
CSE 390a

Lecture 4

Persistent shell settings; users/groups; permissions

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<http://www.cs.washington.edu/390a/>

Lecture summary

- Persistent settings for your bash shell
- User accounts and groups
- File permissions
- The Super User

.bash_profile and .bashrc

- Every time you log in to bash, the commands in `~/.bash_profile` are run
 - you can put any common startup commands you want into this file
 - useful for setting up aliases and other settings for *remote login*
- Every time you launch a non-login bash terminal, the commands in `~/.bashrc` are run
 - useful for setting up persistent commands for *local shell usage*, or when *launching multiple shells*
 - often, `.bash_profile` is configured to also run `.bashrc`, but not always

Note: a dot (.) in front of a filename indicates a normally hidden file, use `ls -a` to see

Exercise: Edit your `.bashrc`

- *Exercise* : Make it so that our `attu` alias from earlier becomes persistent, so that it will work every time we run a shell.
- *Exercise* : Make it so that whenever you try to delete or overwrite a file during a move/copy, you will be prompted for confirmation first.

.plan

- Another fun settings file
- Stored in your home directory
- Contains information you'd like others to be able to see
 - is displayed when the **finger** protocol is run
- *Exercise:* create a quick .plan file, and make sure it works with **finger**

Users

Unix/Linux is a multi-user operating system.

- Every program/process is run by a user.
- Every file is owned by a user.
- Every user has a unique integer ID number (UID).
- Different users have different access permissions, allowing user to:
 - read or write a given file
 - browse the contents of a directory
 - execute a particular program
 - install new software on the system
 - change global system settings
 - ...

People & Permissions

- **People:** each user fits into only one of three permission sets:
 - owner (u) – if you create the file you are the owner, the owner can also be changed
 - group (g) – by default a group (e.g. ugrad_cs, fac_cs) is associated with each file
 - others (o) – everyone other than the owner and people who are in the particular group associated with the file
- **Permissions:** For regular files, permissions work as follows:
 - read (r) – allows file to be open and read
 - write (w) – allows contents of file to be modified or truncated
 - execute (x) – allows the file to be executed (use for executables or scripts)

* Directories also have permissions (covered later). Permission to delete or rename a file is controlled by the permission of its parent directory.

Groups

command	description
groups	list the groups to which a user belongs
chgrp	change the group associated with a file

- **group:** A collection of users, used as a target of permissions.
 - a group can be given access to a file or resource
 - a user can belong to many groups
 - see who's in a group using `grep <groupname> /etc/group`
- Every file has an associated group.
 - the owner of a file can grant permissions to the group
- Every group has a unique integer ID number (GID).
- *Exercise:* create a file, see its default group, and change it

File permissions

command	description
chmod	change permissions for a file
umask	set default permissions for new files

- *types* : read (r), write (w), execute (x)
- *people* : owner (u), group (g), others (o)
- on Windows, .exe files are executable programs;
on Linux, any file with x permission can be executed
- permissions are shown when you type `ls -l`

is it a directory?

owner (u)
↓
group (g)
↓
others (o)
↓

drwxrwxrwx

File permissions Examples

Permissions are shown when you type `ls -l`:

```
-rw-r--r-- 1 rea fac_cs      55 Oct 25 12:02 temp1.txt
-rw--w---- 1 rea orca       235 Oct 25 11:06 temp2.txt
```

temp1.txt:

- **owner** of the file (rea) has read & write permission
- **group** (fac_cs) members have read permission
- **others** have read permission

temp2.txt:

- **owner** of the file (rea) has read & write permission
- **group** (orca) members have write permission (but no read permission – can add things to the file but cannot cat it)
- **others** have no permissions (cannot read or write)

Changing permissions

- letter codes: `chmod who(+-)what filename`

`chmod u+rw myfile.txt` (allow owner to read/write)

`chmod +x banner` (allow everyone to execute)

`chmod ug+rw,o-rwx grades.xls` (owner/group can read and

note: `-R` for recursive write; others nothing)

- octal (base-8) codes: `chmod NNN filename`

- three numbers between 0-7, for owner (u), group (g), and others (o)

- each gets +4 to allow read, +2 for write, and +1 for execute

`chmod 600 myfile.txt` (owner can read/write (rw))

`chmod 664 grades.dat` (owner rw; group rw; other r)

`chmod 751 banner` (owner rwx; group rx; other x)

chmod and umask

`chmod u+rw myfile.txt` (allow owner to read/write)

Note: leaves “group” and “other” permissions as they were.

`chmod 664 grades.dat` (owner rw; group rw; other r)

Note: sets permissions for “owner”, “group” and “other” all at once.

`umask` – returns the “mask” in use, determines the default permissions set on files and directories I create. Can also be used to set that mask.

```
% umask
```

```
0022 ←
```

```
% touch silly.txt
```

```
% ls -l silly.txt
```

```
-rw-r--r-- 1 rea fac_cs 0 Oct 25 12:04 silly.txt
```

0022 means that files I create will have group and other “write bits” turned off:

- 1) Take the bitwise complement of $022_8 \rightarrow 755_8$
- 2) AND with 666_8 for files (777_8 for directories) : $755_8 = 111\ 101\ 101$
 $666_8 = \underline{110\ 110\ 110}$
 $\quad\quad 110\ 100\ 100 = 644_8$
(owner rw, group r, other r)

Exercises

- Change the permissions on `myfile.txt` so that:
 - Others cannot read it.
 - Group members can execute it.
 - Others cannot read or write it.
 - Group members & Others can read and write it.
 - Everyone has full access.

