

## ***PRAISE FOR *A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO UBUNTU LINUX*<sup>®</sup>***

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***EXCERPTS OF CHAPTERS FROM***

**A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO UBUNTU LINUX®**

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**MARK G. SOBELL**

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# 3

## STEP-BY-STEP INSTALLATION

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Chapter 2 covered planning the installation of Ubuntu Linux: determining the requirements; performing an upgrade versus a clean installation; planning the layout of the hard disk; obtaining the files you need for the installation, including how to download and burn CD/DVD ISO images; and collecting information about the system. This chapter focuses on installing Ubuntu. Frequently the installation is quite simple, especially if you have done a good job of planning. Sometimes you may run into a problem or have a special circumstance; this chapter gives you tools to use in these cases. Read as much of this chapter as you need to; once you have installed Ubuntu, continue with Chapter 4, which covers getting started using the Ubuntu desktop. If you install a textual (command line) system, continue with Chapter 5.

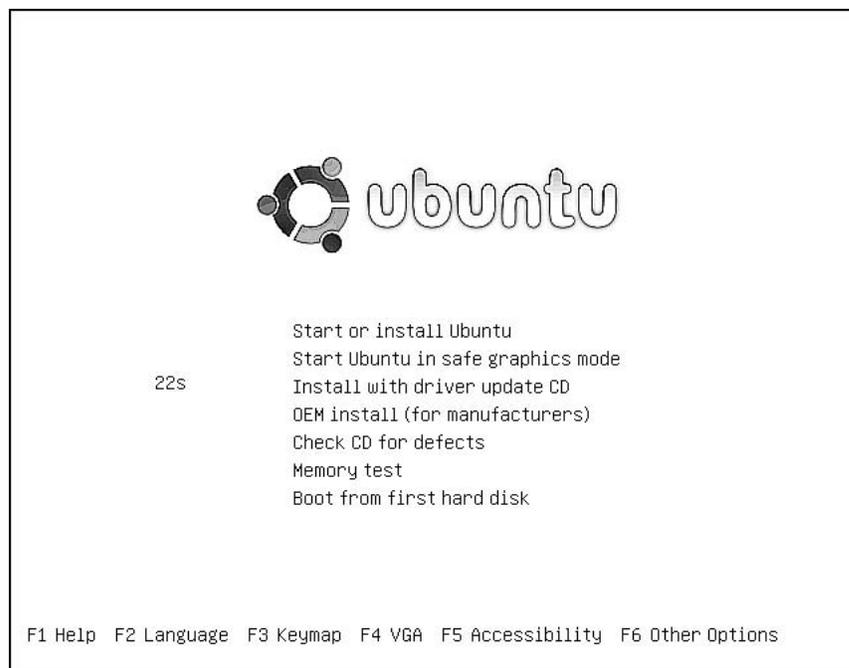
## BASIC INSTALLATION FROM THE LIVE/INSTALL DESKTOP CD/DVD

To begin installing Ubuntu from a live/install Desktop CD/DVD, insert the disk in the computer and boot the system. The system displays the initial install screen (Figure 3-1). Refer to “BIOS setup” on page 26 if the system does not boot from the CD/DVD. See “The Function Keys” on page 62 for information about changing the language, keyboard, and accessibility features the live session uses.

The menu on the initial install screen differs depending on which edition of Ubuntu (page 28) you are installing; along the bottom of the screen, the labels for the function keys remain the same. To the left of the menu, the live (desktop) CD/DVD displays a counter that counts down from 30 to 1; when the counter reaches 0, Ubuntu boots the system. When you press a key (other than RETURN) before the counter reaches 0, the counter stops and the system waits for you to make a selection from the menu. The installation-only (Alternate and Server) CDs do not have a counter, but rather wait for you to make a selection. This section describes how to boot into a live session and how to install Ubuntu from that session.

### BOOTING THE SYSTEM

Before Ubuntu can display a desktop from a live/install Desktop CD/DVD or install itself on a hard disk, the Ubuntu operating system must be read into memory



**Figure 3-1** The initial install screen for the live/install Desktop CD

(booted). This process can take a few minutes on older, slower systems or systems with minimal RAM (memory). Each of the menu selections on the initial install screen, except the memory test, boots the system.

## CHECKING THE CD/DVD FOR DEFECTS

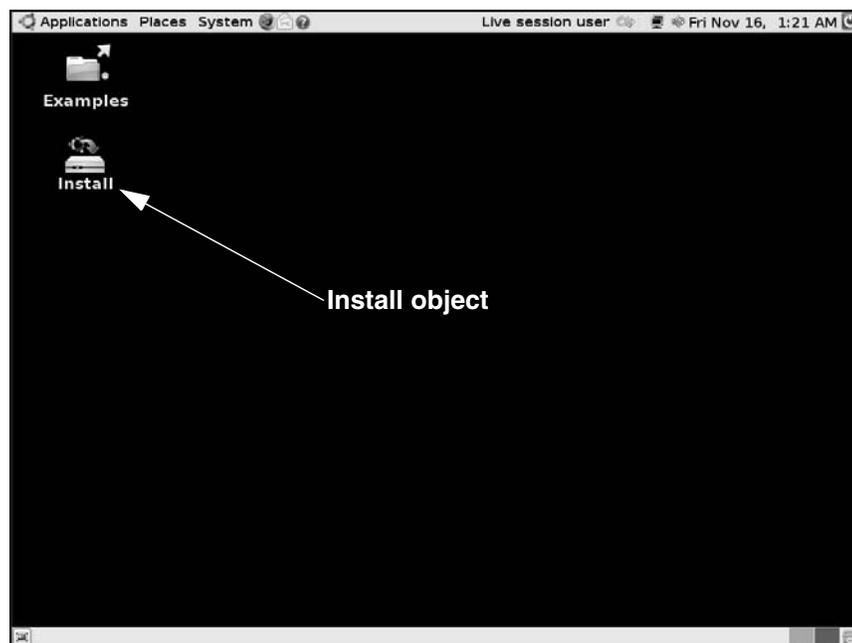
Whether you burned your own CD/DVD, purchased it, or are using the one included with this book, it is a good idea to verify that the contents of the CD/DVD is correct. On the initial install screen, use the **ARROW** keys to highlight **Check the CD for Defects** (this selection checks DVDs too) and press **RETURN**. Checking the CD/DVD takes a few minutes—Ubuntu keeps you apprised of its progress. When Ubuntu finishes checking the CD/DVD, it displays the result of its testing. Press **RETURN** to redisplay the initial install screen.

### Test the CD/DVD

**tip** Testing the CD/DVD takes a few minutes but can save you much aggravation if the installation fails or you run into problems after installing Ubuntu owing to bad media.

## LIVE SESSION

In most cases, you can boot Ubuntu to run a live session that displays a desktop without doing anything after you boot from the live/install Desktop CD/DVD: Ubuntu displays the initial install screen, counts down from 30, boots the system, displays the Ubuntu logo while an orange cursor moves back and forth on the progress bar, and finally displays the GNOME desktop (Figure 3-2). To speed up this process, you can



**Figure 3-2** The GNOME desktop displayed by a live session

press RETURN when Ubuntu displays the initial install screen. The first time you use a CD/DVD, it is a good idea to check it for defects (see the previous page).

If you encounter problems with the display while you are bringing up the desktop from a live/install Desktop CD/DVD or during installation, reboot the system and select **Start Ubuntu in safe graphics mode** (page 62) from the initial install screen. If that does not work, install Ubuntu using the textual installer on the Alternate CD (page 65) or the DVD.

The live/install Desktop CD/DVD gives you a chance to preview Ubuntu without installing it. Boot the live/install Desktop CD/DVD to begin a live session and work with Ubuntu as explained in Chapter 4. When you are finished, remove the CD/DVD and reboot the system. The system boots as it did before the live session.

Because a live session does not write to the hard disk (other than using a swap partition if one is available), none of the work you save will be available once you reboot. You can use Webmail or another method to transfer files you want to preserve to another system.

### optional SEEING WHAT IS GOING ON

If you are curious and want to see what Ubuntu is doing as it boots, remove **quiet** and **splash** from the boot command line (Figure 3-16, page 64): With the initial install screen displayed, press F6 to display the boot command line. Press BACKSPACE or DEL to back up and erase **quiet** and **splash** from the boot command line. If you have not added anything to this line, you can remove the two hyphens at the end of the line. If you have added to this line, use the BACK ARROW key to back up over—but not remove—whatever you added, the hyphens, and the SPACE on each side of them. Then remove **quiet** and **splash**. As Ubuntu boots, it displays information about what it is doing. Text scrolls on the screen, although sometimes too rapidly to read.

## THE UBUNTU GRAPHICAL INSTALLER

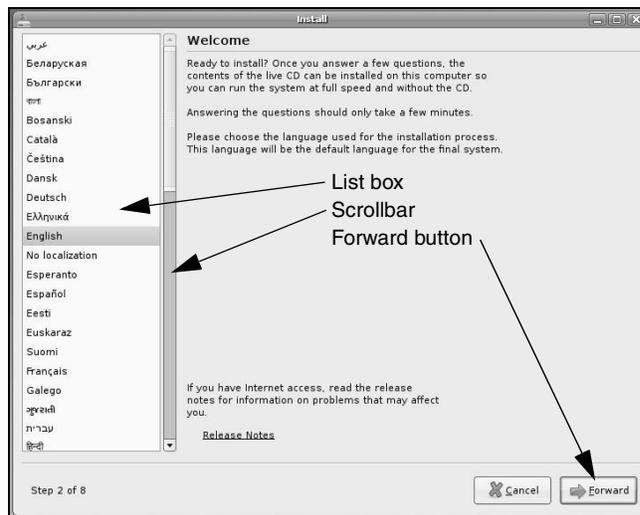
**ubiquity** The ubiquity utility is a graphical installer, written mostly in Python, which installs Ubuntu from a live session. You can use the Alternate or Server CD or the DVD to install Ubuntu using the textual installer (page 67).

### Before you start, see what is on the hard disk

**tip** Unless you are certain you are working with a new disk, or you are sure the data on the disk is of no value, it is a good idea to see what is on the disk before you start installing Ubuntu. You can use the GNOME Partition Editor to examine the contents of a hard disk. See page 53 for more information.

**Welcome screen** To install Ubuntu from the live/install Desktop CD/DVD, start a live session and double-click (use the left mouse button) the object on the desktop labeled **Install** (Figure 3-2, page 47).

After a few moments Ubuntu displays the Welcome screen of the Install window (Figure 3-3). This screen displays a welcome message and a query about which language you would like ubiquity to use. The language you choose will be the default



**Figure 3-3** The Install window, Welcome screen

language for the installed system; you can change this default once the system is installed (page 132).

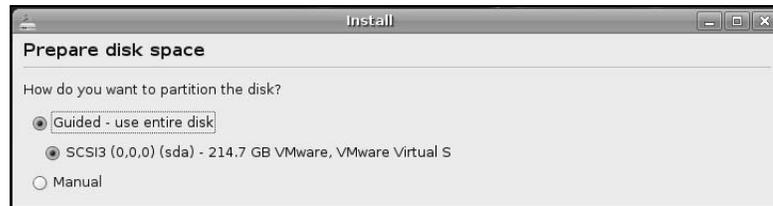
### USING THE MOUSE TO WORK WITH THE INSTALL WINDOW

You can use the mouse or keyboard to make selections from the Install window screens. To select a language from the Welcome screen using the mouse, left-click the language you want to use in the list box at the left. If the language you want does not appear on the displayed portion of the list, click or drag the scrollbar (Figure 3-3) to display more languages; then click the language of your choice. Ubuntu highlights the language you click. Once you select a language, you are finished working with the Welcome screen; click the **Forward** button to display the next screen.

### USING THE KEYBOARD TO WORK WITH THE INSTALL WINDOW

To use the keyboard to make selections, first use the **TAB** key to move the highlight to the object you want to work with. On the Welcome screen, the objects are the selected item in the list box and the buttons labeled **Release Notes**, **Cancel**, and **Forward**. With a language in the list box highlighted, use the **UP ARROW** and **DOWN ARROW** keys to move the highlight to the language you want to use. The list scrolls automatically when you move the highlight to the next, undisplayed entry in the list. See “**F3 Keymap**” on page 63 to change the layout of the keyboard ubiquity uses during installation.

Once you select a language, you are finished working with the Welcome screen; use the **TAB** key to highlight the **Forward** button. The border of a button becomes thicker and darker when it is highlighted. With the **Forward** button highlighted, press **RETURN** to display the next screen.



**Figure 3-4** The ubiquity partitioner showing one empty hard disk

This book describes using the mouse to make selections from a graphical interface; you can use the keyboard if you prefer.

**Where are you?** Next, ubiquity displays the Where are you? screen. This screen allows you to specify the time zone the computer is in. You can use the map or the drop-down list labeled **Selected city** to specify the time zone. Initially, when it is over the map, the mouse pointer appears a magnifying glass with a plus sign in it. Left-click the map near a city that is in the same time zone as the computer; the map zooms in on that area. Left-click again to choose a city; the name of the city appears in the box labeled **Selected city**.

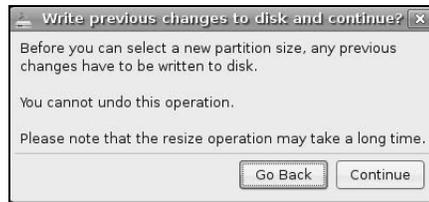
To use the drop-down list, click anywhere in the box labeled **Selected city**; ubiquity expands the box into a list of cities. Use the mouse or **ARROW** keys to select a city and then either click the city or press **RETURN**. Click **Forward**.

**Keyboard layout** The Keyboard layout screen allows you to specify the type of keyboard to be used by the installed system. (See “F3 Keymap” on page 63 to change the layout of the keyboard ubiquity uses during installation.) Select the country you are in or the language you will be using with the installed system from the list box on the left. Then select the type of keyboard you will be using from the list box on the right. Click the empty text box near the bottom of the window and enter some characters to test your selection. Click **Forward**. The installer displays the Setting up the partitioner window while it gets ready for the next step.

**Prepare disk space** The Prepare disk space screen controls how ubiquity partitions the hard disk. See page 31 for a discussion of some of the issues involved in partitioning a hard disk.

With a single, clean hard disk—a hard disk with nothing installed on it, as it comes from the factory (i.e., no partition table)—the ubiquity partitioner displays a Prepare disk space screen similar to the one shown in Figure 3-4. In this case, the simplest way to partition the disk is to have ubiquity do it for you. By default, the radio button labeled **Guided – use entire disk** and the radio button next to the name of the only hard disk in the system are selected. If the system has two or more clean hard disks, the ubiquity partitioner displays a line for each hard disk; click the radio button next to the one you want to install Ubuntu on. Click **Forward** and ubiquity creates two partitions on the hard disk: a small swap partition (page 32) and a root partition (*/*, page 33) that occupies the rest of the disk. The installer displays the Starting Up the Partitioner window while it gets ready for the next step.

If the Prepare disk space screen includes **Guided - resize...** and **Guided - use the largest continuous free space** selections, there is probably at least one partition on the



**Figure 3-5** Write to disk warning window

hard disk (there could just be an empty partition table). If you are sure you do not want to keep any of the information on the hard disk, you can select **Guided - use entire disk**. To find out more about what is on the disk, see the section on the Partition Editor on page 53. For more information on guided partitioning, see page 56. For information on manual partitioning, see page 57.

The ubiquity partitioner displays a warning window (Figure 3-5) if it is going to write to the hard disk before it displays the Ready to install screen (Figure 3-7, page 53). If it does not display this window, ubiquity will not make changes to the hard disk until you click **Install** on the Ready to install screen.

