Introduction to Linux

John Lockman
jlockman@tacc.utexas.edu
February 4, 2013
Linux in the Real (supercomputing) World

• Q: Before we begin, does anyone have a feel for how many machines in the November 2012 Top500 list ran variants of the Linux operating System?

• Q: How about Windows?
## Linux in the Real World

A: 97% are Linux-like

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operating System</th>
<th># of Systems</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linux</td>
<td>469</td>
<td>93.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unix</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSD Based</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unix
A Little History

• Unix is over 40 years old!

• Unix dates back to 1969 with a group at Bell Laboratories

• The original Unix operating system was written in assembler

• First 1972 Unix installations had 3 users and a 500KB disk

DEC PDP-11, 1972
Linux
Bringing Unix to the Desktop

• Unix was very expensive
• Microsoft DOS was the mainstream OS
• MINIX, tried but was not a full port
• An open source solution was needed!
1990’s Movers and Shakers

Richard Stallman, father of the GNU Project

Linus Torvalds
What is Linux?

- Linux is a clone of the Unix operating system written from scratch by Linus Torvalds with assistance from developers around the globe (technically speaking, Linux is not Unix)
- Torvalds uploaded the first version - 0.01 in September 1991
- Only about 2% of the current Linux kernel is written by Torvalds himself but he remains the ultimate authority on what new code is incorporated into the Linux kernel.
- Developed under the GNU General Public License, the source code for Linux is freely available
- A large number of Linux-based distributions exist (for free or purchase)
So Many Flavors!?! 

• See the Wikipedia List of Linux Distribution:

• Main branches
  – redhat
  – debian
  – slackware
The Fedora Project

• The Fedora Project is the name of a worldwide community of people who love, use, and build free software.
• Sponsored by Red Hat
• http://fedoraproject.org/
• Freedom
  – Fedora will always be free
    • Free speech
  – Open Source
• Features
  – Technical excellence and upstream collaboration
  – Completed projects show up in other flavors
    • NetworkManager
    • PulseAudio
    • ABRT
• Friends
  – Worldwide community of 25,000+
• First
  – Innovation
  – Rapid Release cycle
Why use Linux for Scientific Computing?

- **Performance**: as we’ve seen, supercomputers generally run Linux; rich-multi user environment
- **Functionality**: a number of community driven scientific applications and libraries are developed under Linux (molecular dynamics, linear algebra, fast-fourier transforms, etc).
- **Flexibility/Portability**: Linux lets you build your own applications and there is a wide array of support tools (compilers, scientific libraries, debuggers, network monitoring, etc.)
Why Linux is Still Used

- 40+ years of development (Unix)
  - Linux 1991
- Many academic, scientific, and system tools
- Open Source
- System Stability
- Lightweight
- Easy Development
The Basics

- The Command Line
  - Interaction with Linux is based on entering commands to a text terminal
  - Often there are no ‘warnings’ with commands, no ‘undo’

- The Shell
  - The user environment that enables interaction with the kernel, or lower-system OS.
  - Windows Explorer would be a shell for Microsoft Windows.
The Basics
How does Linux work?

• Linux has a kernel and one or more shells

• The kernel is the core of the OS; it receives tasks from the shell and performs them

• The shell is the interface with which the user interacts
The Basics
How does Linux work?

• Everything in Linux is either a file or a process
• A process is an executing program identified by a unique PID (process identifier). Processes may be short in duration or run indefinitely
• A file is a collection of data. Files are created by users using text editors, running compilers, etc
• The Linux kernel is responsible for organizing processes and interacting with files: it allocates time and memory to each processes and handles the filesystem and communications in response to system calls
The Basics
What does the Shell Do?

• The user interface is called the *shell*.
• The shell tends to do 4 jobs repeatedly:

```
| read command | process command | execute command |
```

*the shell*
The Basics
Linux Interaction

• The user interacts with Linux via a shell
• The shell can be graphical (X-Windows) or text-based (command-line) shells like tcsh and bash
• To remotely access a shell session on TACC production resources, use ssh (secure shell)
Open A Terminal

• Fedora uses Gnome 3 for a window manager
  – Many others available (KDE, LXDE, and Xfce)
• To open a terminal
  – Hit the “Super key” or “Windows key”
  – A search box open, type the word:
    • Terminal
  – Then hit the [enter] key
The Basics
Common Shells

• **sh** – the original Unix shell, still located in /bin/sh
• **bash** – a Linux shell written for the GNU Project and is installed on most Linux systems
• **csh** – C Shell, modeled after the C programming language used by Linux systems
• **tcsh** – C Shell with modern improvements such as file name completion

• **echo $SHELL** or **echo $0** – displays what shell your account is using
• **chsh** – change your shell
Try a Few Commands

• What is your default shell?
  `echo $SHELL`

• Open a different shell
  `sh`

• What shell am I using now?
  `echo $0`

• List available shells
  `chsh -l`
How to Get Help
Before we go further...

