

Adding A New User

Introduction

When you first install a Unix system, there are no authorized users other than the superuser 'root.' The root account should be used sparingly since there are no restrictions placed upon its usage and thus small mistakes are liable to become big ones very quickly: consider what would happen if—as root—you typed:

```
| # rm -rf / tmp/fred
```

Instead of:

```
| # rm -rf /tmp/fred
```

It is only a small mistake (only 1 extra character!), but it could have BIG consequences!

Of course there are many other reasons why it is necessary to have multiple user accounts on a system...

See Also

rm (1), useradd (8), pwconv (8), passwd (1)

The Task

In this exercise you will add a new user to your system.

Notes:

- You will need to be root for this exercise.
- You will need to have shadow passwords enabled for this exercise (see the pwconv (8) manual page for more details)

Adding A User

You should pick a username for yourself (ideally, it will be unique in the whole class...).

To add this user to the system you should use the command (substitute the username you picked for *your_username*):

```
| # useradd your_username
```

It is still not possible for this user to log in since it does not have a valid password. To give it a password, execute the following command:

```
| # passwd your_username
```

Modifying The User's Account

Type the command:

```
| # cat /etc/default/useradd
```

This is the file that governs the initial settings for any new user account that useradd creates.

Also take a look at the files in /etc/skel—these are the files are copied into each user's directory to establish that user's initial login environment:

```
| # ls -a /etc/skel
```

The following command modifies the user account that you created in the earlier section:

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```
# usermod -e 01/22/99 -s /bin/tcsh -f 5 your_username
```

This command has:

- set the expiry date of the account to be the last day of the course (01/22/99)
- set the number of days after the password expires until the account is permanently disabled to 5 days
- established /bin/tcsh as the login shell, rather than the default

Establishing The Initial Login Environment

The user's initial login environment is usually very site- and personality-specific! The `useradd` command will have copied the files from `/etc/skel` into the new user's directory.

The files in `/etc/skel` can be edited to take account of local-site conventions or each of the copied files can be edited in-place after installation.

To give you a brief taste of what can/needs to be done, add the following two lines after the first lines in the new user's `.bashrc` file (which can be referred to in the shell as "`~your_username/.bashrc`"):

```
echo "Hello $USER. You are on `tty`."
echo "There are `w | head -1 | awk -F, '{print $3}'`.`"
```

Note: different versions of Linux/awk respond differently to the last line above. If you do not see the number of users logged on to your system you may need to modify it to be:

```
echo "There are `w | head -1 | awk -F, '{print $2}'`.`"
```

The new user `your_username` is now ready to login! You should logout from the root account and login as this user.