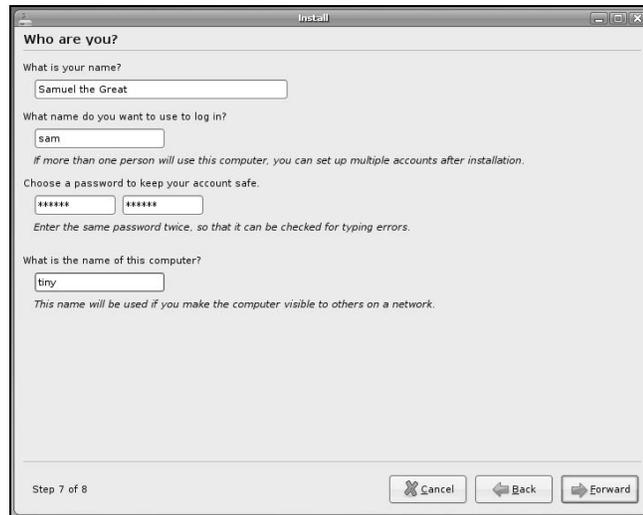
#### Migrate documents and settings

If you are installing Ubuntu on a system that already has one or more operating systems installed on it, and you are not overwriting those operating systems, the Migrate documents and settings screen displays a list of accounts and settings from the existing operating systems. For example, if you are creating a dual-boot system on a system that already has Windows installed on it, this screen shows the accounts from the Windows system and a list of programs and settings. It might show your name from the Windows system and, under that, Internet Explorer and My Documents. Put ticks in the check boxes adjacent to the items you want to migrate to the Ubuntu system. On the lower portion of the screen, enter the information necessary to create an Ubuntu user to receive the migrated information.

#### Who are you?

The Who are you? screen (Figure 3-6 on the next page) sets up the first Ubuntu user. This user can use `sudo` (page 88) to administer the system, including setting up additional users (page 658). Enter the full name of the user in the text box labeled **What is your name?**. When you press RETURN, ubiquity enters the first name from the name you just entered in the box labeled **What name do you want to use to log in?**. Press RETURN to accept this name or backspace (page 137) over it and enter a different name. Enter the same password in the next two (adjacent) boxes. Although ubiquity accepts any password, it is a good idea to choose a more secure password if the system is connected to the Internet. See “Changing Your Password” on page 135 for a discussion of password security.

The final text box specifies the name of the computer. For use on a local network and to connect to the Internet with a Web browser or other client, you can use a simple name such as `tiny`. If you are setting up a system that is to function as a server, see “FQDN” on page 847 for information on names that are valid on the Internet. Click **Forward**.



**Figure 3-6** The Install window, Who are you? screen

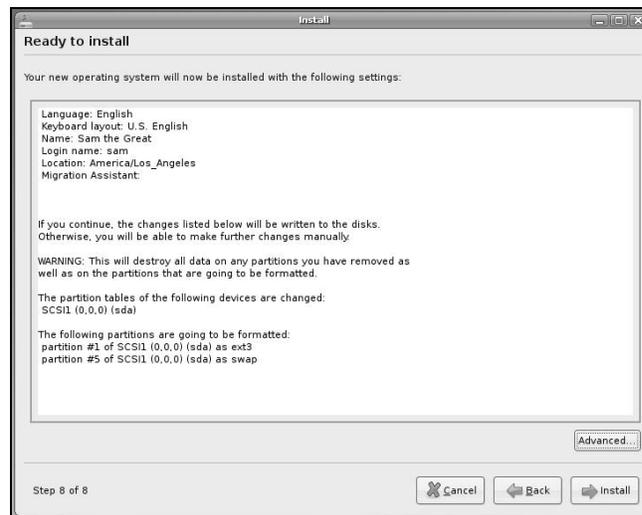
**Ready to install** The final screen ubiquity displays is the Ready to install screen (Figure 3-7). Unless ubiquity asked your permission to write to the hard disk during the partitioning phase of the installation, it has not written to the disk yet. If you click **Cancel** at this point, the hard disk will remain untouched. This screen summarizes your answers to the questions ubiquity asked in the previous screens. Click **Advanced** to display the Advanced Options window, which allows you to choose whether to install a boot loader (normally you want to) and whether you want the system to participate in an automatic, informal package usage survey. Click **OK** to close the Advanced Options window. If everything looks right in the summary in the Ready to install screen, click **Install**. The installer begins installing Ubuntu on the hard disk.

### **This is when ubiquity writes to the hard disk**

**caution** You can abort the installation by clicking the **Cancel** button at any point up to and including the Ready to install screen (Figure 3-7) without making any changes to the system. Once you click **Next** in this screen, ubiquity writes to the hard disk. However, if ubiquity displayed the warning window shown in Figure 3-5 on page 51 and you clicked **Continue**, it wrote to the hard disk at that time.

The ubiquity installer displays a series of windows to keep you informed of its progress. When the new system is installed, Ubuntu displays the Installation Complete window, which gives you the choice of continuing the live session or rebooting the system so you can use the newly installed copy of Ubuntu. Click **Restart now** to reboot the system.

Ubuntu displays its logo and a progress bar. When it has finished shutting down the system, it asks you to remove the disk (so you do not reboot from the live/install Desktop CD/DVD) and press RETURN. When you do so, it reboots the system and displays the Ubuntu GNOME login screen (Figure 4-1, page 90).



**Figure 3-7** The Install window, Ready to install screen

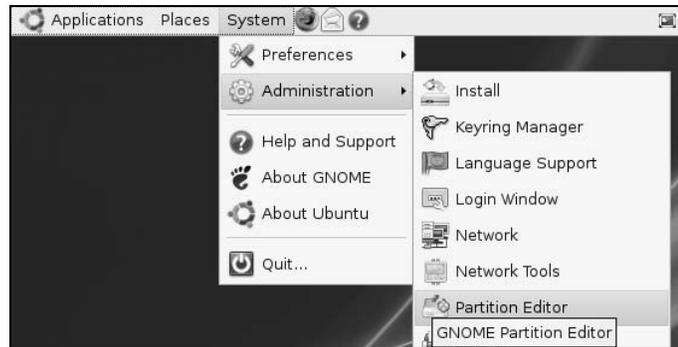
## GRAPHICAL PARTITIONERS

A partitioner displays and can add, delete, and modify partitions on a hard disk. This section describes two graphical partitioners you can use to configure a hard disk so you can install Ubuntu Linux. One partitioner, `gparted`, is available on the `live/install Desktop` CD desktop. The other partitioner is part of the `ubiquity` installer and is not available by itself. See page 57 for information on using the textual partitioner, which is available when you use the textual installer. After you install Ubuntu Linux, you can use `parted` (page 673) to manipulate partitions. If you want a basic set of partitions, you can allow `ubiquity` to partition the hard disk automatically using guided partitioning.

See “Setting Up the Hard Disk” on page 30 for a discussion of free space, partitions, partition tables, and filesystems. “Partition Suggestions” on page 32 discusses some of the filesystems you may want to set up partitions for.

### `gparted`: THE GNOME PARTITION EDITOR

Unless you know the hard disk you are installing Ubuntu Linux on has nothing on it (it is a new disk) or you are sure the disk holds no information of value, it is a good idea to examine the contents of the disk before you start the installation. The GNOME Partition Editor (`gparted`), which is available from a live session, is a good



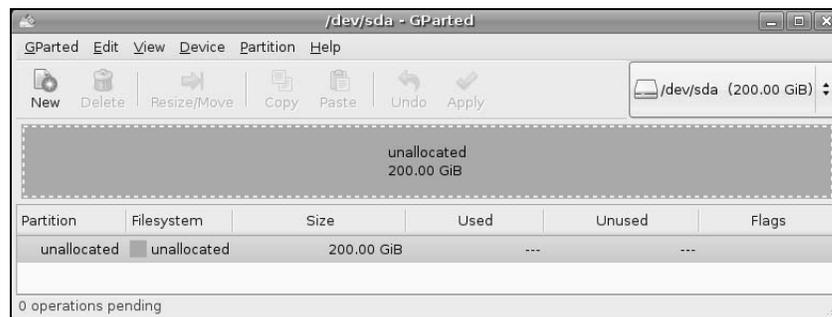
**Figure 3-8** Selecting the Partition Editor from the Main menu

tool for this job. Open the Partition Editor window by selecting **Main menu: Administration**⇒**Partition Editor** as shown in Figure 3-8.

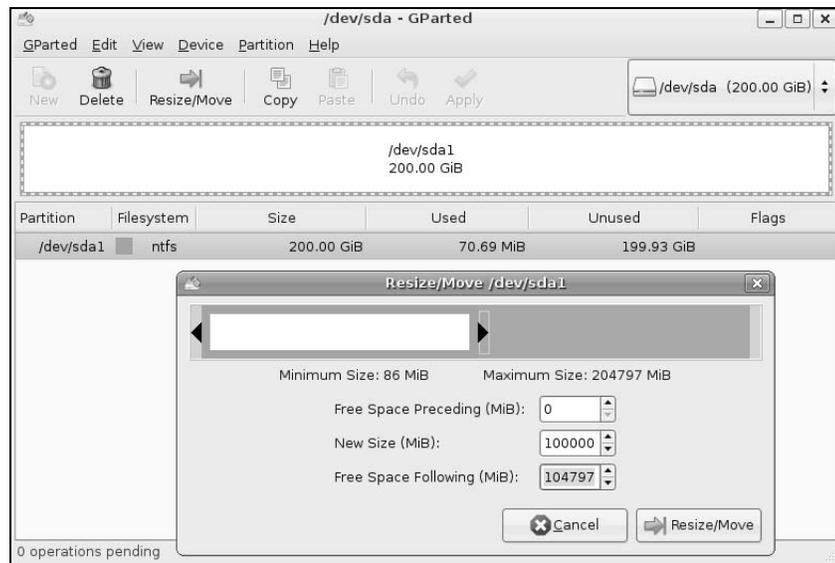
The Partition Editor displays the layout of a hard disk and can resize partitions, such as when you are setting up a dual-boot system by adding Ubuntu to a Windows system (page 61). Although you can create partitions using the Partition Editor, you cannot specify the mount point (page 30) for a partition—this step must wait until you are installing Ubuntu and using the `ubiquity` partitioner. You can save time if you use the Partition Manager to examine a hard disk and the `ubiquity` partitioner to set up the partitions that you install Ubuntu on.

## AN EMPTY HARD DISK

The Partition Editor shows one large unallocated space for a new hard disk (empty, with no partition table). If you have more than one hard disk, use the list box in the upper-right corner of the screen to select which disk the Partition Editor displays information about. Figure 3-9 shows an empty 200-gigabyte hard disk on the device named `/dev/sda`. Figure 3-4 on page 50 shows the `ubiquity` partitioner ready to partition an empty drive similar to the one shown in Figure 3-9.



**Figure 3-9** The Partition Editor displaying an empty disk drive



**Figure 3-10** The Partition Editor displaying a disk drive holding a Windows system

## DELETING A PARTITION

Before deleting a partition, make sure it does not contain any data you need. To use the Partition Editor to delete a partition, highlight the partition you want to delete and click **Delete** and then **Apply** on the toolbar.

## RESIZING A PARTITION

Figure 3-10 shows the Partition Editor displaying information about a hard disk with a single partition that occupies the entire disk. It shows a single 200-gigabyte NTFS filesystem. The process of resizing a partition is the same regardless of the type of partition: You can use the following technique to resize Windows, Linux, or other types of partitions.

### Always back up the data on a hard disk

**caution** If you are installing Ubuntu on a disk that holds data that is important to you, always back up the data before you start the installation. Things can and do go wrong. The power may go out in the middle of an installation, corrupting the data on the hard disk. There may be a bug in the partitioning software that destroys a filesystem. Although it is unlikely, you might make a mistake and format a partition holding data you want to keep.

To install Ubuntu on this system, you must resize (shrink) the partition to make room for Ubuntu. Before you resize a Windows partition, you must boot Windows and defragment the partition using the Windows defragmenter; see the tip on page 61. Although you can resize a partition with the ubiquity partitioner while you are installing Ubuntu, it is easier to see what you are doing when you use the Partition Editor

# 8

## LINUX GUIs: X AND GNOME

### IN THIS CHAPTER

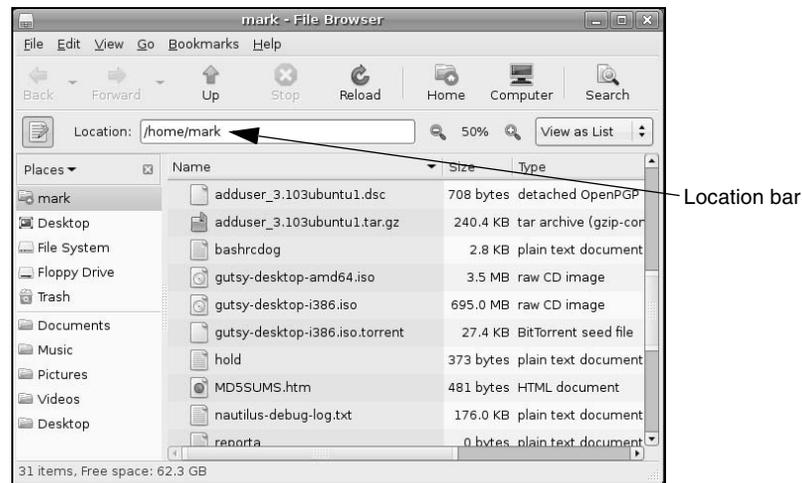
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This chapter covers the Linux graphical user interface (GUI). It continues where Chapter 4 left off, going into more detail about the X Window System, the basis for the Linux GUI. It presents a brief history of GNOME and KDE and discusses some of the problems and benefits of having two major Linux desktop environments. The section on the Nautilus File Browser covers the View and Side panes, the control bars, and the menubar. The final section explores some GNOME utilities, including the new Deskbar applet and Terminal, the GNOME terminal emulator.

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## THE NAUTILUS FILE BROWSER WINDOW

“Using Nautilus to Work with Files” on page 96 presented an introduction to using Nautilus. This section discusses the Nautilus File Browser window in more depth. Figure shows a File Browser window with a Side pane (sometimes called a *sidebar*), View pane, menubar, toolbar, location bar, and status bar. To display



**Figure 8-2** Nautilus File Browser window displaying a List view and a textual location bar

your home folder in a File Browser window, select **Main menu: Places⇒ Home Folder**.

## THE VIEW PANE

The View pane displays icons or a list of filenames. Select the view you prefer from the drop-down list at the right end of the location bar. Figure shows **View as Icons** and Figure 8-2 shows **View as List**. Objects in the View pane behave exactly as objects on the desktop do. See the sections starting on page 90 for information on working with objects.

You can cut/copy and paste objects within a single View pane, between View panes, or between a View pane and the desktop. The Object Context menu (right-click) has cut, copy, and paste selections. Or, you can use the clipboard (page 113) to cut/copy and paste objects.

### Nautilus can open a terminal emulator

**tip** When you install the **nautilus-open-terminal** package and reboot the system, Nautilus presents an Open in Terminal selection in context menus where appropriate. For example, with this package installed, when you right-click a folder (directory) object and select Open in Terminal, Nautilus opens a terminal emulator with that directory as the working directory (page 188).

## THE SIDE PANE

The Side pane augments the information Nautilus displays in the View pane. Press F9 or click the small x at the top of the Side pane to close it. You can display the Side pane by pressing F9 or selecting **File Browser menu: View⇒Side Pane**. To change the horizontal size of the Side pane and its contents, drag the handle (Figure ) on its right side.

The Side pane can display six types of information. The button at its top controls which type it displays. This button is initially labeled **Places**; click it to display the Side pane drop-down list, which has the following selections:

- Places Places lists folders. Double-click one of these folders to display that folder in the View pane. You can open a directory in a new File Browser window by right-clicking the directory in Places and selecting **Open in New Window**.
- Places contains two parts: The list above the divider is static and holds your home directory, your desktop, the filesystem, unmounted filesystems, and the trash. The list below the divider holds bookmarks. Add a bookmark by displaying the directory you want to bookmark in the View pane and pressing **CONTROL-D** or by selecting **Browser menu: Bookmarks⇒Add Bookmark**. Remove a bookmark by selecting **Browser menu: Bookmarks⇒Edit Bookmarks** or by right-clicking the bookmark and selecting **Remove**. You can also use **Edit Bookmarks** to reorder bookmarks.
- Information Information presents information about the folder displayed by the View pane.
- Tree Tree presents an expandable tree view of your home folder, and each mounted filesystem. Each directory in the tree has a triangle to its left. Click a triangle that points right to expand a directory; click a triangle that points down to close a directory. Click a directory in the tree to display that directory in the View pane. Double-click a directory to expand it in the Side pane and display it in the View pane.
- History History displays a chronological list of the folders that have been displayed in the View pane, with the most recently displayed folder at the top. Double-click a folder in this list to display it in the View pane.
- Notes Notes provides a place to keep notes about the folder displayed in the View pane.
- Emblems Similar to the Emblems tab in the Object Properties window (page 117), Emblems allows you to drag emblems from the Side pane and drop them on objects in the View pane. Drag and drop the **Erase** emblem to erase emblems associated with an object. You cannot erase emblems that Ubuntu places on objects, such as locked and link emblems.

