

Re: How to find total MB of a directory plus all subdirectories

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- *From:* Les <hlhowell@xxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Thu, 08 Mar 2007 16:13:25 -0800
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On Thu, 2007-03-08 at 20:35 +0100, Nigel Henry wrote:

On Wednesday 07 March 2007 04:32, Bruno Wolff III wrote:

On Tue, Mar 06, 2007 at 22:01:38 +0100,

Nigel Henry <cave.dnb@xxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

This is a silly question perhaps. I have my soundfiles in a directory named Sounds Library, this contains many subdirectories, which contain the .wav files.

What command can I use to find out the disk space this directory is taking up, including all the files that are in the subdirectories?

`du -k`

Hi Bruno. That's interesting as it lists all the subdirectories in my "Music" directory, with their individual filesizes, and ending with the total content of the "Music" directory. That's not usually a problem with individual subdirectories though, as hovering the mouse over them shows the total size of the files in them.

I have a question about du though. On the other machine where I wanted to find out the size of my soundfiles directory, du couldn't access it because it was named "Sounds Library" , without the quotes. I renamed it putting a hyphen between the 2 words, and then du accessed the directory ok, but all of the subdirectories are multi worded without any hyphens, and du didn't have any problem with them. Any reason why du will not access the main directory without hyphenated words, and yet has no problem with all the subdirectories?

It's not a big deal, just puzzling.

Re: How to find total MB of a directory plus all subdirectories

btw. The now Sounds–Library (with the hyphen) is on a separate harddrive so I have to run du as.

```
du -sh /mnt/hdb5/Sounds–Library
```

Hi, Nigel,

The reason a command won't parse correctly with a space in the file name is due to the tokenizer used by the shell. It cannot deal with spaces in filenames. A space is the end of the word to the tokenizer unless it is inside Quotes or escaped in some way. Thus the command `du xxx yyy` is going to look for files `xxx` and then `yyy`. This is true of most systems, otherwise there would be no way to chose which way to parse a command with several arguments, for example:
`cat xxx yyy aaa bbb ccc ddd > temp.txt`

In this case should the result consist of files `xxx`, `yyy`, `zzz`, `bbb`, `ccc`, and `ddd` all being concatenated to a file called `temp.txt`, or should it be `xxx yyy`, `zzz bbb`, and `ccc ddd`? Moreover how would an unambiguous error message tell the operator what was wrong? What if files `xxx`, `yyy`, `zzz`, `bbb`, `zzz`, and `ddd` were all present? Is this what the operator meant?

This is why a good administrator doesn't put spaces in system control files. It leads to ambiguity when working on the system, leading to errors and system corruption. Typo's that would be caught might not be if spaces are allowed into filenames.

On the other hand, once a directory is opened, the file names are read via a special command designed for the OS, and if the OS permits spaces, the entire file name up to the end charactor (generally control–Z or NULL). Thus the sub directories and files will be correctly handled. But with spaces in the names, error messages regarding parsing, or tracing the file contents may be ambiguous to the operator. It is not illegal to put spaces in filenames, but is should be considered a bad practice, and avoided. But it is your system, so YMMV.

Regards,
Les H

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