

Re: How to use cd with special chars in a network directory name?

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"Jeff" <milleratotago@xxxxxxxxxx>, In a message on 15 Mar 2006 15:02:18 -0800, wrote :

"> (Sorry if this is a dumb question—I'm a bit of a Linux newbie.)
>
> I need to access some files on a Novell server from
> a (debian) Linux machine. I mount the server with a
> command like this:
> mount -t smbfs username=myname ServerMountPointName LocalDir
> and then I can cd into LocalDir and ls the files and subdirs just fine.
>
> The problem is that the directory structure on the server has some
> directories whose names start with the minus sign, like "-main",
> and I cannot get Linux to cd into those directories. From reading
> various docs and faqs on the internet, I thought that one of these
> should work, but none do:
> cd -main
> cd '-main'
> cd `-main`
> cd `-main`
> cd "-main"

Did you try:

```
cd ./-main
```

Filenames that start with a dash (-) can be 'escaped' by prefixing the name with the directory path. The directory path './' can always be put in front of a 'troublesome' filename.

The reason the various quoting forms don't work is because they don't really do anything about the minus sign — quoting in and of itself is mostly for dealing with characters the *shell* considers special (like spaces or question marks and whatnot).

"> (In all cases, the Linux complaint suggests to me that it thinks
> -main is some kind of cd option switch.)
>

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"> I guess it isn't _just_ a network-related problem, because even on
> the local drive I am also unable to make a new directory called
> "-main" with any version of a command like:
> mkdir -main
> mkdir `~main`
> etc
>
> Any suggestions other than renaming all of the directories
> on the server?

Some commands support the use of '--' as a way of saying that there are no more options on the command line, even if something that *looks* like an option follows. But putting a directory path in front of a filename always works. A directory *path* cannot start with a minus sign. It either starts with a slash (/), and is an *absolute* path or it starts with a dot (.), and is a *relative* path (to the current working directory). './' is the directory that is the relative path to the current working directory from the current working directory. Once you start with a relative or absolute directory path, any *embedded* path elements that start with a minus sign are just path elements and won't be seen as command options.

">
> Thank you.
>
>

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