## CONTROL BARS

This section discusses the four control bars that initially appear in a File Browser window: the Status bar, menubar, Main toolbar, and location bar (Figure ). From **File Browser menubar: View**, you can choose which of these bars to display, except for the menubar, which Nautilus always displays.

- Menubar The menubar appears at the top of the File Browser window and displays a menu when you click one of its selections. Which menu selections Nautilus displays depends on what the View pane is displaying and which object(s) are selected. The next section describes the menubar in detail.

**Main toolbar** The Main toolbar appears below the menubar and holds navigation tool icons: Back, Forward, Up, Stop, Reload, Home, Computer, and Search. If the Main toolbar is too short to hold all icons, Nautilus displays a button with a triangle pointing down at the right end of the toolbar. Click this button to display a drop-down list of the remaining icons.

**Location bar** Below the Main toolbar is the location bar, which displays the name of the directory that appears in the View pane. It can display this name in two formats: iconic (using buttons) and textual (using a text box). Press `CONTROL-L` to switch to textual format, click the pencil and paper icon at the left of this bar to switch between iconic and textual formats.

In iconic format, each button represents a directory in a pathname (page 189). The View pane displays the directory of the depressed (darker) button. Click one of these buttons to display that directory. If the leftmost button holds a triangle that points to the left, Nautilus is not displaying buttons for all the directories in the absolute (full) pathname; click the button with a triangle in it to display more directory buttons.

In textual format, the text box displays the absolute pathname of the displayed directory. To have Nautilus display another directory, enter the pathname of the directory and press `RETURN`.

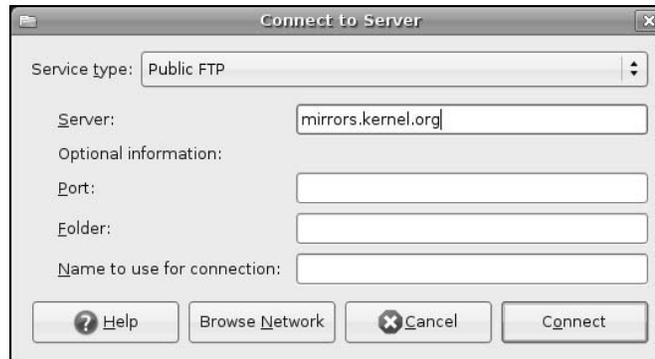
The location bar also holds the magnification selector and the **View as** drop-down list. To change the magnification of the display in the View pane, click the plus or minus sign in a magnifying glass on either side of the magnification percentage. Right-click the magnification percentage itself to return to the default magnification. Left-click the magnification percentage to display a drop-down list of magnifications. Click **View as** (to the right of the right-hand magnifying glass) to choose whether to view files as icons or as a list.

**Status bar** The Status bar, at the bottom of the window, indicates how many items are displayed in the View pane. If the directory you are viewing is on the local system, it also tells you how much free space is on the device that holds the directory displayed by the View pane.

## MENUBAR

The Nautilus File Browser menubar controls what information the File Browser displays and how it displays that information. Many of the menu selections duplicate controls found elsewhere in the File Browser window. This section highlights some of the selections on the menubar; click **Help** on the menubar and select **Contents** or **Get Help Online** for more information. This section describes the six parts of the menubar.

**File** The several Open selections and the Property selection of File work with the highlighted object(s) in the View pane. If no objects are highlighted, these selections are



**Figure 8-3** Connect to Server window

grayed out. Selecting **Connect to Server** displays the Connect to Server window (Figure 8-3). This window presents a **Service type** drop-down list that allows you to select FTP, SSH, Windows, or other types of servers. Enter the URL of the server in the text box labeled **Server**. For an FTP connection, do not enter the **ftp://** part of the URL. Fill in the optional information as appropriate. Click **Connect**. If the server requires authentication, Nautilus displays a window so you can enter your username and password. Nautilus does not open a window but instead places an object, named for the URL you specified, on the desktop. Open the object to connect to and display the top-level directory on the server.

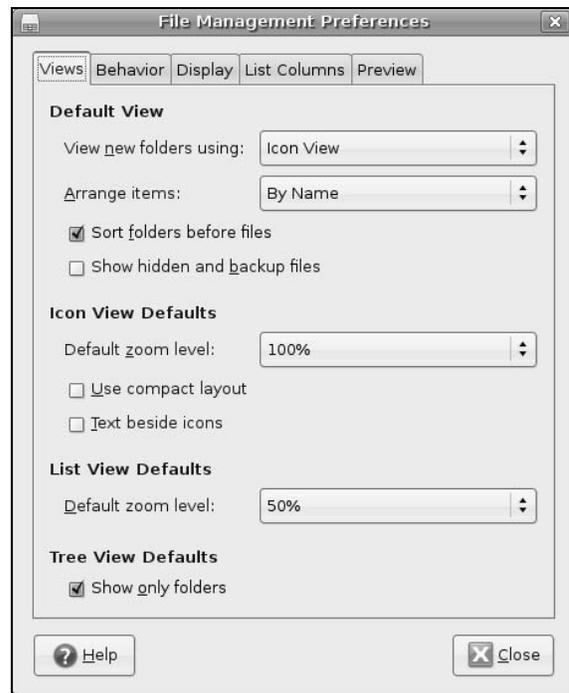
**Edit** Many of the Edit selections work with highlighted object(s) in the View pane; if no objects are highlighted, these selections are grayed out or not displayed. This section discusses three selections from Edit: Create Archive, Backgrounds and Emblems, and Preferences.

The **Edit**⇒**Create Archive** selection creates a single archive file comprising the selected objects. This selection opens a Create Archive window (Figure 8-4) that allows you to specify the name and location of the archive. The drop-down list to the right of the Archive text box allows you to specify a filename extension that determines the type of archive this tool creates. For example, **.tar.gz** creates a tar (page 161) file compressed by gzip (page 161) and **.tar.bz2** creates a tar file compressed by bzip2 (page 160).

The **Edit**⇒**Backgrounds and Emblems** selection has three buttons on the left: Patterns, Colors, and Emblems. Click **Patterns** to display many pattern objects on the right side of the window. Drag and drop one of these objects on the View pane of a



**Figure 8-4** Create Archive window



**Figure 8-5** File Management Preferences window, Views tab

File Browser window to change the background of all File Browser View panes. Drag and drop the Reset object to reset the background to its default color and pattern (usually white). The Colors button works the same way as the Patterns button. The Emblems button works the same way as the Emblems tab in the Side pane (page 262).

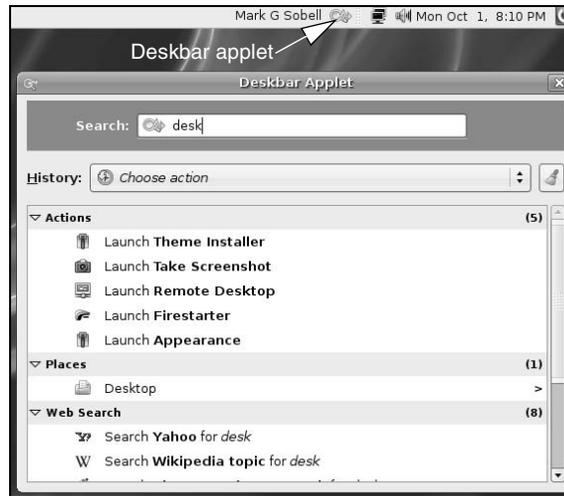
The **Edit⇒Preferences** selection displays the File Management Preferences window (Figure 8-5). This window has five tabs that control the appearance and behavior of File Browser windows.

The **Edit⇒Preferences⇒Views** tab sets several defaults, including which view the File Browser displays (Icon or List view), the arrangement of the objects, and the default zoom level.

**Delete Versus Move to Trash** The **Edit⇒Preferences⇒Behavior** tab controls how many clicks it takes to open an object and what Nautilus does when it opens an executable text object (script). For more confident users, this tab has an option that includes a Delete selection in addition to the Move to Trash selection on several menus. The Delete selection immediately removes the selected object instead of moving it to the **Trash** folder.

The **Edit⇒Preferences⇒Display** tab specifies which information Nautilus includes in object (icon) captions. The three drop-down lists specify the order in which Nautilus displays information as you increase the zoom level of the View pane. This tab also specifies the date format Nautilus uses.

The **Edit⇒Preferences⇒List Columns** tab specifies which columns Nautilus displays, and in what order it displays them, in the View pane when you select **View as List**.



**Figure 8-6** Deskbar applet and Deskbar Applet window

The **Edit**⇒**Preferences**⇒**Preview** tab controls when Nautilus displays or plays previews of files (local files, all files, no files).

- View** Click the **Main Toolbar**, **Side Pane**, **Location Bar**, and **Statusbar** selections in **View** to display or remove these elements from the window. The **Show Hidden Files** selection displays in the **View** pane files with hidden filenames (page 188).
- Go** The **Go** selections display various folders in the **View** pane.
- Bookmark** Bookmarks appear at the bottom of this menu and in the **Side** pane under **Places**. The **Bookmark** selections are explained under “Places” on page 262.
- Help** The **Help** selections display local and online information about Nautilus.

## GNOME UTILITIES

GNOME comes with numerous utilities that can make your work with the desktop easier and more productive. This section covers several tools that are integral to the use of GNOME.

### DESKBAR APPLET

Clicking the Deskbar applet (Figure 8-6) or pressing ALT-F3 opens the Deskbar Applet window (also in Figure 8-6). As you type in the text box labeled **Search**, this tool searches for the string you are entering. In Figure 8-6, the user has entered the string **desk**. Below the list box labeled **History**, the Deskbar Applet window displays matches it has found for **desk**. At the top of the list are actions that match or whose descriptions match the string. For example, clicking **Launch: Take Screenshot** displays a window that includes a radio button labeled **Grab the whole desktop**. Below the actions are places: When you click **Desktop**, the Desktop Applet opens the Nautilus File Browser

displaying the desktop. Finally, the window displays a list of Web searches. Click one of these to open Firefox and perform the search. You can also use the Search for Files window (page 269) to search for files.

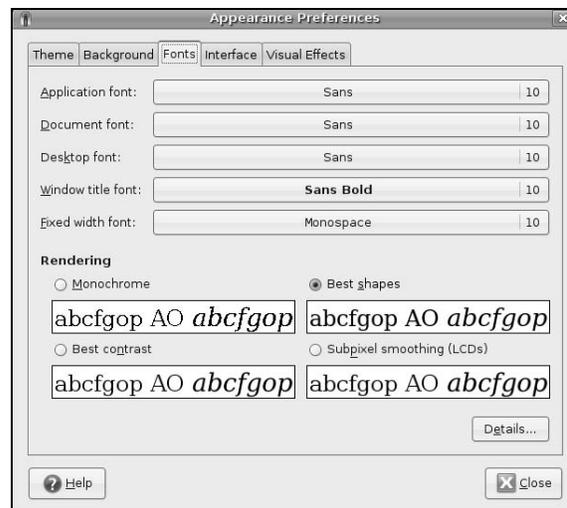
The Deskbar Applet displays matches based on extensions. Right-click the Deskbar applet and select **Preferences** to open the Deskbar Preferences window. In the Searches tab of this window, you can select the extensions you want the applet to use and change the order in which it presents information generated by the extensions. For example, remove the tick from the check box labeled **Programs** to cause the Deskbar Applet window not to display programs in the Action section of its window. Experiment with enabling and disabling extensions and changing their order.

The Extensions with Errors tab lists extensions the Deskbar applet cannot use. When you highlight one of the lines in the Extensions with Errors frame, the Desktop Preferences window displays the reason the extension cannot be used.

For example, when you click **Beagle**, the message **Beagle does not seem to be installed** appears below the frame. Install the **beagle** software package and, after the **beagle-crawl-system** cron script runs (it runs each night) and you reboot the system, this extension appears in the Searches tab. You can enable it and change its position in the list of extensions.

## FONT PREFERENCES

The Fonts tab of the Appearance Preferences window (Figure 8-7) enables you to change the font that GNOME uses for applications, documents, the desktop, window titles, and terminal emulators (fixed width). To display this window, select **Main menu: System ⇒ Preferences ⇒ Appearance** or enter **gnome-appearance-properties** on a command line. Click the **Fonts** tab. Click one of the five font bars in the upper part of the window to display the Pick a Font window (discussed next).



**Figure 8-7** Appearance Preferences window, Fonts tab

# 11

## PROGRAMMING THE BOURNE AGAIN SHELL

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Chapter 7 introduced the shells and Chapter 9 went into detail about the Bourne Again Shell. This chapter introduces additional Bourne Again Shell commands, builtins, and concepts that carry shell programming to a point where it can be useful. The first part of this chapter covers programming control structures, which are also known as control flow constructs. These structures allow you to write scripts that can loop over command line arguments, make decisions based on the value of a variable, set up menus, and more. The Bourne Again Shell uses the same constructs found in such high-level programming languages as C.

Although you may make use of shell programming as a system administrator, reading this chapter is not required to perform system administration tasks. Feel free to skip this chapter and come back to it when you will find it most useful.

The next part of this chapter discusses parameters and variables, going into detail about array variables, local versus global variables, special parameters, and positional parameters. The exploration of builtin commands covers `type`, which displays information about a command, and `read`, which allows

you to accept user input in a shell script. The section on the `exec` builtin demonstrates how `exec` provides an efficient way to execute a command by replacing a process and explains how you can use it to redirect input and output from within a script. The next section covers the `trap` builtin, which provides a way to detect and respond to operating system signals (such as that which is generated when you press `CONTROL-C`). The discussion of builtins concludes with a discussion of `kill`, which can abort a process, and `getopts`, which makes it easy to parse options for a shell script. (Table 11-6 on page 457 lists some of the more commonly used builtins.)

Next the chapter examines arithmetic and logical expressions and the operators that work with them. The final section walks through the design and implementation of two major shell scripts.

This chapter contains many examples of shell programs. Although they illustrate certain concepts, most use information from earlier examples as well. This overlap not only reinforces your overall knowledge of shell programming but also demonstrates how you can combine commands to solve complex tasks. Running, modifying, and experimenting with the examples in this book is a good way to become comfortable with the underlying concepts.

### **Do not name a shell script `test`**

**tip** You can unwittingly create a problem if you give a shell script the name `test` because a Linux utility has the same name. Depending on how the `PATH` variable is set up and how you call the program, you may run your script or the utility, leading to confusing results.

This chapter illustrates concepts with simple examples, which are followed by more complex ones in sections marked “Optional.” The more complex scripts illustrate traditional shell programming practices and introduce some Linux utilities often used in scripts. You can skip these sections without loss of continuity the first time you read the chapter. Return to them later when you feel comfortable with the basic concepts.

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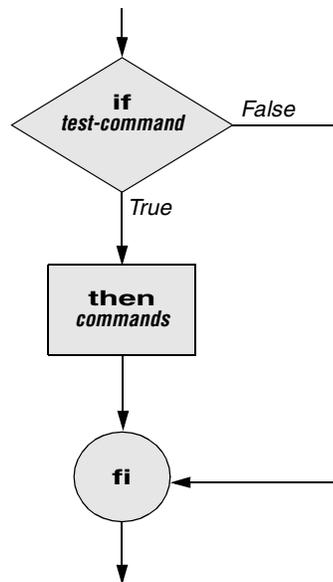
## **CONTROL STRUCTURES**

The *control flow* commands alter the order of execution of commands within a shell script. Control structures include the `if...then`, `for...in`, `while`, `until`, and `case` statements. In addition, the `break` and `continue` statements work in conjunction with the control structures to alter the order of execution of commands within a script.

