creating your own files on a sandbox directory, then you see how the commands work. Some of the issues I find myself at work forgetting the regular expression where I need to find a file by a certain name or date. This book has the exact real world examples I would need. A big bonus is the last few chapters are guides for help writing scripts. I'm not an expert script writer and need all the help I can get, this was a welcome surprise. The chapters offer a template script and you add options as the chapters go on. With the amount of information you have learned, you can easily make a handy script to help with daily tasks (clearing /home). Overall, it's a great book, I'm keeping my copy at work. Something else to note, the author has a website with the book available to read online or in a PDF. I really like to support authors who do this and while the information is available in digital format, I still prefer the paper version.

First of all, I would like to say that I normally don't write reviews, and I'd rather just read what others have to say about a product. This time though, I felt like this product was more than deserving of a review because of the amount of knowledge I gained from it. When I began this book, I was barely able to navigate through a terminal let alone understand what I was doing. Now that I am almost done with this book, I have a much better understanding of how the terminal as well as Linux works! I have also learned some shell scripting which is just as valuable because it allows me to manipulate the terminal. If you would like to look at the table of contents, you can view all of the stuff that you will learn. For the most part, the book starts out with the basics and works its way up to a level where you can start writing basic shell scripts. Along the way, you will learn how to navigate and manipulate the terminal as well as learn how the terminal interacts with devices such as hard drives and printers and how you can control those devices. That description is just the tip of the iceberg if you are a beginner to Linux. I would recommend this book to anyone who is looking to

build a better understanding of linux or the terminal! If you are having a hard time understanding how a terminal works, this book will help you find your way! It is a must read for any beginner who is trying to make a switch from Windows to Linux.

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