



bw | HPC – C5

Command Line Interface – The basics

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Motivation

“In the Beginning... was the Command Line”

by [Neal Stephenson](#)

In contrast to graphical user interface (which can simplify the use of computer) a command-line interface (CLI) is often the most powerful and flexible way to interact with a computer.

The user types commands that tell the computer to do specific things.

These commands can be combined -> see tomorrow session.

You can feel like a real hacker.

Sources:

- <https://www.learnenough.com/command-line-tutorial>
- `man bash` and other manuals

What is this course about and what not?

We will present the *basics* of the command line:

- simple commands
- navigating
- some usability features
- no special command
- no programming (what you can do inside of the command line) -> see tomorrow

The command line interface

```
[projects]$ ls -l foo.txt █
```

- prompt [projects]\$
- command line `ls -l foo.txt`
 - command `ls`
 - option `-l`
 - argument `foo.txt`
 - cursor █

The first command

```
$ echo hello bwHPC
hello bwHPC
$
```

Echo the **STRING(s)** to standard output.

```
$ echo hello                bwHPC
hello bwHPC
$
```

Task: Please do all examples by yourself.

Using *up-Arrow* for the last command. Use *double* or *single* quote to mark strings.

```
$ echo "hello                bwHPC"
hello                bwHPC
$ echo 'hello                bwHPC'
hello                bwHPC
$
```

Getting out of trouble

You can get in trouble by:

- unfinished typing of a command
- long or endless running command
- command expecting further input

Solution: holding Ctrl-Key (Strg) and pressing C. Short written as `Ctrl-C` or `^C` (remember as 'cancel')

If it is not working try `Ctrl-D` (remember as 'end of transmission', 'end of input'), `ESQ` or just `q`.

Task: Try and exit the following commands:

- `$ echo "hello`
- `$ yes`
- `$ cat`

Effect of single and double quotes

Each variable begins with `$`. There are many variable set that defines the environment. Details will be present tomorrow.

```
$ echo My home is $HOME  
My home is /home/kit/scc/ab1337
```

Task: Try out the different effects of quoting by print out the variable `$HOME`.

Getting help

`$man echo` open the manual pages of the command `echo`. It uses `less` as a page viewer, where you can use the arrow keys to navigate.

`less` basics:

- `up & down arrow` Move up or down one line
- `spacebar` Move forward one page
- `q` quit
- `/<string>` search file for `<string>`.
- `n` Move to next search result.
- `N` Move to previous search result.
- `p` goto beginning of the file
- `h` help

Task: Find out how to print text without the newline at the end.

Summary

- `echo <string>` Prints string to screen.
- `man <command>` Displays manual page for command.
- `^C` Get out of trouble.
- *Up & down arrow* Scrolls through previous command history.

Manipulating files

Create files

```
$ touch foobar  
$ touch foobaz
```

redirecting standard output (stdout) to a file:

- redirect operator > (overwrites files)
- append operator >>

```
$ echo "This is the first line." > foobar.txt  
$ echo "This is the second line." >> foobar.txt  
$ cat foobar.txt  
This is the first line.  
This is the second line.
```

Listing

```
$ ls  
foobar  foobar.txt  foobaz
```

Task: What does `ls -lha` do? Try also `-t` and `-r`. Use different combinations.

Note: For short flags you can combine the flags instead of using `ls -l -h -a`. Long flags beginning with two dashes `ls --help`

Make life easier (Tab completion)

use the *tab* key →

```
$ cat f→
```

expands to

```
$ cat fooba
```

twice tab print possible matches

```
$ cat fooba→→
```

```
foobar foobar.txt foobaz
```

```
$ cat foobar.→
```

Task: Print out `foobar.txt` without typing to much. How many keystrokes are needed?

Make life easier (copy and past by mouse)

```
$ ls  
foobar  foobar.txt  foobaz  
$ cat █
```

Mark `foobar.txt` with mouse. Click middle mouse button to insert at cursor.

Tasks:

- Print out `foobar.txt`.
- What will happen when you print out `foobaz` including the letter after `z`?

Make life easier (reverse search)

Search the history.

```
$ ^R echo  
(reverse-i-search)`echo': echo "This is the  
second line." >> foobar.txt
```

- `^C` cancel
- `^R` previous search
- Enter run command
- right arrow select command for editing

Task: Insert a third line to `foobar.txt`.