### **if...then**

The `if...then` control structure has the following syntax:

```
if test-command
  then
    commands
  fi
```



**Figure 11-1** An if...then flowchart

The *bold* words in the syntax description are the items you supply to cause the structure to have the desired effect. The *nonbold* words are the keywords the shell uses to identify the control structure.

test builtin Figure 11-1 shows that the `if` statement tests the status returned by the *test-command* and transfers control based on this status. The end of the `if` structure is marked by a `fi` statement, (*if* spelled backward). The following script prompts for two words, reads them, and then uses an `if` structure to execute commands based on the result returned by the `test` builtin when it compares the two words. (See the `test` info page for information on the `test` utility, which is similar to the `test` builtin.) The `test` builtin returns a status of *true* if the two words are the same and *false* if they are not. Double quotation marks around `$word1` and `$word2` make sure that `test` works properly if you enter a string that contains a `SPACE` or other special character:

```

$ cat if1
echo -n "word 1: "
read word1
echo -n "word 2: "
read word2

if test "$word1" = "$word2"
then
    echo "Match"
fi
echo "End of program."
  
```

```
$ if1
word 1: peach
word 2: peach
Match
End of program.
```

In the preceding example the *test-command* is `test "$word1" = "$word2"`. The `test` builtin returns a *true* status if its first and third arguments have the relationship specified by its second argument. If this command returns a *true* status ( $= 0$ ), the shell executes the commands between the `then` and `fi` statements. If the command returns a *false* status ( $\text{not } = 0$ ), the shell passes control to the statement following `fi` without executing the statements between `then` and `fi`. The effect of this `if` statement is to display **Match** if the two words are the same. The script always displays **End of program**.

**Builtins** In the Bourne Again Shell, `test` is a builtin—part of the shell. It is also a stand-alone utility kept in `/usr/bin/test`. This chapter discusses and demonstrates many Bourne Again Shell builtins. You usually use the builtin version if it is available and the utility if it is not. Each version of a command may vary slightly from one shell to the next and from the utility to any of the shell builtins. See page 444 for more information on shell builtins.

**Checking arguments** The next program uses an `if` structure at the beginning of a script to check that you have supplied at least one argument on the command line. The `-eq` test operator compares two integers, where the  `$#`  special parameter (page 439) takes on the value of the number of command line arguments. This structure displays a message and exits from the script with an exit status of 1 if you do not supply at least one argument:

```
$ cat chkargs
if test $# -eq 0
then
    echo "You must supply at least one argument."
    exit 1
fi
echo "Program running."
$ chkargs
You must supply at least one argument.
$ chkargs abc
Program running.
```

A test like the one shown in `chkargs` is a key component of any script that requires arguments. To prevent the user from receiving meaningless or confusing information from the script, the script needs to check whether the user has supplied the appropriate arguments. Sometimes the script simply tests whether arguments exist (as in `chkargs`). Other scripts test for a specific number or specific kinds of arguments.

You can use `test` to ask a question about the status of a file argument or the relationship between two file arguments. After verifying that at least one argument has been given on the command line, the following script tests whether the argument is the

name of an ordinary file (not a directory or other type of file) in the working directory. The test builtin with the `-f` option and the first command line argument (`$1`) check the file:

```
$ cat is_ordfile
if test $# -eq 0
then
    echo "You must supply at least one argument."
    exit 1
fi
if test -f "$1"
then
    echo "$1 is an ordinary file in the working directory"
else
    echo "$1 is NOT an ordinary file in the working directory"
fi
```

You can test many other characteristics of a file with `test` and various options. Table 11-1 lists some of these options.

**Table 11-1** Options to the test builtin

Option	Tests file to see if it
<code>-d</code>	Exists and is a directory file
<code>-e</code>	Exists
<code>-f</code>	Exists and is an ordinary file (not a directory)
<code>-r</code>	Exists and is readable
<code>-s</code>	Exists and has a size greater than 0 bytes
<code>-w</code>	Exists and is writable
<code>-x</code>	Exists and is executable

Other test options provide ways to test relationships between two files, such as whether one file is newer than another. Refer to later examples in this chapter for more detailed information.

### Always test the arguments

**tip** To keep the examples in this book short and focused on specific concepts, the code to verify arguments is often omitted or abbreviated. It is a good practice to test arguments in shell programs that other people will use. Doing so results in scripts that are easier to run and debug.

`[]` is a synonym for `test` The following example—another version of `chkargs`—checks for arguments in a way that is more traditional for Linux shell scripts. The example uses the bracket (`[]`) synonym for `test`. Rather than using the word `test` in scripts, you can surround the arguments to test with brackets. The brackets must be surrounded by white-space (SPACES or TABS).

```
$ cat chkargs2
if [ $# -eq 0 ]
then
    echo "Usage: chkargs2 argument..." 1>&2
    exit 1
fi
echo "Program running."
exit 0
$ chkargs2
Usage: chkargs2 arguments
$ chkargs2 abc
Program running.
```

Usage message The error message that `chkargs2` displays is called a *usage message* and uses the `1>&2` notation to redirect its output to standard error (page 280). After issuing the usage message, `chkargs2` exits with an exit status of 1, indicating that an error has occurred. The `exit 0` command at the end of the script causes `chkargs2` to exit with a 0 status after the program runs without an error. The Bourne Again Shell returns a 0 status if you omit the status code.

The usage message is commonly employed to specify the type and number of arguments the script takes. Many Linux utilities provide usage messages similar to the one in `chkargs2`. If you call a utility or other program with the wrong number or kind of arguments, you will often see a usage message. Following is the usage message that `cp` displays when you call it without any arguments:

```
$ cp
cp: missing file argument
Try 'cp --help' for more information.
```

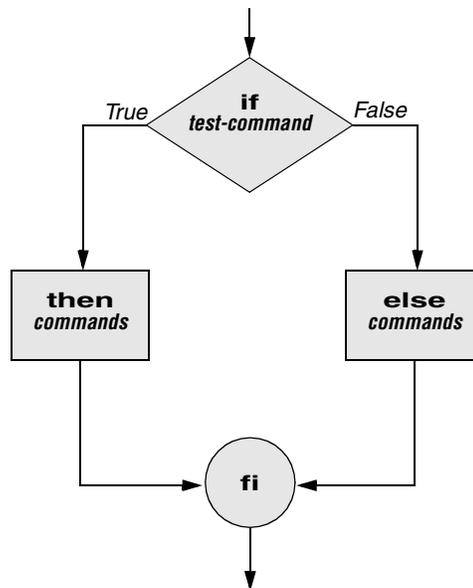
## if...then...else

The introduction of an `else` statement turns the `if` structure into the two-way branch shown in Figure 11-2. The `if...then...else` control structure has the following syntax:

```
if test-command
  then
    commands
  else
    commands
fi
```

Because a semicolon (;) ends a command just as a `NEWLINE` does, you can place `then` on the same line as `if` by preceding it with a semicolon. (Because `if` and `then` are separate builtins, they require a command separator between them; a semicolon and `NEWLINE` work equally well.) Some people prefer this notation for aesthetic reasons, while others like it because it saves space:

```
if test-command; then
    commands
  else
    commands
fi
```



**Figure 11-2** An if...then...else flowchart

If the *test-command* returns a *true* status, the *if* structure executes the commands between the *then* and *else* statements and then diverts control to the statement following *fi*. If the *test-command* returns a *false* status, the *if* structure executes the commands following the *else* statement.

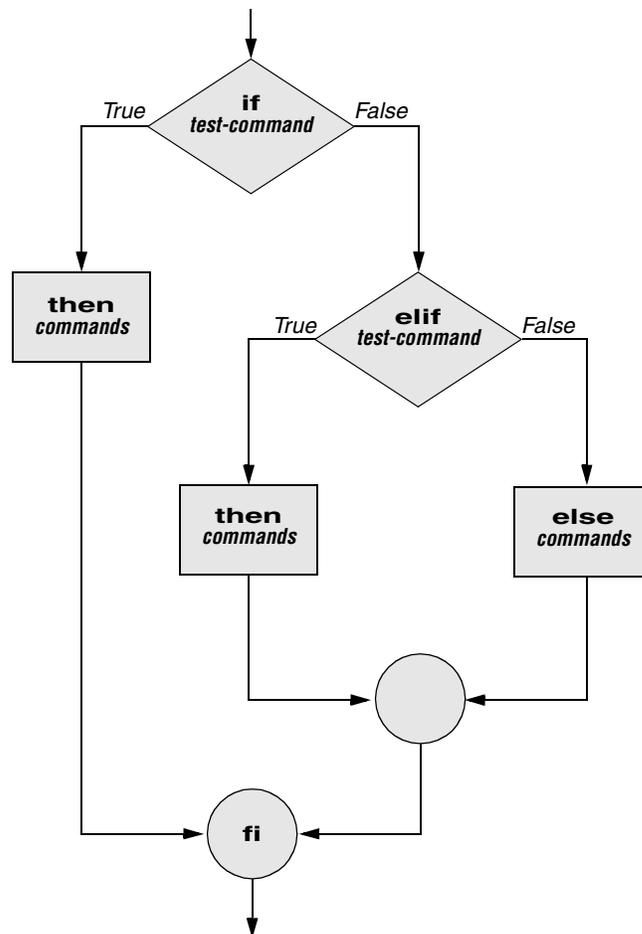
When you run the next script, named *out*, with arguments that are filenames, it displays the files on the terminal. If the first argument is *-v* (called an option in this case), *out* uses *less* (page 148) to display the files one page at a time. After determining that it was called with at least one argument, *out* tests its first argument to see whether it is *-v*. If the result of the test is *true* (if the first argument is *-v*), *out* uses the *shift* builtin to shift the arguments to get rid of the *-v* and displays the files using *less*. If the result of the test is *false* (if the first argument is *not -v*), the script uses *cat* to display the files:

```

$ cat out
if [ $# -eq 0 ]
then
    echo "Usage: out [-v] filenames..." 1>&2
    exit 1
fi

if [ "$1" = "-v" ]
then
    shift
    less -- "$@"
else
    cat -- "$@"
fi
  
```

**optional** In `out` the `--` argument to `cat` and `less` tells these utilities that no more options follow on the command line and not to consider leading hyphens (`-`) in the following list as indicating options. Thus `--` allows you to view a file with a name that starts with a hyphen. Although not common, filenames beginning with a hyphen do occasionally occur. (You can create such a file by using the command `cat > -fname`.) The `--` argument works with all Linux utilities that use the `getopts` builtin (page 454) to parse their options; it does not work with `more` and a few other utilities. This argument is particularly useful when used in conjunction with `rm` to remove a file whose name starts with a hyphen (`rm -- -fname`), including any that you create while experimenting with the `--` argument.



**Figure 11-3** An `if...then...elif` flowchart

## if...then...elif

The **if...then...elif** control structure (Figure 11-3) has the following syntax:

```

if test-command
  then
    commands
  elif test-command
    then
      commands
  ...
  else
    commands
fi

```

The **elif** statement combines the **else** statement and the **if** statement and allows you to construct a nested set of **if...then...else** structures (Figure 11-3). The difference between the **else** statement and the **elif** statement is that each **else** statement must be paired with a **fi** statement, whereas multiple nested **elif** statements require only a single closing **fi** statement.

The following example shows an **if...then...elif** control structure. This shell script compares three words that the user enters. The first **if** statement uses the Boolean operator AND (**-a**) as an argument to **test**. The **test** builtin returns a *true* status only if the first and second logical comparisons are *true* (that is, if **word1** matches **word2** and **word2** matches **word3**). If **test** returns a *true* status, the script executes the command following the next **then** statement, passes control to the statement following **fi**, and terminates:

```

$ cat if3
echo -n "word 1: "
read word1
echo -n "word 2: "
read word2
echo -n "word 3: "
read word3

if [ "$word1" = "$word2" -a "$word2" = "$word3" ]
  then
    echo "Match: words 1, 2, & 3"
  elif [ "$word1" = "$word2" ]
    then
      echo "Match: words 1 & 2"
  elif [ "$word1" = "$word3" ]
    then
      echo "Match: words 1 & 3"
  elif [ "$word2" = "$word3" ]
    then
      echo "Match: words 2 & 3"
  else
    echo "No match"
fi

```

```

$ if3
word 1: apple
word 2: orange
word 3: pear
No match
$ if3
word 1: apple
word 2: orange
word 3: apple
Match: words 1 & 3
$ if3
word 1: apple
word 2: apple
word 3: apple
Match: words 1, 2, & 3

```

If the three words are not the same, the structure passes control to the first **elif**, which begins a series of tests to see if any pair of words is the same. As the nesting continues, if any one of the **if** statements is satisfied, the structure passes control to the next **then** statement and subsequently to the statement following **fi**. Each time an **elif** statement is not satisfied, the structure passes control to the next **elif** statement. The double quotation marks around the arguments to **echo** that contain ampersands (&) prevent the shell from interpreting the ampersands as special characters.

### optional THE lnks SCRIPT

The following script, named **lnks**, demonstrates the **if...then** and **if...then...elif** control structures. This script finds hard links to its first argument, a filename. If you provide the name of a directory as the second argument, **lnks** searches for links in that directory and all subdirectories. If you do not specify a directory, **lnks** searches the working directory and its subdirectories. This script does not locate symbolic links.

```

$ cat lnks
#!/bin/bash
# Identify links to a file
# Usage: lnks file [directory]

if [ $# -eq 0 -o $# -gt 2 ]; then
    echo "Usage: lnks file [directory]" 1>&2
    exit 1
fi
if [ -d "$1" ]; then
    echo "First argument cannot be a directory." 1>&2
    echo "Usage: lnks file [directory]" 1>&2
    exit 1
else
    file="$1"
fi

```

```

if [ $# -eq 1 ]; then
    directory="."
elif [ -d "$2" ]; then
    directory="$2"
else
    echo "Optional second argument must be a directory." 1>&2
    echo "Usage: lnks file [directory]" 1>&2
    exit 1
fi

# Check that file exists and is an ordinary file:
if [ ! -f "$file" ]; then
    echo "lnks: $file not found or special file" 1>&2
    exit 1
fi
# Check link count on file
set -- $(ls -l "$file")
linkcnt=$2
if [ "$linkcnt" -eq 1 ]; then
    echo "lnks: no other hard links to $file" 1>&2
    exit 0
fi

# Get the inode of the given file
set $(ls -i "$file")

inode=$1

# Find and print the files with that inode number
echo "lnks: using find to search for links..." 1>&2
find "$directory" -xdev -inum $inode -print

```

Alex has a file named **letter** in his home directory. He wants to find links to this file in his and other users' home directory file trees. In the following example, Alex calls **lnks** from his home directory to perform the search. The second argument to **lnks**, **/home**, is the pathname of the directory he wants to start the search in. The **lnks** script reports that **/home/alex/letter** and **/home/jenny/draft** are links to the same file:

```

$ lnks letter /home
lnks: using find to search for links...
/home/alex/letter
/home/jenny/draft

```

In addition to the **if...then...elif** control structure, **lnks** introduces other features that are commonly used in shell programs. The following discussion describes **lnks** section by section.

Specify the shell The first line of the **lnks** script uses **#!** (page 284) to specify the shell that will execute the script:

```
#!/bin/bash
```

In this chapter the `#!` notation appears only in more complex examples. It ensures that the proper shell executes the script, even when the user is running a different shell or the script is called from another shell script.

**Comments** The second and third lines of `lnks` are comments; the shell ignores the text that follows a pound sign up to the next `NEWLINE` character. These comments in `lnks` briefly identify what the file does and how to use it:

```
# Identify links to a file
# Usage: lnks file [directory]
```

**Usage messages** The first `if` statement tests whether `lnks` was called with zero arguments or more than two arguments:

```
if [ $# -eq 0 -o $# -gt 2 ]; then
    echo "Usage: lnks file [directory]" 1>&2
    exit 1
fi
```

If either of these conditions is *true*, `lnks` sends a usage message to standard error and exits with a status of 1. The double quotation marks around the usage message prevent the shell from interpreting the brackets as special characters. The brackets in the usage message indicate that the `directory` argument is optional.

The second `if` statement tests whether the first command line argument (`$1`) is a directory (the `-d` argument to test returns a *true* value if the file exists and is a directory):

```
if [ -d "$1" ]; then
    echo "First argument cannot be a directory." 1>&2
    echo "Usage: lnks file [directory]" 1>&2
    exit 1
else
    file="$1"
fi
```

If the first argument is a directory, `lnks` displays a usage message and exits. If it is not a directory, `lnks` saves the value of `$1` in the `file` variable because later in the script `set` resets the command line arguments. If the value of `$1` is not saved before the `set` command is issued, its value will be lost.