- Now try this:
 - Deny all access from everyone.
 - !!! is it dead?

Exercises (Solutions)

- Change the permissions on `myfile.txt` so that:
 - Others cannot read it. `chmod o-r myfile.txt`
 - Group members can execute it. `chmod g+x myfile.txt`
 - Others cannot read or write it. `chmod o-rw myfile.txt`
 - Group members & Others can read and write it. `chmod go+rw myfile.txt`
 - Everyone has full access. `chmod ugo+rwx myfile.txt`

- Now try this:
 - Deny all access from everyone. `chmod ugo-rwx myfile.txt`
 - !!! is it dead?
 - I own this file. Can I change the Owner's (u) permissions?

Directory Permissions

- Read, write, execute a directory?
 - **Read** - permitted to read the contents of directory (view files and sub-directories in that directory, run `ls` on the directory)
 - **Write** - permitted to write in to the directory (add, delete, or rename & create files and sub-directories in that directory)
 - **Execute** - permitted to enter into that directory (`cd` into that directory)
- It is possible to have any combination of these permissions:

Try these:

- Have **read** permission for a directory, but NOT **execute** permission
 - ????
- Have **execute** permission for a directory, but NOT **read** permission
 - ???

***Note:** permissions assigned to a directory **are not inherited** by the files within that directory

Directory Permissions

- Read, write, execute a directory?
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 - **Write** - permitted to write in to the directory (add, delete, or rename & create files and sub-directories in that directory)
 - **Execute** - permitted to enter into that directory (`cd` into that directory)
- It is possible to have any combination of these permissions:
 - Have **read** permission for a directory, but NOT **execute** permission
 - Can do an `ls` from outside of the directory but cannot `cd` into it, cannot access files in the directory
 - Have **execute** permission for a directory, but NOT **read** permission
 - Can `cd` into the directory, can access files in that directory if you already know their name, but cannot do an `ls` of the directory

***Note:** permissions assigned to a directory **are not inherited** by the files within that directory

Permissions don't travel

- Note in the previous examples that permissions are separate from the file
 - If I disable read access to a file, I can still look at its permissions
 - If I upload a file to a directory, its permissions will be the same as if I created a new file locally
- Takeaway: permissions, users, and groups reside on the particular machine you're working on. If you email a file or throw it on a thumbdrive, no permissions information is attached.
 - Why? Is this a gaping security hole?

Lets combine things

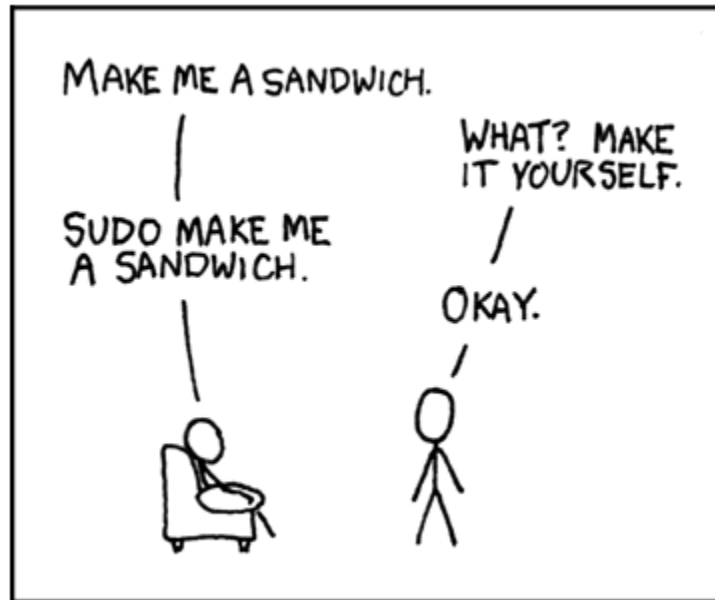
- Say I have a directory structure, with lots of .txt files scattered
 - I want to remove all permissions for Others on all of the text files
 - First attempt:
 - `chmod -R o-rwx *.txt`
 - What happened?
 - Try and fix this using `find` and `xargs`!
 - `find -name "*.txt"`
 - `find -name "*.txt" | xargs chmod o-rwx`

Super-user (root)

command	description
sudo	run a single command with root privileges (prompts for password)
su	start a shell with root privileges (so multiple commands can be run)

- **super-user:** An account used for system administration.
 - has full privileges on the system
 - usually represented as a user named root
- Most users have more limited permissions than root
 - protects system from viruses, rogue users, etc.
 - if on your own box, why ever run as a non-root user?
- Example: Install the `sun-java6-jdk` package on Ubuntu.
`sudo apt-get install sun-java6-jdk`

Playing around with power...



Courtesy XKCD.com

Playing around with power...

- Create a file, remove all permissions
 - Now, login as root and change the owner and group to root
 - Bwahaha, is it a brick in a user's directory?
- Different distributions have different approaches
 - Compare Fedora to Ubuntu in regards to sudo and su...
- Power can have dangerous consequences
 - `rm *` might be just what you want to get rid of everything in a local directory
 - but what if you happened to be in `/bin...` and you were running as root...

Wrap-up discussion

- What do you think of the permissions model in *nix?
 - How does it compare to your experience of other OS's?
 - What are it's strengths?
 - Are there any limitations? Can you think of a scenario of access rights that this approach doesn't easily facilitate?
- Additional info: ACL vs. Capabilities
 - Access Control Lists
 - Like what we just looked at – each file has a list of who can do what
 - Capabilities
 - Different approach using capabilities, or “keys”
 - Principle of least privilege, keys are communicable
 - Not a focus point, but more info online if you're interested