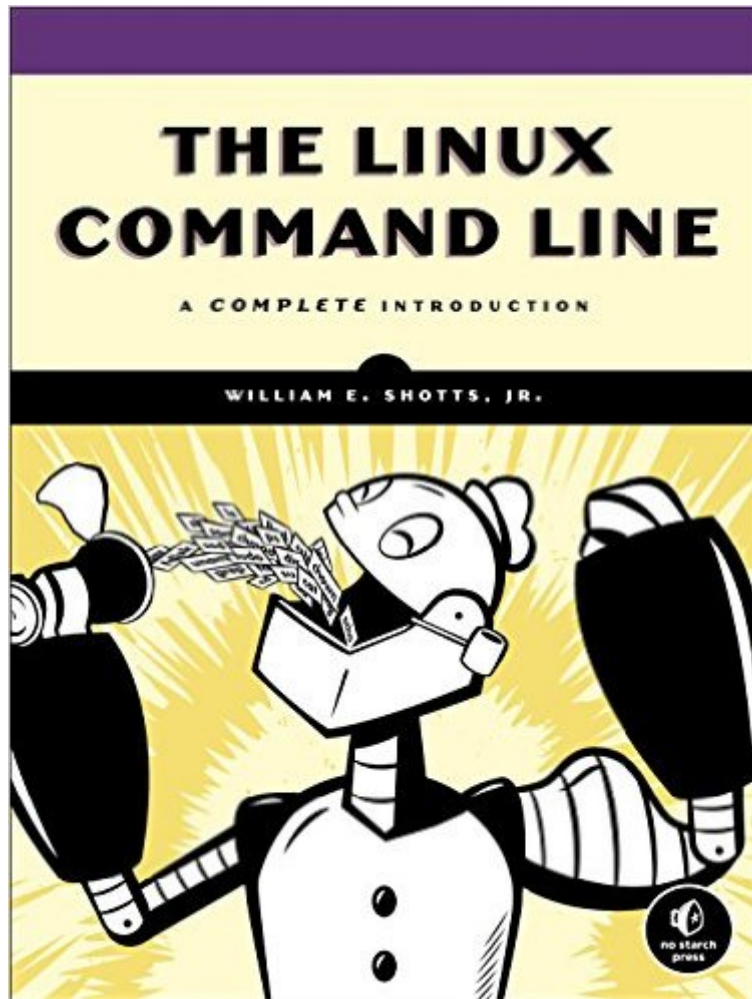


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The Linux Command Line: A Complete Introduction



Synopsis

You've experienced the shiny, point-and-click surface of your Linux computerâ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 17, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1593273894

ISBN-13: 978-1593273897

Product Dimensions: 7 x 1.5 x 9.2 inches

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

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 starsÂÂ See all reviewsÂ (268 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #7,815 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #1 inÂ Books > Computers & Technology > Operating Systems > Linux > Programming #2 inÂ Books > Computers & Technology > Networking & Cloud Computing > Network Administration > Linux & UNIX Administration #3 inÂ Books > Computers & Technology > Operating Systems > Linux > Networking & System Administration

Customer Reviews

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 feels 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.

I will first state that I am a partially blind Linux user. I took some Linux classes in 2006, and I completely migrated to Linux in 2007 due to several reasons which I will not cover here. When I refer to myself as "partially" blind, I say that with the intent that what minimal amount of vision I have left may not last much longer. Throughout the majority of my 'Linux life', I heavily relied on screen magnification and graphical tools to get things done; as of recently, however, my good eye has not held up so well as it used to. With the possibility of the loss of my remaining vision eminent, I decided that I could better be served by performing many operations under Linux from the command line. I can still use a graphical environment through the use of the Orca screen reader, and there are a number of screen readers available strictly for the command line side of Linux. For awhile now I tried to learn the command line through Google searches and different online tutorials, as well as some arcane manpages for command line utilities. I felt kind of overwhelmed because I could not find all of the information I needed in a format for learning. Enter this book! As mentioned by other reviewers, this book is not necessarily meant to be a reference it is written in such a way that it is like you have a personal Linux trainer. Everything is explained so that the reader can understand it, and the author seems to be very meticulous when it comes to details (by no means a

complaint). I have learned more from this one book than I have from the textbooks used by the professor of the Linux class at the college which I attended back in 2006. That is not to say I learned nothing in those classes, as I learned a ton...just not enough to (for the most part) live in the command line.

This has been an amazing book. It should have been the first thing I ever read on Linux. You might think that it's a specialist book of some kind - after all, it is only about the command line. But the command line is where it's at and the author doesn't assume you know anything about Linux. It's actually a complete introduction to Linux and at each step of the way you have a new skill you can start to apply or just something to screw around with on your computer. I mean, there's nothing in Linux that can't be done on the command line. Graphical user interfaces are just a pretty presentation of what's going on underneath. Some people might grumble at "having to learn the command line" but honestly it feels very powerful once you get the handle on it (not as hard as you'd think) and I think linux actually makes doing stuff in the terminal much more fun, interesting, and powerful than in Windows or OSX. It starts out with navigating folders and files, copying and what-not like you could do through menus and right clicking on a GUI. Then it teaches you some cool tricks you can only do in the command line (and aren't that difficult) like making a folder for each of the letters A-Z (it happens to be `sudo mkdir` so again, not as hard as you might think). Or maybe you want to find a folder on your computer whose third letter is either a p or a q - you can't quite remember. There's a chapter on permissions which allows you to, say, make a file that is only accessible to users in the group "teachers," or maybe you just want to turn a text document (say you compiled something from C) into something your computer knows can be run. It tells you how to alter the command prompt to display pretty pictures or show a clock.

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