**Test the arguments** The next section of `lnks` is an `if...then...elif` statement:

```
if [ $# -eq 1 ]; then
    directory="."
elif [ -d "$2" ]; then
    directory="$2"
else
    echo "Optional second argument must be a directory." 1>&2
    echo "Usage: lnks file [directory]" 1>&2
    exit 1
fi
```

The first *test-command* determines whether the user specified a single argument on the command line. If the *test-command* returns 0 (*true*), the user-created variable named **directory** is assigned the value of the working directory (.). If the *test-command* returns *false*, the *elif* statement tests whether the second argument is a directory. If it is a directory, the **directory** variable is set equal to the second command line argument, **\$2**. If **\$2** is not a directory, **lnks** sends a usage message to standard error and exits with a status of 1.

The next *if* statement in **lnks** tests whether **\$file** does not exist. This test keeps **lnks** from wasting time looking for links to a nonexistent file.

The *test* builtin with the three arguments **!**, **-f**, and **\$file** evaluates to *true* if the file **\$file** does *not* exist:

```
[ ! -f "$file" ]
```

The **!** operator preceding the **-f** argument to *test* negates its result, yielding *false* if the file **\$file** *does* exist and is an ordinary file.

Next **lnks** uses *set* and *ls -l* to check the number of links **\$file** has:

```
# Check link count on file
set -- $(ls -l "$file")
linkcnt=$2
if [ "$linkcnt" -eq 1 ]; then
    echo "lnks: no other hard links to $file" 1>&2
    exit 0
fi
```

The *set* builtin uses command substitution (page 344) to set the positional parameters to the output of *ls -l*. The second field in this output is the link count, so the user-created variable **linkcnt** is set equal to **\$2**. The **--** used with *set* prevents *set* from interpreting as an option the first argument produced by *ls -l* (the first argument is the access permissions for the file and typically begins with **-**). The *if* statement checks whether **\$linkcnt** is equal to 1; if it is, **lnks** displays a message and exits. Although this message is not truly an error message, it is redirected to standard error. The way **lnks** has been written, all informational messages are sent to standard error. Only the final product of **lnks**—the pathnames of links to the specified file—is sent to standard output, so you can redirect the output as you please.

If the link count is greater than one, **lnks** goes on to identify the *inode* (page 1041) for **\$file**. As explained on page 212, comparing the inodes associated with filenames is a good way to determine whether the filenames are links to the same file. The **lnks** script uses *set* to set the positional parameters to the output of *ls -li*. The first argument to *set* is the inode number for the file, so the user-created variable named **inode** is assigned the value of **\$1**:

```
# Get the inode of the given file
set $(ls -li "$file")

inode=$1
```

Finally **lnks** uses the **find** utility to search for files having inode numbers that match **\$inode**:

```
# Find and print the files with that inode number
echo "lnks: using find to search for links..." 1>&2
find "$directory" -xdev -inum $inode -print
```

The **find** utility searches for files that meet the criteria specified by its arguments, beginning its search with the directory specified by its first argument (**\$directory**) and searching all subdirectories. The remaining arguments specify that the file-names of files having inodes matching **\$inode** should be sent to standard output. Because files in different filesystems can have the same inode number and not be linked, **find** must search only directories in the same filesystem as **\$directory**. The **-xdev** argument prevents **find** from searching directories on other filesystems. Refer to page 209 for more information about filesystems and links.

The **echo** command preceding the **find** command in **lnks**, which tells the user that **find** is running, is included because **find** frequently takes a long time to run. Because **lnks** does not include a final exit statement, the exit status of **lnks** is that of the last command it runs, **find**.

## DEBUGGING SHELL SCRIPTS

When you are writing a script such as **lnks**, it is easy to make mistakes. You can use the shell's **-x** option to help debug a script. This option causes the shell to display each command before it runs the command. Tracing a script's execution in this way can give you information about where a problem lies.

You can run **lnks** as in the previous example and cause the shell to display each command before it is executed. Either set the **-x** option for the current shell (**set -x**) so that all scripts display commands as they are run or use the **-x** option to affect only the shell that is running the script called by the command line.

```
$ bash -x lnks letter /home
+ '[' 2 -eq 0 -o 2 -gt 2 -e ']'
+ '[' -d letter -e ']'
+ file=letter
+ '[' 2 -eq 1 -e ']'
+ '[' -d /home -e ']'
+ directory=/home
+ '[' -f letter -e ']'
...

```

- PS4** Each command that the script executes is preceded by the value of the **PS4** variable—a plus sign (+) by default, so you can distinguish debugging output from script-produced output. You must export **PS4** if you set it in the shell that calls the script. The next command sets **PS4** to **>>>>** followed by a **SPACE** and exports it:

```
$ export PS4='>>>> '
```

You can also set the `-x` option of the shell running the script by putting the following `set` command at the top of the script:

```
set -x
```

Put `set -x` anywhere in the script you want to turn debugging on. Turn the debugging option off with a plus sign.

```
set +x
```

The `set -o xtrace` and `set +o xtrace` commands do the same things as `set -x` and `set +x`, respectively.

## for...in

The `for...in` control structure has the following syntax:

```
for loop-index in argument-list
do
    commands
done
```

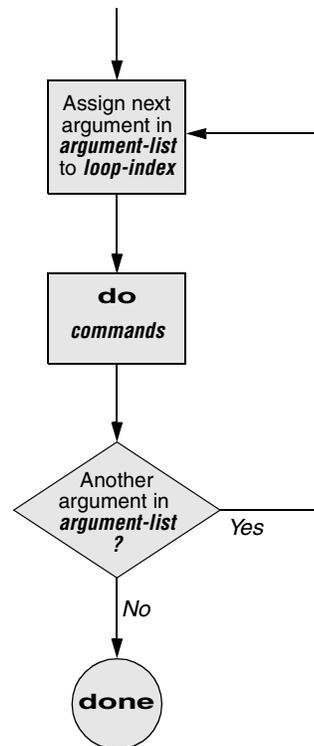


Figure 11-4 A `for...in` flowchart

The **for...in** structure (Figure 11-4, previous page) assigns the value of the first argument in the *argument-list* to the *loop-index* and executes the *commands* between the **do** and **done** statements. The **do** and **done** statements mark the beginning and end of the **for** loop.

After it passes control to the **done** statement, the structure assigns the value of the second argument in the *argument-list* to the *loop-index* and repeats the *commands*. The structure repeats the *commands* between the **do** and **done** statements one time for each argument in the *argument-list*. When the structure exhausts the *argument-list*, it passes control to the statement following **done**.

The following **for...in** structure assigns **apples** to the user-created variable **fruit** and then displays the value of **fruit**, which is **apples**. Next the structure assigns **oranges** to **fruit** and repeats the process. When it exhausts the argument list, the structure transfers control to the statement following **done**, which displays a message.

```
$ cat fruit
for fruit in apples oranges pears bananas
do
    echo "$fruit"
done
echo "Task complete."

$ fruit
apples
oranges
pears
bananas
Task complete.
```

The next script lists the names of the directory files in the working directory by looping over all the files, using **test** to determine which files are directories:

```
$ cat dirfiles
for i in *
do
    if [ -d "$i" ]
    then
        echo "$i"
    fi
done
```

The ambiguous file reference character **\*** matches the names of all files (except hidden files) in the working directory. Prior to executing the **for** loop, the shell expands the **\*** and uses the resulting list to assign successive values to the index variable **i**.

# 12

## SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION: CORE CONCEPTS

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The job of a system administrator is to keep one or more systems in a useful and convenient state for users. On a Linux system, the administrator and user may both be you, with you and the computer being separated by only a few feet. Alternatively, the system administrator may be halfway around the world, supporting a network of systems, with you being one of thousands of users. On one hand, a system administrator can be one person who works part-time taking care of a system and perhaps is also a user of the system. On the other hand, several administrators can work together full-time to keep many systems running.

## SECURING A SERVER

Two ways you can secure a server are by using TCP wrappers and by setting up a chroot jail. This section describes both techniques.

### TCP WRAPPERS: SECURE A SERVER (hosts.allow AND hosts.deny)

Follow these guidelines when you open a local system to access from remote systems:

- Open the local system only to systems you want to allow to access it.
- Allow each remote system to access only the data you want it to access.
- Allow each remote system to access data only in the appropriate manner (readonly, read/write, write only).

**libwrap** As part of the client/server model, TCP wrappers, which can be used for any daemon that is linked against **libwrap**, rely on the **/etc/hosts.allow** and **/etc/hosts.deny** files as the basis of a simple access control language (ACL). This access control language defines rules that selectively allow clients to access server daemons on a local system based on the client's address and the daemon the client tries to access. The output of **ldd** shows that one of the shared library dependencies of **sshd** is **libwrap**:

```
$ ldd /usr/sbin/sshd | grep libwrap
libwrap.so.0 => /lib/libwrap.so.0 (0xb7f56000)
```

**hosts.allow** and **hosts.deny** Each line in the **hosts.allow** and **hosts.deny** files has the following format:

```
daemon_list : client_list [: command]
```

where *daemon\_list* is a comma-separated list of one or more server daemons (such as **portmap**, **vsftpd**, or **sshd**), *client\_list* is a comma-separated list of one or more clients (see Table 12-2, “Specifying a client,” on page 528), and the optional *command* is the command that is executed when a client from *client\_list* tries to access a server daemon from *daemon\_list*.

When a client requests a connection to a server, the **hosts.allow** and **hosts.deny** files on the server system are consulted as follows until a match is found:

1. If the daemon/client pair matches a line in **hosts.allow**, access is granted.
2. If the daemon/client pair matches a line in **hosts.deny**, access is denied.
3. If there is no match in the **hosts.allow** or **hosts.deny** file, access is granted.

The first match determines whether the client is allowed to access the server. When either **hosts.allow** or **hosts.deny** does not exist, it is as though that file was empty. Although it is not recommended, you can allow access to all daemons for all clients by removing both files.

Examples For a more secure system, put the following line in **hosts.deny** to block all access:

```
$ cat /etc/hosts.deny
...
ALL : ALL : echo '%c tried to connect to %d and was blocked' >> /var/log/tcpwrappers.log
```

This line prevents any client from connecting to any service, unless specifically permitted to do so in **hosts.allow**. When this rule is matched, it adds a line to the file named **/var/log/tcpwrappers.log**. The **%c** expands to client information and the **%d** expands to the name of the daemon the client attempted to connect to.

With the preceding **hosts.deny** file in place, you can include lines in **hosts.allow** that explicitly allow access to certain services and systems. For example, the following **hosts.allow** file allows anyone to connect to the OpenSSH daemon (**ssh**, **scp**, **sftp**) but allows **telnet** connections only from the same network as the local system and users on the 192.168. subnet:

```
$ cat /etc/hosts.allow
sshd: ALL
in.telnet: LOCAL
in.telnet: 192.168.* 127.0.0.1
...
```

The first line allows connection from any system (**ALL**) to **sshd**. The second line allows connection from any system in the same domain as the server (**LOCAL**). The third line matches any system whose IP address starts **192.168.** and the local system.

## SETTING UP A chroot JAIL

On early UNIX systems, the root directory was a fixed point in the filesystem. On modern UNIX variants, including Linux, you can define the root directory on a per-process basis. The `chroot` utility allows you to run a process with a root directory other than `/`.

The root directory appears at the top of the directory hierarchy and has no parent. Thus a process cannot access files above the root directory because none exists. If, for example, you run a program (process) and specify its root directory as `/tmp/jail`, the program would have no concept of any files in `/tmp` or above: `jail` is the program's root directory and is labeled `/` (not `jail`).

By creating an artificial root directory, frequently called a (chroot) jail, you prevent a program from accessing, executing, or modifying—possibly maliciously—files outside the directory hierarchy starting at its root. You must set up a chroot jail properly to increase security: If you do not set up a chroot jail correctly, you can make it easier for a malicious user to gain access to a system than if there were no chroot jail.

### USING chroot

Creating a chroot jail is simple: Working with `root` privileges, give the command `/usr/sbin/chroot directory`. The *directory* becomes the root directory and the process attempts to run the default shell. The following command sets up a chroot jail in the (existing) `/tmp/jail` directory:

```
$ sudo /usr/sbin/chroot /tmp/jail
/usr/sbin/chroot: cannot run command '/bin/bash': No such file or directory
```

This example sets up a chroot jail, but when it attempts to run the `bash` shell, it fails. Once the jail is set up, the directory that was named `jail` takes on the name of the root directory, `/`. As a consequence, `chroot` cannot find the file identified by the pathname `/bin/bash`. In this situation the chroot jail works correctly but is not useful.

Getting a chroot jail to work the way you want is more complicated. To have the preceding example run `bash` in a chroot jail, create a `bin` directory in `jail` (`/tmp/jail/bin`) and copy `/bin/bash` to this directory. Because the `bash` binary is dynamically linked to shared libraries, you need to copy these libraries into `jail` as well. The libraries go in `lib`.

The next example creates the necessary directories, copies `bash`, uses `ldd` to display the shared library dependencies of `bash`, and copies the necessary libraries to `lib`. The `linux-gate.so.1` file is a dynamically shared object (DSO) provided by the kernel to speed system calls; you do not need to copy it.

```
$ pwd
/tmp/jail
$ mkdir bin lib
$ cp /bin/bash bin
$ ldd bin/bash
linux-gate.so.1 => (0xffffe000)
libncurses.so.5 => /lib/libncurses.so.5 (0xb7f44000)
libdl.so.2 => /lib/tls/i686/cmov/libdl.so.2 (0xb7f40000)
libc.so.6 => /lib/tls/i686/cmov/libc.so.6 (0xb7dff000)
/lib/ld-linux.so.2 (0xb7f96000)
```

```
$ cp /lib/{libncurses.so.5,ld-linux.so.2} lib
$ cp /lib/tls/i686/cmov/{libdl.so.2,libc.so.6} lib
```

Now start the chroot jail again. Although all the setup can be done by an ordinary user, you must be working with **root** privileges to run chroot:

```
$ sudo /usr/sbin/chroot /tmp/jail
bash-3.2# pwd
/
bash-3.2# ls
bash: ls: command not found
bash-3.2# exit
exit
$
```

This time chroot finds and starts **bash**, which displays its default prompt (**bash-3.2#**). The **pwd** command works because it is a shell builtin (page 243). However, **bash** cannot find the **ls** utility because it is not in the chroot jail. You can copy **/bin/ls** and its libraries into the jail if you want users in the jail to be able to use **ls**. An **exit** command allows you to escape from the jail.

If you provide chroot with a second argument, it takes that argument as the name of the program to run inside the jail. The following command is equivalent to the preceding one:

```
$ sudo /usr/sbin/chroot /home/sam/jail /bin/bash
```

To set up a useful chroot jail, first determine which utilities the users of the chroot jail need. Then copy the appropriate binaries and their libraries into the jail. Alternatively, you can build static copies of the binaries and put them in the jail without installing separate libraries. (The statically linked binaries are considerably larger than their dynamic counterparts. The base system with **bash** and the core utilities exceeds 50 megabytes.) You can find the source code for most common utilities in the **bash** and **coreutils** source packages.

The chroot utility fails unless you run it with **root** privileges. The preceding examples used **sudo** to gain these privileges. The result of running chroot with **root** privileges is a **root** shell (a shell with **root** privileges) running inside a chroot jail. Because a user with **root** privileges can break out of a chroot jail, it is imperative that you run a program in the chroot jail with reduced privileges (i.e., privileges other than those of **root**).

There are several ways to reduce the privileges of a user. For example, you can put **su** or **sudo** in the jail and then start a shell or a daemon inside the jail, using one of these programs to reduce the privileges of the user working in the jail. A command such as the following starts a shell with reduced privileges inside the jail:

```
$ sudo /usr/sbin/chroot jailpath /usr/bin/sudo -u user /bin/bash &
```

where *jailpath* is the pathname of the jail directory, and *user* is the username under whose privileges the shell runs. The problem with this scenario is that **sudo** and **su** as compiled for Ubuntu, call PAM. To run one of these utilities you need to put all of PAM, including its libraries and configuration files, in the jail, along with **sudo** (or **su**) and the **/etc/passwd** file. Alternatively, you can recompile **su** or **sudo**.