• Read the Manual.
  – `man command`
  – `man [section] command`
  – `man –k keyword` (search all manuals based on keyword)

• Most commands have a built-in manual, even the `man` command!

• Commands without manuals have help too, with `--h`, `--help`, or `/?` option.
Linux Accounts

• To access a Linux system you need to have an account

• Linux account includes:
  – username and password
  – userid and groupid
  – home directory
    • a place to keep all your snazzy files
    • may be quota’d, meaning that the system imposes a limit on how much data you can have
  – a default shell preference
Shell “Preferences”

• Shells execute startup scripts when you login
• You can customize these scripts with new 
  environment variables and aliases
  – For bash: ~/.profile
  – For tcsh: ~/.cshrc
Customizing Your Startup Script

**bash**

- `export ENVAR=value`
- `export PATH=$PATH:/new/path`
- `alias ll='ls -lrt'`

- Customize your command prompt
  - `export PS1="\u@\h:\W\$ "`

**tcsh**

- `setenv ENVAR value`
- `set PATH = ( $PATH /new/path)`
- `alias ll "ls –lrt”`

- Customize your command prompt
  - `setenv PROMPT “[%n@%m:%c]%#”`
Linux Accounts
Groups

- Linux includes the notion of a "group" of users
- A Linux group can share files and active processes
- Each account is assigned a "primary" group
- The *groupid* is a number that corresponds to this primary group
- In Linux-speak, groupid’s are known as *GID’s*
- A single account can belong to many groups (but has only one primary group)
Files and File Names

• A file is a basic unit of storage (usually storage on a disk)
• Every file has a name
• File names can contain any characters (although some make it difficult to access the file)
• Unix file names can be long!
  – how long depends on your specific flavor of Unix
File Contents

• Each file can hold some raw data

• Linux does not impose any structure on files
  – files can hold any sequence of bytes
  – it is up to the application or user to interpret the files correctly

• Many programs interpret the contents of a file as having some special structure
  – text file, sequence of integers, database records, etc.
  – in scientific computing, we often use binary files for efficiency in storage and data access
    • Fortran unformatted files
    • Scientific data formats like NetCDF or HDF have specific formats and provide APIs for reading and writing
More about File Names

- Every file must have a name
- Each file in the same directory must have a unique name
- Files that are in different directories can have the same name
- Note: **Linux is case-sensitive**
  - So, “texas-fight” is different than “Texas-Fight”
    - Mac caveat: MacOS is NOT cAsE sEnSiTiVe
Create an Empty File

• Create an empty file
• The touch command will create an empty file
• The syntax is
  \texttt{touch filename}
• Example:
  \texttt{– touch foo}
• Want more info? Read the man page!
Directories

• A directory is a special kind of file - Unix uses a directory to hold information about other files
• We often think of a directory as a container that holds other files (or directories)
• Mac and Windows users can relate a directory to the same idea as a folder
Directories

What is a *working directory*?

The directory your shell is currently associated with. At anytime in the system your login is associated with a directory.

```
pwd  – view the path of your working directory
ls   – view your working directory
```
Try These Commands

• What is my current working directory?
  \texttt{pwd}

• What is in this directory?
  \texttt{ls}
  • This command has many options, look at the man page for more info
    \texttt{man \texttt{ls}}
    • \textit{Note: Use “q” to quit out of a manual}

• Make a new directory
  \texttt{mkdir example}

• Now look at your directory
  \texttt{ls \texttt{-l example}}
Linux File System (an upside-down tree)
Finding your home

Each user has a home directory which can be found with:

```bash
    cd
    cd ~jlockman
    cd $HOME
```

The tilde character ‘~’ will tell the shell to auto-complete the path statement for the `cd` command.

$HOME refers to an environment variable which contains the path for home.
Relative vs.. Absolute Path

Commands expect you to give them a path to a file. Most commands will let you provide a file with a relative path, or a path relative to your working directory.

- `../directory` - the `..` refers to looking at our previous directory first
- `./executable` - `.` says this directory, or our working directory

Absolute, or Full paths are complete. An easy way to know if a path is absolute is does it contain the ` `/` character at the beginning?

