

Ext3 problem

Source: <http://linux.derkeiler.com/Newsgroups/comp.os.linux.development.system/2004-09/0347.html>

From: Kasper Dupont (*kasperd_at_daimi.au.dk*)

Date: 09/29/04

Date: Wed, 29 Sep 2004 23:01:43 +0200

Assume I execute this shell code.

```
touch _ ; while ln _ $(uuidgen) ; do true ; done
```

A stupid thing to do I know, but still I think it ought to be possible to clean up after doing this.

Eventually the code will give me an error about no more disk space. At that point removing all the links actually doesn't help on an ext3 filesystem. Even if I remove all the links I just created, the disk space is still used.

It seems I can only free the space by creating a new directory and moving the remaining contents to the new directory, and finally removing the old directory. Let's for a moment ignore the fact that I couldn't create the new directory due to lack of disk space, and instead consider a more fundamental problem.

If I had executed the code in my home directory, I cannot clean up myself. I would need to contact an administrator and have him create a new home directory for me and move all the files in order for the disk space to be freed again.

Even worse if the shell code was executed in the root of a filesystem. Typically only root can do that, but some people might use a separate filesystem for /tmp. In that case there seems to be no way to free the disk space again except from mkfs.

Can it really be true, that there is a way to allocate space on an ext3 filesystem, that can only be freed again by the use of mkfs? And are there any suggestions on how to improve on this?

--

Kasper Dupont