

CSE 303: Concepts and Tools for Software Development

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Lecture 3— I/O Redirection, Shell Scripts

Where are We

- A simple view of the system: files, users, processes, shell
- Lots of small useful programs; more to come
- An ever-more-complicated shell definition:
 - Filename expansion
 - Command-line editing
 - History expansion
 - I/O redirection
 - Programming constructs
 - Variables

Simple view of input/output

- Old news: Programs take an array of strings as *arguments*
- Also: Programs return an integer (convention: 0 for “success”)

The shell also sets up 3 “streams” of data for the program to access:

- `stdin` a.k.a. 0: an input stream
- `stdout` a.k.a. 1: an output stream
- `stderr` a.k.a. 2: another output stream

The *default* shell behavior uses the keyboard for `stdin` and the shell window for `stdout` and `stderr`.

Examples:

`ls` prints files `stdout` and “No match” to `stderr`.

`mail` takes message body from `stdin` (waiting for C-d (“end of file”) to stop taking input).

File Redirection

Using arcane characters, we can tell the shell to use files instead of the keyboard/screen (Bash Manual, Section 3.6):

- redirect input: *cmd < file*
- redirect output, overwriting *file*: *cmd > file*
- redirect output, appending to *file*: *cmd >> file*
- redirect error output: *cmd 2> file*
- redirect output and error output to *file*: *cmd &> file*
- ...

Examples:

- How I get the histories for the web page.
- `ls` uses `stdout` and `stderr`.
- Using `cat` to copy information to/from files.

Pipes

cmd1 | *cmd2*

Change the stdout of *cmd1* and the stdin of *cmd2* to be the same, new stream!

Very powerful idea:

- In the shell, larger command out of smaller commands
- To the user, combine small programs to get more usefulness
 - Each program can do one thing and do it well!

Examples:

- `foo --help | less`
- `djpeg me.jpg | pnmscale -xysize 100 150 | cjpeg > me_thumb.jpg`

cat and redirection

Just to show there is some math underlying all this nonsense, here are some fun and useless equivalences (like $1 \cdot y = y$):

- $\text{cat } y = \text{cat } < y$
- $x < y = \text{cat } y \mid x$
- $x \mid \text{cat} = x$

Combining Commands

Combining simpler commands to form more complicated ones is very programming-like. In addition to pipes, we have:

- `cmd1 ; cmd2` (sequence)
- `cmd1 || cmd2` (or, using int result – the “exit status”)
- `cmd1 && cmd2` (and, like or)
- `cmd1 `cmd2`` (use output of `cmd2` as input to `cmd1`). (*Very useful for your homework. Note `cmd2` surrounded by backquotes, not regular quotes*)
 - Useless example: `cd `pwd``.
 - Non-useless example: `mkdir `whoami`A`whoami``.

Note: Previous line’s exit status is in `$?`.

Non-alphabet soup

List of characters with special (before program/built-in runs) meaning is growing: ' ! % & * ~ ? [] " ' \ > < | \$ (and we're not done).

If you ever want these characters or (space) in something like an argument, you need some form of *escaping*; each of " ' \ have slightly different meaning.

First approximation:

- "stuff" treats stuff as a single argument but allows some substitutions for \$variables.
example: `cat "to-do list"`
- 'stuff' suppresses basically all substitutions and treats stuff literally.

Toward Scripts...

A running shell has a *state*, i.e., a current

- working directory
- user
- collection of aliases
- history
- ...

In fact, next time we will learn how to extend this state with new *shell variables*.

We learned that `source` can execute a file's contents, which can affect the shell's state.

Running a script

What if we want to run a bunch of commands *without* changing our shell's state?

Answer: start a new shell (sharing our stdin, stdout, stderr), run the commands in it, and exit.

Better answer: Automate this process.

- A shell *script* as a *program* (user doesn't even know it's a script).
- Now we'll want the shell to end up being a programming language
- But it will be a bad one except for simple things

Writing a script

- Make the first line exactly: `#!/bin/bash`
- Give yourself “execute” permission on the file
- Run it

Note: The shell consults the first line:

- If a shell-program is there, launch it and run the script
- Else if it’s a “real executable” run it (more later).

Example: `listhome`

Accessing arguments

The script accesses the arguments with $\$i$ to get the i^{th} one (name of program is $\$0$).

Example: `make_thumbnail1`

Also very useful for homework: `shift` (manual Section 4.1)

Example: `countdown`

We would like optional arguments and/or usage messages. Need:

- way to find out the number of arguments
- a conditional
- some stuff we already have

Example: `make_thumbnail2`

More expressions

bash expressions can be:

- math or string tests (e.g., `-lt`)
- logic (`&&`, `||`, `!`) (if you use double-brackets)
- *file tests* (very common; see Pocket Guide)
- math (if you use double-parens)

Gotcha: parens and brackets must have spaces before and after them!

Example: `dc1s` (double `cd` and `ls`) can check that arguments are directories.

Exercise: script that replaces older file with newer one

Exercise: make up your own

Review

- The shell runs programs and builtins, interpreting special characters for filenames, history, I/O redirection.
- Some builtins like `if` support rudimentary programming.
- A script is a program to its user, but is written using shell commands.

So the shell language is okay for interaction and “quick-and-dirty” programs, making it a strange beast.

For both, shell *variables* are extremely useful.

Variables

```
i=17 # no spaces
set
echo $i
set | grep i
echo $i
unset i
echo $i
f1=$1
```

(The last is very useful in scripts before shifting, e.g., see homework.)

Enough for your homework (arithmetic, conditionals, shift, variables, redirection, ...)

Gotcha: using undefined variables (e.g., because of typo) doesn't fail (just the empty string).