- `/home/user/directory/executable` - a full path to file executable
More file commands

**cd directory** - change your current working directory to the new path

**ls –a** – show hidden files

   Hidden files are files that begin with a period in the filename ‘.’

**mv** - moves one file to another

**cp** – copies files or directories

**rm** – remove files & directories

   **rm –rf** – remove everything with no warnings

   **rm –rf * ** - most dangerous command you can run!

**rename from to filenames** – can rename lots of files at once

   - rename file file0 file?.txt  (i.e. would move file1.txt to file01.txt)
Try These Commands

• Change into your new directory “example”
  \texttt{cd} \texttt{example}

• List the contents of this folder
  \texttt{ls} \texttt{-ltr}

• Change back to your home directory
  \texttt{cd} ..

• Move the file foo into example
  \texttt{mv} \texttt{foo} \texttt{example}
Try These Commands

• List the contents of the directory “example”
  `ls -ltr example`

• Create a new empty file
  `touch bar`

• Make a copy of the file “bar” in “example”
  `cp bar example`

• Remove the file bar in your home directory
  `rm $HOME/bar`

• Remove the directory “example” and all of its contents
  `rm -rf example`
Recursive Directories

Oftentimes a manual will refer to ‘recursive’ actions on directories. This means to perform an action on the given directory and recursively to all subdirectories.

`cp -R source destination` – copy recursively all directories under source to destination
Poking around in $HOME

How much space do I have?

 quota – command to see all quotas for your directories are, if any.

How much space am I taking up?

du - command to find out how much space a folder or directory uses.
df – display space information for the entire system
Helpful Hints on Space

Almost all commands that deal with file space will display information in Kilobytes, or Bytes. *Today, nobody finds this useful.*

Many commands will support a ‘-h’ option for “Human Readable” formatting.

`ls -lh` - displays the working directory files with a long listing format, using “human readable” notation for space
Permissions

- Linux systems are multi-user environments where many users run programs and share data. Files and directories have three levels of permissions: World, Group, and User.

- The types of permissions a file can contain are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Read Permissions</th>
<th>Write Permissions</th>
<th>Execute Permissions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>r</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Permissions Cont.

- File permissions are arranged in three groups of three characters.
- In this example the owner can read & write a file, while others have read access.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>User (owner)</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Others (everyone else)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>rw-</td>
<td>r--</td>
<td>r--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Changing Permissions

- **chmod** – change permissions on a file or directory

- **chgrp** and **chown** – change group ownership to another group (only the superuser can change the owner)

  - Both options support ‘-R’ for recursion.
What everyone else is up to

• **top** – show a detailed, refreshed, description of running processes on a system.

• **uptime** – show the system load and how long the system has been up.

• ‘load’ is a number based on utility of the cpu’s of the system. A load of 1 indicates full load for one cpu.

```
login1$ uptime
13:21:28 up 13 days, 20:12, 23 users,  load average: 2.11, 1.63, 0.91
```
Killing Badly Behaving Processes

• Commands or programs on the system are identified by their filename and by a process ID which is a unique identifier.
  – `ps` – display process information on the system
  – `kill pid` – terminates the process id
  – `^c` (control+c) terminates the running program
  – `^d` (control+d) terminates your session.

• Only you and the superuser (root) has permissions to kill processes you own.
Advanced Program Options

- Often we must run a command in the background with the ampersand ‘&’ character
  
  `command -options &`

  runs command in background, prompt returns immediately

- Match zero or more characters wildcard ‘*’
  
  `cp * destination`

  copy everything to destination

  This option can get you into trouble if misused
Background and Foreground

• `^z` (control+z) suspends the active job
• `bg` – resumes a suspended job in the background and returns you to the command prompt
• `fg` – resumes a background job in the foreground so you can interact with it again
Editing and Reading Files

**emacs vs. vim**

- Among the largest ‘nerd battle’ in history. emacs relies heavily on key-chords (multiple key strokes), while vim is mode based. (editor mode vs. command mode)
- vim users tend to enter and exit the editor repeatedly, and use the Linux shell for complex tasks, whereas emacs users usually remain within the editor and use emacs itself for complex tasks

**less**

- If you only need to read a file (not edit it), programs like less give you “read only” access and a simplified interface
Searching for files

A large majority of activity on Linux systems involve searching for files and information.

- **find** – utility to find files
- **cat** – utility to print files to standard out (monitor)

```
login1$ find . -name foobar
./test_dir/foobar

login1$ cat ./test_dir/foobar
========
*
This is the file I searched for!
*
========
```
Input and Output

- Programs and commands can contain an input and output. These are called ‘streams’. Linux programming is oftentimes stream based.
  - Programs also have an error output. We will see later how to catch the error output.

