

A Bash teaser

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WWW-URL : <http://algolog.teamfree.info/cdlfy.pdf>)

Here is a simple teaser which will demonstrate some of the finer aspects of Bash programming:

The teaser : Bash can do many wonderful things. But, can you make a simple "change dirctory" (cd) from inside Bash ? Can you write a one line script which will change your current directory ***and leave you in the new directory*** ?

Imagine that you wish to shift to a directory called "lfy" from wherever you are. You can do a "cd lfy" at the command prompt. Now try to do it from within a script. Try writing a one-line script with "cd lfy" inside it. Let us call this script cdlfy. Execute cdlfy (remember to make it executable, using a chmod) by invoking cdlfy through a command line. What happens ? Why are you not inside lfy **after the cdlfy** finishes ? You can find the answer in any good book on shell scripting. Or, you can ask the author. Or you can try this : instead of just invoking cdlfy by simply calling it, try calling "source cdlfy". Now, you end up inside lfy.

In fact you cannot cd from inside a shell scipt simply. The right way to do it would be to create an alias. Say "alias ccdd=cd lfy". Now invoke ccdd, and it works !

You can get the best of both worlds by combining the alias and the shell script. Create an alias like "alias cccddd=source cdlfy". Execute cccddd by invoking it. This way you can avoid typing "source" every time you want to invoke cdlfy.

Try it.

PS Change cdlfy to include one more line, "ls ." Invoke cdlfy (without the "source") What do you see ? Why ?

You can send your comments, suggestions, and remarks to : drpartha@gmail.com

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