The source code calls PAM, however, so you would need to modify the source so it does not call PAM. Either one of these techniques is time-consuming and introduces complexities that can lead to an insecure jail.

The following C program<sup>1</sup> runs a program with reduced privileges in a `chroot` jail. Because this program obtains the UID and GID of the user you specify on the command line before calling `chroot()`, you do not need to put `/etc/passwd` in the jail. The program reduces the privileges of the specified program to those of the specified user. This program is presented as a simple solution to the preceding issues so you can experiment with a `chroot` jail and better understand how it works.

**\$ cat uchroot.c**

```
/* See svn.gna.org/viewcvs/etoile/trunk/Etoile/LiveCD/uchroot.c for terms of use. */

#include <stdio.h>
#include <stdlib.h>
#include <pwd.h>

int main(int argc, char * argv[])
{
    if(argc < 4)
    {
        printf("Usage: %s {username} {directory} {program} [arguments]\n", argv[0]);
        return 1;
    }
    /* Parse arguments */
    struct passwd * pass = getpwnam(argv[1]);
    if(pass == NULL)
    {
        printf("Unknown user %s\n", argv[1]);
        return 2;
    }
    /* Set the required UID */
    chdir(argv[2]);
    if(chroot(argv[2])
        ||
        setgid(pass->pw_gid)
        ||
        setuid(pass->pw_uid))
    {
        printf("%s must be run as root. Current uid=%d, euid=%d\n",
            argv[0],
            (int)getuid(),
            (int)geteuid()
        );
        return 3;
    }
    char buf[100];
    return execv(argv[3], argv + 3);
}
```

---

1. Thanks to David Chisnall and the Étoilé Project ([etoile-project.org](http://etoile-project.org)) for the `uchroot.c` program.

The first of the following commands compiles `uchroot.c`, creating an executable file named `uchroot`. Subsequent commands move `uchroot` to `/usr/local/bin` and give it appropriate ownership.

```
$ cc -o uchroot uchroot.c
$ sudo mv uchroot /usr/local/bin
$ sudo chown root:root /usr/local/bin/uchroot
$ ls -l /usr/local/bin/uchroot
-rwxr-xr-x 1 root root 7922 Jul 17 08:26 /usr/local/bin/uchroot
```

Using the setup from earlier in this section, give the following command to run a shell with the privileges of the user `sam` inside a chroot jail:

```
$ sudo /usr/local/bin/uchroot sam /tmp/jail /bin/bash
```

### Keeping multiple chroot jails

**tip** If you plan to deploy multiple chroot jails, it is a good idea to keep a clean copy of the `bin` and `lib` directories somewhere other than one of the active jails.

### RUNNING A SERVICE IN A chroot JAIL

Running a shell inside a jail has limited usefulness. Instead, you are more likely to want to run a specific service inside the jail. To run a service inside a jail, make sure all files needed by that service are inside the jail. Using `uchroot`, the format of a command to start a service in a chroot jail is

```
$ sudo /usr/local/bin/uchroot user jailpath daemonname
```

where `jailpath` is the pathname of the jail directory, `user` is the username that runs the daemon, and `daemonname` is the pathname (inside the jail) of the daemon that provides the service.

Some servers are already set up to take advantage of chroot jails. You can set up DNS so that `named` runs in a jail (page 870), for example, and the `vsftpd` FTP server can automatically start chroot jails for clients (page 744).

### SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS

Some services need to be run by a user/process with `root` privileges but release their `root` privileges once started (Apache, Procmail, and `vsftpd` are examples). If you are running such a service, you do not need to use `uchroot` or `su` or `sudo` inside the jail.

A process run with `root` privileges can potentially escape from a chroot jail. For this reason, always reduce privileges before starting a program running inside the jail. Also, be careful about which `setuid` (page 201) binaries you allow inside a jail—a security hole in one of them could compromise the security of the jail. In addition, make sure the user cannot access executable files that he uploads to the jail.

## DHCP: CONFIGURES NETWORK INTERFACES

Instead of storing network configuration information in local files on each system, DHCP (Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol) enables client systems to retrieve network configuration information from a DHCP server each time they connect to the network. A DHCP server assigns IP addresses from a pool of addresses to clients as needed. Assigned addresses are typically temporary but need not be.

This technique has several advantages over storing network configuration information in local files:

- A new user can set up an Internet connection without having to deal with IP addresses, netmasks, DNS addresses, and other technical details. An experienced user can set up a connection more quickly.
- DHCP facilitates assignment and management of IP addresses and related network information by centralizing the process on a server. A system administrator can configure new systems, including laptops that connect to the network from different locations, to use DHCP; DHCP then assigns IP addresses only when each system connects to the network. The pool of IP addresses is managed as a group on the DHCP server.
- IP addresses can be used by more than one system, reducing the total number of IP addresses needed. This conservation of addresses is important because the Internet is quickly running out of IPv4 addresses. Although a particular IP address can be used by only one system at a time, many end-user systems require addresses only occasionally, when they connect to the Internet. By reusing IP addresses, DHCP has lengthened the life of the IPv4 protocol. DHCP applies to IPv4 only, as IPv6 (page 369) forces systems to configure their IP addresses automatically (called autoconfiguration) when they connect to a network.

DHCP is particularly useful for an administrator who is responsible for maintaining a large number of systems because individual systems no longer need to store unique configuration information. With DHCP, the administrator can set up a master system and deploy new systems with a copy of the master's hard disk. In educational establishments and other open-access facilities, the hard disk image may be stored on a shared drive, with each workstation automatically restoring itself to pristine condition at the end of each day.

### MORE INFORMATION

Web [www.dhcp.org](http://www.dhcp.org)  
[www.dhcp-handbook.com/dhcp\\_faq.html](http://www.dhcp-handbook.com/dhcp_faq.html) DHCP FAQ

HOWTO *DHCP Mini HOWTO*

### How DHCP WORKS

Using `dhclient`, the client contacts the server daemon, `dhcpd`, to obtain the IP address, netmask, broadcast address, nameserver address, and other networking

parameters. In turn, the server provides a *lease* on the IP address to the client. The client can request the specific terms of the lease, including its duration; the server can limit these terms. While connected to the network, a client typically requests extensions of its lease as necessary so its IP address remains the same. This lease may expire once the client is disconnected from the network, with the server giving the client a new IP address when it requests a new lease. You can also set up a DHCP server to provide static IP addresses for specific clients (refer to “Static Versus Dynamic IP Addresses” on page 364). DHCP is broadcast based, so both client and server must be on the same subnet (page 367).

When you install Ubuntu, the system runs a DHCP client, connects to a DHCP server if it can find one, and configures its network interface. You can use `firestarter` (page 886) to configure and run a DHCP server.

## DHCP CLIENT

A DHCP client requests network configuration parameters from the DHCP server and uses those parameters to configure its network interface.

### PREREQUISITES

Make sure the following package is installed:

- `dhcp3-client`

### dhclient: THE DHCP CLIENT

When a DHCP client system connects to the network, `dhclient` requests a lease from the DHCP server and configures the client’s network interface(s). Once a DHCP client has requested and established a lease, it stores the lease information in a file named `dhclient.interface.leases`, which is stored in `/var/lib/dhcp3`. The *interface* is the name of the interface that the client uses, such as `eth0`. The system uses this information to reestablish a lease when either the server or the client needs to reboot. You need to change the default DHCP client configuration file, `/etc/dhcp3/dhclient.conf`, only for custom configurations.

The following `dhclient.conf` file specifies a single interface, `eth0`:

```
$ cat /etc/dhclient.conf
interface "eth0"
{
send dhcp-client-identifier 1:xx:xx:xx:xx:xx:xx;
send dhcp-lease-time 86400;
}
```

In the preceding file, the 1 in the `dhcp-client-identifier` specifies an Ethernet network and `xx:xx:xx:xx:xx:xx` is the *MAC address* (page 1046) of the device controlling that interface. See page 541 for instructions on how to determine the MAC address of a device. The `dhcp-lease-time` is the duration, in seconds, of the lease on the IP address. While the client is connected to the network, `dhclient` automatically renews the lease each time half of the lease time is up. The lease time of 86,400 seconds (or one day) is a reasonable choice for a workstation.

## DHCP SERVER

A DHCP server maintains a list of IP addresses and other configuration parameters. Clients request network configuration parameters from the server.

### PREREQUISITES

Install the following package:

- **dhcp3-server**

**dhcp3-server** init script When you install the **dhcpd3-server** package, the **dpkg postinst** script starts the **dhcpd3** daemon. After you configure **dhcpd3**, call the **dhcp3-server** init script to restart the **dhcpd3** daemon:

```
$ sudo /etc/init.d/dhcp3-server restart
```

### dhcpd: THE DHCP DAEMON

A simple DHCP server (**dhcpd**) allows you to add clients to a network without maintaining a list of assigned IP addresses. A simple network, such as a home LAN sharing an Internet connection, can use DHCP to assign a dynamic IP address to almost all nodes. The exceptions are servers and routers, which must be at known network locations to be able to receive connections. If servers and routers are configured without DHCP, you can specify a simple DHCP server configuration in **/etc/dhcp3/dhcpd.conf**:

```
$ cat /etc/dhcp3/dhcpd.conf
default-lease-time 600;
max-lease-time 86400;

option subnet-mask 255.255.255.0;
option broadcast-address 192.168.1.255;
option routers 192.168.1.1;
option domain-name-servers 192.168.1.1;
option domain-name "example.com";

subnet 192.168.1.0 netmask 255.255.255.0 {
    range 192.168.1.2 192.168.1.200;
}
```

The **/etc/default/dhcp3-server** file specifies the interfaces that **dhcpd** serves requests on. By default, **dhcpd** uses **eth0**. To use another interface or to use more than one interface, set the **INTERFACES** variable in this file to a **SPACE**-separated list of the interfaces you want to use; enclose the list within quotation marks.

The preceding configuration file specifies a LAN where both the router and DNS server are located on **192.168.1.1**. The **default-lease-time** specifies the number of seconds the dynamic IP lease will remain valid if the client does not specify a duration. The **max-lease-time** is the maximum time allowed for a lease.

The information in the **option** lines is sent to each client when it connects. The names following the word **option** specify what the following argument represents. For example, the **option broadcast-address** line specifies the broadcast address of the network. The **routers** and **domain-name-servers** options allow multiple values separated by commas.

The **subnet** section includes a **range** line that specifies the range of IP addresses the DHCP server can assign. In case of multiple subnets, you can define options, such as **subnet-mask**, inside the **subnet** section. Options defined outside all **subnet** sections are global and apply to all subnets.

The preceding configuration file assigns addresses in the range from 192.168.1.2 to 192.168.1.200. The DHCP server starts at the bottom of this range and attempts to assign a new IP address to each new client. Once the DHCP server reaches the top of the range, it starts reassigning IP addresses that have been used in the past but are not currently in use. If you have fewer systems than IP addresses, the IP address of each system should remain fairly constant. Two systems cannot use the same IP address at the same time.

Once you have configured a DHCP server, restart it using the **dhcpcd** init script (page 540). With the server is running, clients configured to obtain an IP address from the server using DHCP should be able to do so.

### STATIC IP ADDRESSES

As mentioned earlier, routers and servers typically require static IP addresses. Although you can manually configure IP addresses for these systems, it may be more convenient to have the DHCP server provide them with static IP addresses.

When a system that requires a specific static IP address connects to the network and contacts the DHCP server, the server needs a way to identify the system so it can assign the proper IP address to that system. The DHCP server uses the *MAC address* (page 1046) of the system's Ethernet card (NIC) as an identifier. When you set up the server, you must know the MAC address of each system that requires a static IP address.

Determining a MAC address

The **ifconfig** utility displays the MAC addresses of the Ethernet cards in a system. In the following example, the MAC addresses are the colon-separated series of hexadecimal number pairs following **HWaddr**:

```
$ ifconfig | grep -i hwaddr
eth0      Link encap:Ethernet HWaddr BA:DF:00:DF:C0:FF
eth1      Link encap:Ethernet HWaddr 00:02:B3:41:35:98
```

Run **ifconfig** on each system that requires a static IP address. Once you have determined the MAC addresses of these systems, you can add a **host** section to the **/etc/dhcpd.conf** file for each one, instructing the DHCP server to assign a specific address to that system. The following **host** section assigns the address **192.168.1.1** to the system with the MAC address of **BA:DF:00:DF:C0:FF**:

```
$ cat /etc/dhcp3/dhcpd.conf
...
host router {
    hardware ethernet BA:DF:00:DF:C0:FF;
    fixed-address 192.168.1.1;
    option host-name router;
}
```

The name following **host** is used internally by **dhcpcd**. The name specified after **option host-name** is passed to the client and can be a hostname or an FQDN. After making changes to **dhcpd.conf**, restart **dhcpcd** using the **dhcpcd** init script (page 540).

## nsswitch.conf: WHICH SERVICE TO LOOK AT FIRST

With the advent of NIS and DNS, finding user and system information was no longer a simple matter of searching a local file. Where once you looked in `/etc/passwd` to get user information and in `/etc/hosts` to find system address information, you can now use several methods to obtain this type of information. The `/etc/nsswitch.conf` (name service switch configuration) file specifies which methods to use and the order in which to use them when looking for a certain type of information. You can also specify which action the system should take based on whether a method succeeds or fails.

Format Each line in `nsswitch.conf` specifies how to search for a piece of information, such as a user's password. A line in `nsswitch.conf` has the following format:

```
info:           method [[action]] [method [[action]]...]
```

where *info* specifies the type of information the line describes, *method* is the method used to find the information, and *action* is the response to the return status of the preceding *method*. The action is enclosed within square brackets.

## HOW nsswitch.conf WORKS

When called upon to supply information that `nsswitch.conf` describes, the system examines the line with the appropriate *info* field. It uses the methods specified on the line, starting with the method on the left. By default, when it finds the desired information, the system stops searching. Without an *action* specification, when a method fails to return a result, the system tries the next action. It is possible for the search to end without finding the requested information.

### INFORMATION

The `nsswitch.conf` file commonly controls searches for usernames, passwords, host IP addresses, and group information. The following list describes most of the types of information (*info* in the syntax given earlier) that `nsswitch.conf` controls searches for.

<b>automount</b>	Automount ( <code>/etc/auto.master</code> and <code>/etc/auto.misc</code> , page 818)
<b>bootparams</b>	Diskless and other booting options (See the <code>bootparam</code> man page.)
<b>ethers</b>	MAC address (page 1046)
<b>group</b>	Groups of users ( <code>/etc/group</code> , page 558)
<b>hosts</b>	System information ( <code>/etc/hosts</code> , page 559)
<b>networks</b>	Network information ( <code>/etc/networks</code> )
<b>passwd</b>	User information ( <code>/etc/passwd</code> , page 560)
<b>protocols</b>	Protocol information ( <code>/etc/protocols</code> , page 561)
<b>publickey</b>	Used for NFS running in secure mode
<b>rpc</b>	RPC names and numbers ( <code>/etc/rpc</code> , page 562)
<b>services</b>	Services information ( <code>/etc/services</code> , page 562)
<b>shadow</b>	Shadow password information ( <code>/etc/shadow</code> , page 562)

## METHODS

Following is a list of the types of information that **nsswitch.conf** controls searches for (*method* in the format above). For each type of information, you can specify one or more of the following methods:<sup>2</sup>

<b>files</b>	Searches local files such as <b>/etc/passwd</b> and <b>/etc/hosts</b>
<b>nis</b>	Searches the NIS database; <b>yp</b> is an alias for <b>nis</b>
<b>dns</b>	Queries the DNS ( <b>hosts</b> queries only)
<b>compat</b>	± syntax in <b>passwd</b> , <b>group</b> , and <b>shadow</b> files (page 544)

## SEARCH ORDER

The information provided by two or more methods may overlap: For example, both **files** and **nis** may provide password information for the same user. With overlapping information, you need to consider which method you want to be authoritative (take precedence); place that method at the left of the list of methods.

The default **nsswitch.conf** file lists methods without actions, assuming no overlap (which is normal). In this case, the order is not critical: When one method fails, the system goes to the next one and all that is lost is a little time. Order becomes critical when you use actions between methods or when overlapping entries differ.