**STDIN** – ‘standard input,’ or input from the keyboard

**STDOUT** – ‘standard output,’ or output to the screen

**STDERR** – ‘standard error,’ error output which is sent to the screen.
File Redirection

• Oftentimes we want to save output (stdout) from a program to a file. This can be done with the ‘redirection’ operator.

  \texttt{myprogram > myfile}

  using the ‘\texttt{>}’ operator we redirect the output from myprogram to file myfile

• Similarly, we can append the output to a file instead of rewriting it with a double ‘\texttt{>>}’

  \texttt{myprogram >> myfile}

  using the ‘\texttt{>}’ operator we append the output from myprogram to file myfile
Input Redirection

• Input can also be given to a command from a file instead of typing it to the screen, which would be impractical.

\[
\text{cat programinput > mycommand}
\]

• This command series starts with the command 'cat' which prints a file to the screen. programinput is printed to stdout, which is redirected to a command mycommand
Pipes

• Using a pipe operator ‘|’ commands can be linked together. The pipe will link the standard output from one command to the standard input of another.

• Helpful for using multiple commands together example: `ls -l ./* | wc -l`
Other Useful Commands

head file.txt
– prints the first 10 lines of a file

tail -n 5 file.txt
– prints the last 5 lines of a file

history
– prints your command history

example:
Try These Commands

```
history | grep "ls"
```

- This command will pipe the output of “history” to the command “grep” which will search for instances of ls
Compression using gzip

$ du -h bigfile
32K bigfile
$ gzip bigfile
$ du -h bigfile.gz
4.0K bigfile.gz

How to unzip/decompress your gzip file:
$ gunzip bigfile.gz
UNIX vs. Windows files

- File formats are different between the two operating systems
- Use the UNIX command dos2unix to convert files – especially script files - created on Windows, so they will work on UNIX
File Transfers

• Both **scp** and **rsync** are simple file transfer tools.

• **scp** usage:
  – `scp [options] SOURCE DESTINATION`
  – Example: 
    ```
    login1$ scp myfile.txt jlockman@stampede.tacc.utexas.edu:
    ```
    – This will copy the file “myfile.txt” to Stampede in my home folder (/home1/00944/jlockman)
  – You could also provide the full path 
    ```
    login1$ scp myfile.txt jlockman@stampede.tacc.utexas.edu:/work/00944/jlockman/foo
    ```
File Transfers

• rsync usage:
  – rsync [options] SOURCE DESTINATION
  – Example:

    login1$ rsync myfile.txt jlockman@stampede.tacc.utexas.edu:

    – This will copy the file “myfile.txt” to Stampede in my home folder (/home1/00944/jlockman)

    – You might also rsync an entire directory

    login1$ rsync -av ./foo/ jlockman@stampede.tacc.utexas.edu:~/oo
Regular Expressions
Regular Expressions - Search Patterns

• A regular expression, often called a pattern, is an expression that describes a set of strings.
• They are typically used to give a concise description of a set, without having to list all elements.
• For example the three strings “Handel”, “Händel”, and “Haendel” can be described by the pattern:

\[ H(\dd{|ae?})ndel \]
Regular Expressions

• **Boolean “or”**
  – A vertical bar separates alternatives
  – For example, `gray|grey` can match “gray” or “grey”

• **Grouping**
  – Parentheses are used to define the scope and precedence of the operator (among other uses).
  – For example, `gray|grey` and `gr(a|e)y` are equivalent patterns which both describe the set of “gray” and “grey”
Regular Expressions

• Quantification
  – A quantifier after a token (such as a character) or group specifies how often that preceding element is allowed to occur. The most common quantifiers are the question mark \(?\), the asterisk \(*\), and the plus sign \(+\)
Regular Expressions - ?

- The question mark indicates there is zero or one of the preceding element.
- Example:

  `colour` will match both “color” and “colour”
Regular Expressions - *

• The asterisk indicates there are zero or more of the preceding element.
• Example:

  \texttt{ab*}c \text{ matches “ac”, “abc”, “abbc”, “abbbbc”, etc...}
Regular Expressions - +

• The plus sign indicates that there is one or more of the preceding element.

• Example:

\texttt{ab+c} matches “abc”, “abbc”, “abbbc”, etc... But NOT “ac” as in the previous example.
Regular Expression Meta Characters

- . (full stop)
  - Matches any single character

  \texttt{a.c} matches “abc”, etc.,

  - But \texttt{[a.c]} matches only “a”, “.”, or “c”.

