

Re: bash, grep, and regular expressions

Source: <http://linux.derkeiler.com/Mailing-Lists/Debian/2005-02/2431.html>

From: Freddy Freeloader (*freddy_at_cableone.net*)

Date: 02/18/05

Date: Fri, 18 Feb 2005 09:56:29 -0800

To: debian-user@lists.debian.org

Peter Simpson wrote:

> *On Friday 18 Feb 2005 16:38, Freddy Freeloader wrote:*

>

>> *Matt Zagrabelny wrote:*

>>

>>>> *I have ls aliased to ls -al. What I've been attempting to do with grep*

>>>> *and regular expressions is list only non-hidden directories and/or*

>>>> *files. I am unable to come up with an expression that will eliminate*

>>>> *hidden files and return non-hidden files at the same time.*

>>>

>>> *the last sentence above is a little misleading. ls does that by default.*

>>>

>>>> *so examples of what you want are:*

>>>

>>>.bashrc

>>>something.cc

>>>bin/

>>>

>>>> *examples of what you dont want are:*

>>>

>>>.ssh/

>>>.gnome2/

>>>

>>>> *is this correct?*

>>>

>>>-matt zagrabelny

>>

>> *What I'm trying to do is return something like this*

>>

>>test.txt

>>bin/

>>

>> *rather than*

>>

>>.ssh/

>>test.txt

>>bin/

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```
>>.bashrc
>>
>>I have found some regular expressions that will filter out specific
>>files and extensions, but not something that will filter exclusively on
>>the . that signfies a hidden file or directory. The best luck I've had
>>in filtering is to do something like this:
>>
>>ls -al | grep -e ^d | grep -e '[.][a-z]'
>>
>>This will filter to return directories only with the first grep command
>>and then the second grep will return only hidden directories that begin
>>with small caps. However, where I run into problems is:
>>
>>ls -al | grep -e ^d | grep -e '[^.][a-z]'
>>
>>You would think this would return only directories that begin with
>>anything except . and begin with lower case letters. This however is not
>>>true. It returns all directories and ignores case altogether.
>
>
> Your search matches any string in the line that contains something that is not
> a period, followed by a lower case letter.
>
> This matches pretty much anything.
>
> What you want to do is limit this somewhat!
>
> A better idea would be to match two numbers followed by a space, followed by
> your letter.
>
> What works for me is:
>
> ls -al | grep -e ^d | grep -e ':[0-9][0-9] [^\.][a-zA-Z]'
>
> HTH.
>
>
```

Your expression returns an empty set.

You were correct in saying that my second expression was not selective enough. I had left a portion of it out.

```
ls -al | grep -e ^d | grep -e '\<[^\.][a-z]'
```

This also returns all directories. It doesn't matter whether they are hidden or not. The \< should limit the expression to searching for the beginning of a word that starts with anything except a ".". However, it does not do that. It returns exactly the same thing as the other less selective statement. When I remove the ^ from [^\.] it returns an empty set.

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It's as if grep doesn't recognize the space between the time column and the file name column as a separator between words, but as just another character in a word.

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