

Linux/Mac Operating system tips

Changing prompt

Fernando Barao, IST/DF (Oct, 2018)

Prompt statement variables

There are several variables that can be set to control the appearance of the bash command prompt: PS1, PS2, PS3, PS4 and PROMPT_COMMAND the contents are executed just as if they had been typed on the command line.

- PS1 – Default interactive prompt (this is the variable most often customized)
- PS2 – Continuation interactive prompt (when a long command is broken up with \ at the end of the line) default=">"
- PS3 – Prompt used by “select” loop inside a shell script
- PS4 – Prompt used when a shell script is executed in debug mode (“set -x” will turn this on) default =“++”
- PROMPT_COMMAND - If this variable is set and has a non-null value, then it will be executed just before the PS1 variable.

Setting prompt variable

Set your prompt by changing the value of the PS1 environment variable, as follows:

```
$ export PS1="My prompt> "
```

Other common things you can place in your prompt

```
\d The date, in "Weekday Month Date" format
```

```
\h The hostname, up to the first . (e.g. deekard)
```

```
\l The basename of the shell's terminal device name
```

```
\t The time, in 24-hour HH:MM:SS format
```

```
\@ The time, in 12-hour am/pm format.
```

```
\w The current working directory.
```

```
\W The basename of $PWD.
```

```
\$ If you are not root, inserts a "$"; if you are root,  
you get a "#" (root uid = 0)
```

Operating system prompt (F. Barao) Oct.2018

3

examples of prompts

adding colours to your prompt

use *tput* : [see more about tput here](#)

examples

1. Set a prompt like:

```
[username@hostname:~/CurrentWorkingDirectory]$
```

```
export PS1='[\u@\h:\w]\$ '
```

2. Set a prompt with both foreground and background colors, set via *tput*:

```
magenta=$(tput setaf 5)
```

```
blue=$(tput setaf 4)
```

```
reset=$(tput sgr0)
```

```
export PS1='[\[$magenta\]\u\[$reset\]@\[$magenta\]\h\  
[$reset\]:\[$blue\]\w\[$reset\] ]\$ '
```

Operating system prompt (F. Barao) Oct.2018

4