Manipulating files: Rename, copy, delete

Moving

Moving a file will rename it.

```
mv foobaz test
$ ls
foobar  foobar.txt  test
```

Manipulating files: Rename, copy, delete

Copy from source to target

```
cp foobar.txt test_text.txt
```

```
$ ls
```

```
foobar  foobar.txt  test  test_text.txt
```


Manipulating files: Rename, copy, delete

Remove.

WARNING: It is deleted, really, no trash, nothing.

```
rm foobar.txt
```

```
$ ls
```

```
foobar  foobar.txt  test  test_text.txt
```

Editors (nano)

A basic editor

```
$ nano test_text.txt
```

Help for some useful commands see bottom lines

Try `^K^K^U^U` to cut and uncut lines

exit nano

`^X` exist and ask for save changes, type `y`, type filename or press enter for current filename.

Editors (vim)

A much more powerful and very fast editor

```
$ vim test_text.txt
```

Press `i` to go to insert mode. Now you can type text.

exit vim

Press `ESC` to go back to the normal (command) mode. Type `:q` to quit. If you change something you have to write and quit `:wq` or force quit `:q!`.

 LEARN vim!

```
$ vimtutor (-g language)
```

It takes 25-30 min. You can start at the end of this course.

Summary

- `>` Redirect output to filename
- `>>` Append output to filename
- `touch <file>` Create an empty file
- `cat <file>` Print contents of file to screen
- `ls` List directory or file
- `mv <old> <new>` Rename (move) from old to new
- `cp <old> <new>` Copy from old to new
- `rm <file>` Delete (remove) file (no recovery!)
- `→` Auto completion
- `^R` Reverse search
- `vimtutor` Tutor for learning vim

Directories

```
$ pwd  
/home/kit/scc/ab1337
```

Prints the current working path, starting with the root directory / followed by the directories `home`, `kit`, `scc` and `ab1337`.

Create directory

```
$ mkdir text_files
```

```
$ mkdir example
```

This is relative. Paths are normally relative from the current working path.
Absolute paths beginning with the root /.

Moving directories

Move files to directories

```
$ mv *.txt text_files/  
$ ls text_files/
```

Use tabs! `*.txt` is a Wildcard matching all files ended on `.txt`. See tomorrow.

Moving directories

Move (rename) directories

```
$ mv example/ data
```

```
$ ls
```


Changing directories (Navigation)

```
$ cd text_files/
```

```
$ cd ..
```

```
$ cd data
```

`cd ..` goes one directory up.

Task: Double check directories with `pwd` and `ls`.

Relative changing

A path beginning with `../` goes relative to the current working directory one directory layer for each `../` up. Try

```
$ cd ../text_files/
```

Tab completion adds automatically a `/` at end of directory name. (Don't matter at the moment.)

Task: create `foo/bar/` at once.

Special navigation

Moving to the last directory.

```
$ cd -
```

Moving to the home directory.

```
$ cd
```

```
$ cd ~
```

```
$ cd $HOME
```

`$HOME` is the already known variable for the home directory. See later courses for other path variables.

Copying directories

Add `-r` option for recursive

```
$ cd
$ mkdir foobar
$ cd foobar/
$ cp -r ../text_files .
$ ls
text_files
```

. is the current directory.

Task: What happen if you add a / to the source directory

```
../text_files/?
$ cp -r ../text_files/ .
$ ls
text_files text.txt
```

Remember as `../text_files` is the directory and `../text_files/` is already inside the directory.

Remove directories

Add `-r` option for recursive

```
$ cd
```

```
$ rm -r foobar
```

Warning: Again, there are no warning, it will be deleted, not trash, nothing.

Task: Do not execute it! What are the options `-f` and `-r` are doing in `rm`?

Why you should *NEVER* used `rm -rf /`?

Summary

- `mkdir <name>` Make directory with name
- `pwd` Print working directory
- `cd <dir>` Change to `<dir>`
- `cd ~/<dir>` cd relative to home
- `cd` Change to home directory
- `cd -` Change to previous directory
- `.` The current directory
- `..` One directory up
- `cp -r <old> <new>` Copy recursively
- `rm -r <dir>` Remove dir and content

Find files

Task: create some `.txt` files in different directories.

```
$ find . -name "*.txt"
```

Search recursively for files beginning in the current directory `.`, filter by name, only display files ending with `.txt`.

```
$ grep -r line
```

Search recursively (`-r`) for files and print lines containing `line`.

Task:

- Print line number of lines with 'first' using `grep`
- Print lines not containing 'first' using `grep`