The first of the following lines from **nsswitch.conf** causes the system to search for password information in **/etc/passwd** and, if that fails, to use NIS to find the information. If the user you are looking for is listed in both places, the information in the local file is used and is considered authoritative. The second line uses NIS to find an IP address given a hostname; if that fails, it searches **/etc/hosts**; if that fails, it checks with DNS to find the information.

```
passwd      files nis
hosts      nis files dns
```

## ACTION ITEMS

Each method can optionally be followed by an action item that specifies what to do if the method succeeds or fails. An action item has the following format:

```
[(!)STATUS=action]
```

where the opening and closing square brackets are part of the format and do not indicate that the contents are optional; *STATUS* (uppercase by convention) is the status being tested for; and *action* is the action to be taken if *STATUS* matches the status returned by the preceding method. The leading exclamation point (!) is optional and negates the status.

---

2. There are other, less commonly used methods. See the default **/etc/nsswitch.conf** file and the **nsswitch.conf** man page for more information. Although NIS+ belongs in this list, it is not implemented as a Linux server and is not discussed in this book.

**STATUS** Values for *STATUS* are

**NOTFOUND** The method worked but the value being searched for was not found. The default action is **continue**.

**SUCCESS** The method worked and the value being searched for was found; no error was returned. The default action is **return**.

**UNAVAIL** The method failed because it is permanently unavailable. For example, the required file may not be accessible or the required server may be down. The default action is **continue**.

**TRYAGAIN** The method failed because it was temporarily unavailable. For example, a file may be locked or a server overloaded. The default action is **continue**.

**action** Values for *action* are

**return** Returns to the calling routine with or without a value.

**continue** Continues with the next method. Any returned value is overwritten by a value found by a subsequent method.

**Example** The following line from **nsswitch.conf** causes the system first to use DNS to search for the IP address of a given host. The action item following the DNS method tests whether the status returned by the method is not (!) UNAVAIL.

```
hosts          dns [!UNAVAIL=return] files
```

The system takes the action associated with the *STATUS* (**return**) if the DNS method does not return UNAVAIL (!UNAVAIL)—that is, if DNS returns SUCCESS, NOTFOUND, or TRYAGAIN. The result is that the following method (**files**) is used only when the DNS server is unavailable. If the DNS server is *not unavailable* (read the two negatives as “is available”), the search returns the domain name or reports that the domain name was not found. The search uses the **files** method (checks the local **/etc/hosts** file) only if the server is not available.

### **COMPAT METHOD: ± IN passwd, group, AND shadow FILES**

You can put special codes in the **/etc/passwd**, **/etc/group**, and **/etc/shadow** files that cause the system, when you specify the **compat** method in **nsswitch.conf**, to combine and modify entries in the local files and the NIS maps.

A plus sign (+) at the beginning of a line in one of these files adds NIS information; a minus sign (–) removes information. For example, to use these codes in the **passwd** file, specify **passwd: compat** in **nsswitch.conf**. The system then goes through the **passwd** file in order, adding or removing the appropriate NIS entries when it reaches each line that starts with a + or –.

Although you can put a plus sign at the end of the **passwd** file, specify **passwd: compat** in **nsswitch.conf** to search the local **passwd** file, and then go through the NIS map, it is more efficient to put **passwd: file nis** in **nsswitch.conf** and not modify the **passwd** file.

# 21

## exim4: SETTING UP MAIL SERVERS, CLIENTS, AND MORE

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Sending and receiving email require three pieces of software. At each end, there is a client, called an MUA (mail user agent), which is a bridge between a user and the mail system. Common MUAs are mutt, Evolution, KMail, Thunderbird, and Outlook. When you send an email, the MUA hands it to an MTA (a mail transfer agent, such as **exim4** or **sendmail**), which transfers it to the destination server. At the destination, an MDA (a mail delivery agent, such as **procmail**) puts the mail in the recipient's mailbox file. On Linux systems, the MUA on the receiving system either reads the mailbox file or retrieves mail from a remote MUA or MTA, such as an ISP's SMTP (Simple Mail Transfer Protocol) server, using POP (Post Office Protocol) or IMAP (Internet Message Access Protocol).

Most Linux MUAs expect a local MTA such as **exim4** to deliver outgoing email. On some systems, including those with a dial-up connection to the Internet, the MTA sends email to an ISP's mail server. Because most MTAs use SMTP to deliver email, they are often referred to as SMTP servers. By default, when you install **exim4** on an Ubuntu system, **exim4** uses its own builtin MDA to deliver email to the recipient's mailbox file.

### You do not need to set up `exim4` to send and receive email

**tip** Most MUAs can use POP or IMAP to receive email from an ISP's server. These protocols do not require an MTA such as `exim4`. As a consequence, you do not need to install or configure `exim4` (or another MTA) to receive email. Although you still need SMTP to send email, the SMTP server can be at a remote location, such as your ISP. Thus you may not need to concern yourself with it, either.

---

---

## INTRODUCTION TO `exim4`

When the network that was to evolve into the Internet was first set up, it connected a few computers, each serving a large number of users and running several services. Each computer was capable of sending and receiving email and had a unique hostname, which was used as a destination for email.

Today the Internet has a large number of transient clients. Because these clients do not have fixed IP addresses or hostnames, they cannot receive email directly. Users on these systems usually maintain an account on an email server run by their employer or an ISP, and they collect email from this account using POP or IMAP. Unless you own a domain where you want to receive email, you will not need to set up `exim4` to receive mail from nonlocal systems.

**Smarthost** You can set up `exim4` on a client system so it sends mail bound for nonlocal systems to an SMTP server that relays the mail to its destination. This type of server is called a *smarthost*. Such a configuration is required by organizations that use firewalls to prevent email from being sent out on the Internet from any system other than the company's official mail servers. As a partial defense against spreading viruses, some ISPs block outbound port 25 to prevent their customers from sending email directly to a remote computer. This configuration is required by these ISPs.

You can also set up `exim4` as a server that sends mail to nonlocal systems and does not use an ISP as a relay. In this configuration, `exim4` connects directly to the SMTP servers for the domains receiving the email. An ISP set up as a smarthost is configured this way.

You can set up `exim4` to accept email for a registered domain name as specified in the domain's DNS MX record (page 852). However, most mail clients (MUAs) do not interact directly with `exim4` to receive email. Instead, they use POP or IMAP—protocols that include features for managing mail folders, leaving messages on the server, and reading only the subject of an email without downloading the entire message. If you want to collect your email from a system other than the one running the incoming mail server, you may need to set up a POP or IMAP server, as discussed on page 776.

## PREREQUISITES

Install the following packages:

- `exim4` (a virtual package)
- `eximon4` (optional; monitors `exim4`)
- `mailx` (optional; installs mail, which is handy for testing `exim4` from the command line)
- `exim4-doc-html` (optional; `exim4` documentation in HTML format)
- `exim4-doc-info` (optional; `exim4` documentation in `info` format)

`exim4` init script When you install the `exim4` package, the `dpkg postinst` script minimally configures `exim4` and starts the `exim4` daemon. After you configure `exim4`, call the `exim4` init script to restart `exim4`:

```
$ sudo /etc/init.d/exim4 restart
```

After changing the `exim4` configuration on an active server, use `reload` in place of `restart` to reload `exim4` configuration files without interrupting the work `exim4` is doing. The `exim4` init script accepts several nonstandard arguments:

```
$ /etc/init.d/exim4
```

```
Usage: /etc/init.d/exim4 {start|stop|restart|reload|status|what|force-stop}
```

The `status` and `what` arguments display information about `exim4`. The `force-stop` argument immediately kills all `exim4` processes.

## NOTES

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| Firewall                                     | An SMTP server normally uses TCP port 25. If an SMTP server system that receives nonlocal mail is running a firewall, you need to open this port. To do so, use <code>firestarter</code> (page 886) to set a policy that allows SMTP service.   |
| Log files                                    | You must be a member of the <code>adm</code> group or work with <code>root</code> privileges to view the log files in <code>/var/log/exim4</code> .   |
| <code>sendmail</code> and <code>exim4</code> | Although it does not work the same way <code>sendmail</code> does, Ubuntu configures <code>exim4</code> as a drop-in replacement for <code>sendmail</code> . The <code>exim4-daemon-light</code> package, which is part of the <code>exim4</code> virtual package, includes <code>/usr/sbin/sendmail</code> , which is a link to <code>exim4</code> . Because the <code>exim4</code> daemon accepts many of <code>sendmail</code> 's options, programs that depend on <code>sendmail</code> will work with <code>exim4</code> installed in place of <code>sendmail</code> . |
| Local and nonlocal systems                   | The <code>exim4</code> daemon sends and receives email. A piece of email that <code>exim4</code> receives can originate on a local system or on a nonlocal system. Similarly, email that <code>exim4</code> sends can be destined for a local or a nonlocal system. The <code>exim4</code> daemon processes each piece of email based on its origin and destination.  |
| The local system versus local systems        | <i>The local system</i> is the one <code>exim4</code> is running on. <i>Local systems</i> are systems that are on the same LAN as the local system.<br>As it is installed, <code>exim4</code> delivers mail to the local system only.   |

## MORE INFORMATION

- Web `exim4` [www.exim.org](http://www.exim.org) (includes the complete `exim4` specification),  
[www.exim-new-users.co.uk](http://www.exim-new-users.co.uk), [wiki.debian.org/PkgExim4](http://wiki.debian.org/PkgExim4)  
 SpamAssassin [spamassassin.apache.org](http://spamassassin.apache.org), [wiki.apache.org/spamassassin](http://wiki.apache.org/spamassassin)  
 Spam database [razor.sourceforge.net](http://razor.sourceforge.net)  
 Mailman [www.list.org](http://www.list.org)  
**procmail** [www.procmail.org](http://www.procmail.org)  
 SquirrelMail [www.squirrelmail.org](http://www.squirrelmail.org)  
 IMAP [www.imap.org](http://www.imap.org)  
 Dovecot [www.dovecot.org](http://www.dovecot.org)  
 Postfix [www.postfix.org/docs.html](http://www.postfix.org/docs.html) (alternative MTA; page 779)  
 Qmail [www.qmail.org/top.html](http://www.qmail.org/top.html)
- Local `exim4` `/usr/share/doc/exim4*/*`  
 SpamAssassin `/usr/share/doc/spam*`  
 Dovecot `/usr/share/doc/dovecot*`  
 man pages `exim4` `exim4_files` `update-exim4.conf` `update-exim4defaults` `spamassassin`  
`spamd` `spamd`  
 SpamAssassin Install the `perl-doc` package and give the following command:
- ```
$ perldoc Mail::SpamAssassin::Conf
```

## JUMPSTART I: CONFIGURING `exim4` TO USE A SMARTHOST

This JumpStart configures an `exim4` server that sends mail from users on local systems to local and nonlocal destinations and does not accept mail from nonlocal systems. This server

- Accepts email originating on local systems for delivery to local systems.
- Accepts email originating on local systems for delivery to nonlocal systems, delivering it using an SMTP server (a smarthost)—typically an ISP—to relay email to its destination.
- Does not deliver email originating on nonlocal systems. As is frequently the case, you need to use POP or IMAP to receive email.
- Does not forward email originating on nonlocal systems to other nonlocal systems (does not relay email).

To set up this server, you need to change the values of a few configuration variables in `/etc/exim4/update-exim4.conf.conf` (page 766) and restart `exim4`. The `dpkg-reconfigure` utility (page 768) guides you in editing this file; this JumpStart uses a text editor. Working with `root` privileges, use a text editor to make the following changes to `update-exim4.conf.conf`:

```
dc_eximconfig_configtype='smarthost'  
smarthost='mail.example.net'
```

- Configuration type** Set the `dc_eximconfig_configtype` configuration variable to `smarthost` to cause `exim4` to send mail bound for nonlocal systems to the system that the `smarthost` configuration variable specifies. This line should appear exactly as shown on the previous page.
- Smarthost** With `dc_eximconfig_configtype` set to `smarthost`, set `smarthost` to the FQDN or IP address (preferred) of the remote SMTP server (the `smarthost`) that `exim4` uses to relay email to nonlocal systems. Replace `mail.example.net` with this FQDN or IP address. For Boolean variables in `update-exim4.conf.conf`, `exim4` interprets the null value (specified by `'`) as a value of `false`. With these changes, the file should look similar to this:

```
$ cat /etc/exim4/update-exim4.conf.conf
...
dc_eximconfig_configtype='smarthost'
dc_other_hostnames=''
dc_local_interfaces='127.0.0.1'
dc_readhost=''
dc_relay_domains=''
dc_minimaldns='false'
dc_relay_nets=''
dc_smarthost='mail.example.net'
CFILEMODE='644'
dc_use_split_config='false'
dc_hide_mailname='false'
dc_mailname_in_oh='true'
dc_localdelivery='mail_spool'
```

The `exim4` server does not use the value of the `dc_local_interfaces` variable in a `smarthost` configuration, so you can leave it blank. However, in other configurations, the value of `127.0.0.1` prevents `exim4` from accepting email from nonlocal systems. It is a good idea to configure `exim4` this way and change this variable only when you are ready to accept mail from other systems.

To minimize network accesses for DNS lookups, which can be helpful if you are using a dial-up line, change the value of the `dc_minimaldns` configuration variable to `true`.

- /etc/mailname** The `/etc/mailname` file initially holds the node name (`uname -n`) of the server. The string stored in `/etc/mailname` appears as the name of the sending system on the envelope-from and From lines of email that originates on the local system. If you want email to appear to come from a different system, change the contents of this file. You can modify this file using a text editor; the `dpkg-reconfigure` utility can also change it.

The following file causes mail sent from the local system to appear to come from `username@example.com`, where `username` is the username of the user who is sending the email:

```
$ cat /etc/mailname
example.com
```

See page 766 for more information on `exim4` configuration variables. After making these changes, restart `exim4` (page 757).

Test Test `exim4` with the following command:

```
$ echo "my exim4 test" | exim4 user@remote.host
```

Replace `user@remote.host` with an email address on *another system* where you receive email. You need to send email to a remote system to make sure that `exim4` is sending email to the remote SMTP server (the `smarthost`). If the mail is not delivered, check the email of the user who sent the email (on the local system) for errors. Also check the log file(s) in the `/var/log/exim4` directory.

## JUMPSTART II: CONFIGURING `exim4` TO SEND AND RECEIVE EMAIL

To receive email sent from a nonlocal system to a registered domain (that you control), you need to configure `exim4` to accept email from nonlocal systems. This JumpStart describes how to set up a server that

- Accepts email from local and nonlocal systems.
- Delivers email that originates on local systems to a local system or directly to a nonlocal system, without using a relay.
- Delivers email that originates on nonlocal systems to a local system only.
- Does not forward email originating on nonlocal systems to other nonlocal systems (does not relay email).

This server does not relay email originating on nonlocal systems. (You must set the `dc_relay_domains` variable [page 767] for the local system to act as a relay.) For this configuration to work, you must be able to make outbound connections and receive inbound connections on port 25 (see “Firewall” on page 757).

Working with `root` privileges, use a text editor to set the following configuration variables in `/etc/exim4/update-exim4.conf.conf`:

```
dc_eximconfig_configtype='internet'
dc_other_hostnames='mydom.example.com'
dc_local_interfaces=''
```

**Configuration type** Set `dc_eximconfig_configtype` to `internet` to cause `exim4` to send mail directly to nonlocal systems as specified by the DNS MX record (page 852) for the domain the mail is addressed to and to accept email on the interfaces specified by `dc_local_interfaces` (next page). This line should appear exactly as shown above.

**Other hostnames** The `dc_other_hostnames` configuration variable specifies the FQDNs or IP addresses that the local server receives mail addressed to. Replace `mydom.example.com` with these FQDN or IP addresses. You must separate multiple entries with semicolons. These values do not necessarily include the FQDN or the IP address of the local server.

Local interfaces Set **dc\_local\_interfaces** to the interface you want **exim4** to listen on. Set it to the null value (') to listen on all interfaces.