- []
  - A bracket expression matches a single character that is contained within the brackets.

  \texttt{[abc]} matches “a”, “b”, or “c”

  - Can use ranges
    - \texttt{[a–z]}
    - \texttt{[0–9]}
Regular Expression Meta Characters

- `[^ ]` - Matches a single character that is not contained within the brackets.
  - `[^abc]` matches any character other than “a”, “b”, or “c”

- `^` - Matches the starting position within the string
  - `^foo` matches lines that start with foo
Regular Expression Meta Characters

• $  
  – Matches the ending position of the string or the position just before the string-ending newline. 
  at$ matches things like “hat” or “cat” but only if they are at the end of the line.
grep

- man grep

grep [options] PATTERN [FILE...]  

- grep searches the named input FILEs (or standard input if no files are named, or the file name – is given) for lines containing a match to the given PATTERN. By default, grep prints the matching lines.
grep

• File example.txt contains:

  Database: lkp_blast_db.renamed.pep.fa
  Posted date:  May 6, 2011  3:04 PM
  Number of letters in database: 7,896,286
  Number of sequences in database: 21,309

• We would like to find all lines containing “May 6”

  $ grep "May 6" example.txt
  Posted date:  May 6, 2011  3:04 PM
  $


awk

• **man awk**
  – Pattern scanning and processing language

• **print**
  – This displays the contents of the current line. In AWK, lines are broken down into fields, and these can be displayed separately:
    • **print $1**
      – Displays the first field of the current line
    • **print $1, $3**
      – Displays the first and third fields of the current line, separated by a predefined string called the output field separator (OFS) whose default value is a single space character.
awk

• File example.txt contains:
  
  foo1 bar baz
  foo2 barr buzz
  foo3 barrr buzzz
  foo4 barrrr buzzzz

• We would like to print only the 1st column

  $ cat example.txt | awk '{print $1}'
  
  foo1
  foo2
  foo3
  foo4
**sed**

- `man sed`  
  - Stream editor for filtering and transforming text

```
  sed -i 's/foo/bar/g' ./myfile.txt
```

- The above command will search for all instances of “foo” in the file “myfile.txt” and replace it with “bar”
Putting it all together

• I have a BLAST output file:
  – PTFA-assembly.fa_blastx.results

• I would like to find how many total “high scoring” hits (>300) were found, so let us use a combination of grep, awk, and wc

```
$ grep "Score" PTFA-assembly.fa_blastx.results | awk '$3>300 {print;}' | wc -l
317983
```

• That is a lot of results!
Putting it all together

$ grep "Score" PTFA-assembly.fa_blastx.results | awk '$3>300 {print;}' | wc -l
317983

- **grep** for the word “Score” in the results file
- **awk** looks at the 2nd column from grep’s output, determines if the value is greater than 300 and if so prints that line.
- **wc -l** is a program that performs a word count, with the -l option give the number of lines in output
Putting it all together

$ cat PTFA-assembly.fa_blastx.results | grep "Score" | awk '{print;}' | wc -l
317983

• 317,983 is too many values to make any sense of, so let us make our query a bit more fine grained.

• This time searching for specific instances of Medicago truncatula
Putting it all together: searching for “Medicago truncatula”

$ grep "Medicago_truncatula" PTFA-assembly.fa_blastx.results | grep -v ">" | wc -l
302151

- **grep** for instances of “medicago_truncatula” in the results file
- Use **grep** again to remove duplicate entries that begin with “>”
- **wc -l** is word count to find how many instances of “medicago_truncatula” exist.
- 302,151 is still a lot of results, let us refine our query a bit more
Putting it all together:
searching for “Medicago truncatula” with a score of 300 or higher

$ grep "Medicago_truncatula" PTFA-assembly.fa_blastx.results | grep -v ">" | awk 'S>300 {print;}' | wc -l
15233

• **grep** for instances of “medicago_truncatula” in the results file
• Use **grep** again to remove duplicate entries that begin with “>”
• **awk** looks at the 2nd column from grep’s output, determines if the value is greater than 300 and if so prints that line.
• **wc -l** is word count to find how many instances of “medicago_truncatula” exist.
Conclusions

• There is a lot of information presented here, don’t become overwhelmed.
• Linux is a full featured OS with several useful tools right out of the box.
• Pick up a book on regular expressions to generate better queries of text files
John Lockman
jlockman@tacc.utexas.edu

For more information:
www.tacc.utexas.edu