As in JumpStart I, you may need to change the value of **/etc/mailname** (page 759). For Boolean variables in this file, **exim4** interprets the null value (specified by ') as *false*. The file should look similar to this:

```
$ cat /etc/exim4/update-exim4.conf.conf
...
dc_eximconfig_configtype='internet'
dc_other_hostnames='mydom.example.com'
dc_local_interfaces=''
dc_readhost=''
dc_relay_domains=''
dc_minimaldns='false'
dc_relay_nets=''
dc_smarthost=''
CFILEMODE='644'
dc_use_split_config='false'
dc_hide_mailname=''
dc_mailname_in_oh='true'
dc_localdelivery='mail_spool'
```

See page 766 for more information on **exim4** configuration variables. Once you have restarted **exim4**, it will accept mail addressed to the local system. To receive email addressed to a domain, the DNS MX record (page 852) for that domain must point to the IP address of the local system. If you are not running a DNS server, you must ask your ISP to set up an MX record or else receive mail at the IP address of the server. If you receive email addressed to an IP address, set **dc\_other\_hostnames** to that IP address.

## How exim4 WORKS

When **exim4** receives email, from both local and nonlocal systems, it creates in the **/var/spool/exim4/input** directory two files that hold the message while **exim4** processes it. To identify a particular message, **exim4** generates a 16-character message ID and uses that string in filenames pertaining to the email. The **exim4** daemon stores the body of the message in a file named by the message ID followed by **-D** (data). It stores the headers and envelope information in a file named by the message ID followed by **-H** (header).

If **exim4** cannot deliver a message, it marks the message as *frozen* and makes no further attempt to deliver it. Once it has successfully delivered an email, **exim4** removes all files pertaining to that email from **/var/spool/exim4/input**.

Mail addressed to the local system By default, **exim4** delivers email addressed to the local system to users' files in the mail spool directory, **/var/mail**, in **mbox** format. Within this directory, each user has a mail file named with the user's username. Mail remains in these files until it is collected, typically by an MUA. Once an MUA collects the mail from the mail spool, the MUA stores the mail as directed by the user, usually in the user's home directory.

|                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mail addressed to nonlocal systems | The scheme that <b>exim4</b> uses to process email addressed to a nonlocal system depends on how it is configured: It can send the email to a smarthost, it can send the email to the system pointed to by the DNS MX record of the domain the email is addressed to, or it can refuse to send the email.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>mbox</b> versus <b>maildir</b>  | The <b>mbox</b> format holds all messages for a user in a single file. To prevent corruption, a process must lock this file while it is adding messages to or deleting messages from the file; thus the MUA cannot delete a message at the same time the MTA is adding messages. A competing format, <b>maildir</b> , holds each message in a separate file. This format does not use locks, allowing an MUA to delete messages from a user at the same time as mail is delivered to the same user. In addition, the <b>maildir</b> format is better able to handle larger mailboxes. The downside is that the <b>maildir</b> format adds overhead when you are using a protocol such as IMAP to check messages. The <b>exim4</b> daemon supports both <b>mbox</b> and <b>maildir</b> formats (see <b>dc_localdelivery</b> on page 767). Qmail (page 779), which is an alternative to <b>sendmail</b> and <b>exim4</b> , uses <b>maildir</b> -format mailboxes. |

## MAIL LOGS

By default, **exim4** sends normal log messages to `/var/exim4/mainlog`, with other messages going to other files in the same directory. The following lines in a **mainlog** file describe an email message sent directly to a remote system's SMTP server. The **exim4** daemon writes one line each time it receives a message and one line each time it attempts to deliver a message. The **Completed** line indicates that **exim4** has completed its part in delivering the message. Each line starts with the date and time of the entry followed by the message ID.

```
$ tail -3 /var/log/exim4/mainlog
2007-07-19 23:13:12 1IB1jk-0000t8-1Z <= zachs@example.com U=sam P=local S=304
2007-07-19 23:13:17 1IB1jk-0000t8-1Z => zachs@example.com R=dnslookup T=remote_smtp
H=filter.mx.meer.net [64.13.141.12]
2007-07-19 23:13:17 1IB1jk-0000t8-1Z Completed
```

The next entry on each line except the **Completed** line is a two-character status flag that tells you which kind of event the line describes:

```
<=    Received a message
=>    Delivered a message normally
->    Delivered a message normally to an additional address (same delivery)
*>   Did not deliver because of a -N command line option
**    Did not deliver because the address bounced
==    Did not deliver because of a temporary problem
```

Information following the flag is preceded by one of the following letters, which indicates the type of the information, and an equal sign:

```
H     Name of remote system (host)
U     Username of the user who sent the message
P     Protocol used to receive the message
R     Router used to process the message
T     Transport used to process the message
S     Size of the message in bytes
```

The first line in the preceding example indicates that **exim4** received a 304-byte message to be delivered to **zachs@example.com** from **sam** on the **local** system. The next line indicates that **exim4** looked up the address using DNS (**dnslookup**) and delivered it to the remote SMTP server (**remote\_smtp**) at **filter.mx.meer.net**, which has an IP address of 64.13.141.12.

The following log entries describe a message that **exim4** received from a remote system and delivered to the local system:

```
2007-07-19 23:13:32 1IB1k4-0000tL-8L <= zachs@gmail.com H=wx-out-0506.google.com
[66.249.82.229] P=esmtP S=1913 id=7154255d0707192313y304a1b27t39f...@mail.gmail.com
2007-07-19 23:13:32 1IB1k4-0000tL-8L => sam <sams@example.com> R=local_user T=mail_spool
2007-07-19 23:13:32 1IB1k4-0000tL-8L Completed
```

See the **exim4** specification for more information on log files. If you send and receive a lot of email, the mail logs can grow quite large. The **logrotate** (page 684) **exim4-base** file archives and rotates these files regularly.

## WORKING WITH MESSAGES

You can call **exim4** with many different options to work with email that is on the system and to generate records of email that has passed through the system. Most of these options begin with **-M** and require the message ID (see the preceding section) of the piece of email you want to work with. The following command removes a message from the queue:

```
$ sudo exim4 -Mrm 1IEKKj-0006CQ-LM
Message 1IEKKj-0006CQ-LM has been removed
```

Following are some of the **exim4** options you can use to work with a message. Each of these options must be followed by a message ID. See the **exim4** man page for a complete list.

```
-Mf   Mark message as frozen
-Mrm  Remove message
-Mt   Thaw message
-Mvb  Display message body
-Mvh  Display message header
```

## ALIASES AND FORWARDING

You can use the **aliases** and **.forward** (page 764) files to forward email.

**/etc/aliases** Most of the time when you send email, it goes to a specific person; the recipient, **user@system**, maps to a real user on the specified system. Sometimes, however, you may want email to go to a class of users and not to a specific recipient. Examples of classes of users include **postmaster**, **webmaster**, **root**, and **tech\_support**. Different users may receive this email at different times or the email may go to a group of users. You can use the **/etc/aliases** file to map local addresses and classes to local users, files, commands, and local as well as to nonlocal addresses.

Each line in **/etc/aliases** contains the name of a local (pseudo)user, followed by a colon, whitespace, and a comma-separated list of destinations. Because email sent

to the **root** account is rarely checked, the default installation includes an entry similar to the following that redirects email sent to **root** to the initial user:

```
root: sam
```

You can set up an alias to forward email to more than one user. The following line forwards mail sent to **abuse** on the local system to **sam** and **max**:

```
abuse: sam, max
```

You can create simple mailing lists with this type of alias. For example, the following alias sends copies of all email sent to **admin** on the local system to several users, including Zach, who is on a different system:

```
admin: sam, helen, max, zach@example.com
```

You can direct email to a file by specifying an absolute pathname in place of a destination address. The following alias, which is quite popular among less conscientious system administrators, redirects email sent to **complaints** to **/dev/null** (page 555), where it disappears:

```
complaints: /dev/null
```

You can also send email to standard input of a command by preceding the command with the pipe character (**|**). This technique is commonly used by mailing list software such as Mailman (page 775). For each list it maintains, Mailman has entries, such as the following one for **painting\_class**, in the **aliases** file:

```
painting_class: "|/var/lib/mailman/mail/mailman post painting_class"
```

See the **exim4\_files** man page for information on **exim4** files, including **aliases**.

**newaliases** After you edit **/etc/aliases**, you must run **newaliases** while you are working with **root** privileges. The **/usr/bin/newaliases** file is a symbolic link to **exim4**. Running **newaliases** calls **exim4**, which rebuilds the **exim4** alias database.

**~/forward** Systemwide aliases are useful in many cases, but non**root** users cannot make or change them. Sometimes you may want to forward your own mail: Maybe you want mail from several systems to go to one address or perhaps you want to forward your mail while you are working at another office. The **~/forward** file allows ordinary users to forward their email.

Lines in a **.forward** file are the same as the right column of the **aliases** file explained earlier in this section: Destinations are listed one per line and can be a local user, a remote email address, a filename, or a command preceded by the pipe character (**|**).

Mail that you forward does not go to your local mailbox. If you want to forward mail and keep a copy in your local mailbox, you must specify your local username preceded by a backslash to prevent an infinite loop. The following example sends Sam's email to himself on the local system and on the system at **example.com**:

```
$cat ~/sam/.forward
sams@example.com
\sam
```

## RELATED PROGRAMS

- exim4** The `exim4` packages include several programs. The primary program, `exim4`, reads from standard input and sends an email to the recipient specified by its argument. You can use `exim4` from the command line to check that the mail delivery system is working and to email the output of scripts. See “Test” on page 760 for an example. The command `apropos exim4` displays a list of `exim4`-related files and utilities. In addition, you can call `exim4` with options (page 763) or through links to cause it to perform various tasks.
- exim4 -bp** When you call `exim4` with the `-bp` option, or when you call the `mailq` utility (which is a symbolic link to `exim4`), it displays the status of the outgoing mail queue. When there are no messages in the queue, it displays nothing. Unless they are transient, messages in the queue usually indicate a problem with the local or remote MTA configuration or a network problem.

```
$ sudo exim4 -bp
24h 262 1IBhYI-0006iT-7Q <sam@> *** frozen ***
zachs@example.com
```

- eximstats** The `eximstats` utility displays statistics based on `exim4` log files. Call this utility with an argument of the name of a log file, such as `/var/log/mainlog` or `/var/log/mainlog2.gz`. Without any options, `eximstats` sends information based on the log file in text format to standard output. When you include the `-html` option, `eximstats` generates output in HTML format, suitable for viewing with a browser:

```
$ eximstats -html /var/log/exim4/mainlog.2.gz > exim.0720.html
```

If you are not a member of the `adm` group, you must run the preceding command with `root` privileges. See the `eximstats` man page for more information.

- eximon** Part of the `eximon4` package, `eximon` displays a simple graphical representation of the `exim4` queue and log files.

---

## CONFIGURING `exim4`

The `exim4` daemon is a complex and capable MTA that is configured by `/etc/default/exim4` and the files in the `/etc/exim4` directory hierarchy. The former allows you to specify how the daemon is to be run; the latter configures all other aspects of `exim4`. You can configure `exim4` by editing its configuration files with a text editor (discussed in the next section) or by using `dpkg-reconfigure` (page 768).

- /etc/default/exim4** The default `/etc/default/exim4` file sets `QUEUERUNNER` to `combined`, which starts one daemon that both runs the queue and listens for incoming email. It sets `QUEUEINTERVAL` to `30m`, which causes the daemon to run the queue (that is, check whether the queue contains mail to be delivered) every 30 minutes. See the comments in the file for more information.

## USING A TEXT EDITOR TO CONFIGURE `exim4`

The files in the `/etc/exim4` directory hierarchy control how `exim4` works—which interfaces it listens on, whether it uses a smarthost or sends email directly to its destination, whether and for which systems it relays email, and so on. You can also create an `exim4.conf.localmacros` file to turn on/off `exim4` functions (see page 778 for an example). Because of its flexibility, `exim4` uses many configuration variables. You can establish the values of these variables in one of two ways: You can edit a single file, as the JumpStart sections of this chapter explain, or you can work with the approximately 40 files in the `/etc/exim4/conf.d` directory hierarchy. For many configurations, working with the single file `update-exim4.conf.conf` is sufficient. This section describes the variables in that file but does not discuss working with the files in `conf.d`. Refer to the `exim4` specification if you need to set up a more complex mail server.

## THE `update-exim4.conf.conf` CONFIGURATION FILE

`update-exim4.conf` The `update-exim4.conf` utility reads the `exim4` configuration files in `/etc/exim4`, including `update-exim4.conf.conf`, and generates the `/var/lib/exim4/config.autogenerated` file. When `exim4` starts, it reads this file for configuration information. Typically you do not need to run `update-exim4.conf` manually because the `exim4` init script (page 757) runs this utility before it starts, restarts, or reloads `exim4`.

Split configuration Setting the `dc_use_split_config` variable in `update-exim4.conf.conf` to `false` specifies an unsplit configuration, wherein `update-exim4.conf` merges the data from `exim4.conf.localmacros`, `update-exim4.conf.conf`, and `exim4.conf.template` to create `config.autogenerated`. Setting this variable to `true` specifies a split configuration, wherein `update-exim4.conf` merges the data from `exim4.conf.localmacros`, `update-exim4.conf.conf`, and all the files in the `conf.d` directory hierarchy to create `config.autogenerated`.

Following is the list of configuration variables you can set in `update-exim4.conf.conf`. Enclose all values within single quotation marks. For Boolean variables, `exim4` interprets the null value (specified by `'`) as `false`.

`CFILEMODE='perms'`

Sets the permissions of `config.autogenerated` to the octal value `perms`, typically 644.

`dc_eximconfig_configtype='type'`

Specifies the type of configuration that `exim4` will run, where `type` is one of the following:

**internet** Sends and receives email locally and remotely. See “JumpStart II” on page 760 for an example.

**smarthost** Sends and receives email locally and remotely, using a smarthost to relay messages to nonlocal systems. See “JumpStart I” on page 758 for an example.

**satellite** Sends email remotely, using a smarthost to relay messages; does not receive mail locally.

**local** Sends and receives local messages only.

**none** No configuration; `exim4` will not work.

`dc_hide_mailname='bool'`

Controls whether `exim4` displays the local mailname (from `/etc/mailname`, page 759) in the headers of email originating on local systems. Set `bool` to `true` to hide (not display) the local mailname or `false` to display it. When you set this variable to `true`, `exim4` uses the value of `dc_readhost` in headers.

`dc_local_interfaces='interface-list'`

The `interface-list` is a semicolon-separated list of interfaces that `exim4` listens on. Set `interface-list` to the null value ('') to cause `exim4` to listen on all interfaces. Set it to 127.0.0.1 to prevent `exim4` from accepting email from other systems.

`dc_localdelivery='lcl-transport'`

Set `lcl-transport` to `mail_spool` to cause `exim4` to store email in `mbox` format; set it to `maildir_home` for `maildir` format. See page 762 for more information.

`dc_mailname_in_oh='bool'`

Used internally by `exim4`. Do not change this value.

`dc_minimaldns='bool'`

Set `bool` to `true` to minimize DNS lookups (useful for dial-up connections) or to `false` to perform DNS lookups as needed.

`dc_other_hostnames='host-list'`

The `host-list` is a semicolon-separated list of IP addresses and/or FQDNs the local system accepts (but does not relay) email for; `localhost` (127.0.0.1) is assumed to be in this list.

`dc_readhost='hostname'`

The `hostname` replaces the local mailname in the headers of email originating on local systems. This setting is effective only if `dc_hide_mailname` is set to `true` and `dc_eximconfig_configtype` is set to `smarthost` or `satellite`.

`dc_relay_domains='host-list'`

The `host-list` is a semicolon-separated list of IP addresses and/or FQDNs the local system accepts mail for, but does not deliver to local systems. The local system relays mail to these systems. For example, the local system may be a secondary server for these systems.

`dc_relay_nets='host-list'`

The `host-list` is a semicolon-separated list of IP addresses and/or FQDNs of systems that the local system relays mail for. The local system is a `smarthost` (page 759) for these systems.

`dc_smarthost='host-list'`

The `host-list` is a semicolon-separated list of IP addresses (preferred) and/or FQDNs the local system sends email to for relaying to nonlocal systems (a `smarthost`; page 759). See “JumpStart I” on page 758 for an example.

`dc_use_split_config='bool'`

Controls which files `update-exim4.conf` uses to generate the configuration file for `exim4`. See “Split configuration” (page 766) for more information.