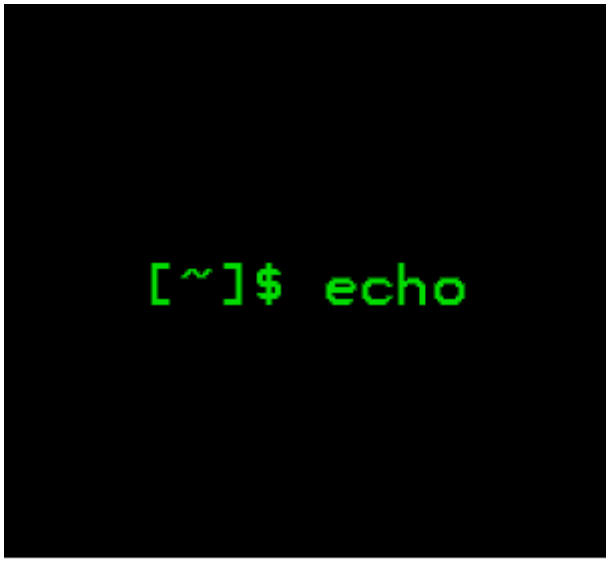
Linux and Unix echo command



About echo

echo displays a line of text.

Overview

echo is a fundamental command found in most operating systems that offer a command line. It is frequently used in scripts, batch files, and as part of individual commands; anywhere you may need to insert text.

Many command shells such as **bash**, **ksh** and **csh** implement **echo** as a built-in command.

bash is the default command shell in nearly every major Linux distribution, so in this documentation we will look at the behavior, syntax, and options of **bash**'s implementation of **echo**.

echo syntax

```
echo [SHORT-OPTION]... [STRING]...
```

```
echo LONG-OPTION
```

Options

-n Do not output a trailing newline.

-e Enable interpretation of backslash escape sequences (see below for a list of these).

-E Disable interpretation of backslash escape sequences (this is the default).

--help Display a help message and exit.

--version Output version information and exit.

If you specify the **-e** option, the following escape sequences are recognized:

**** A literal backslash character ("****").

\a An alert (The BELL character).

\b Backspace.

\c Produce no further output after this.

\e The escape character; equivalent to pressing the escape key.

\f A form feed.

\n A newline.

\r	A carriage return.
\t	A horizontal tab.
\v	A vertical tab.
\0*NNN*	byte with octal value *NNN* (which can be 1 to 3 digits).
\x*HH*	byte with hexadecimal value *HH* (which can be either 1 or 2 digits)

NOTE: each shell generally has its own implementation of **echo**, which may be slightly different than the version described here. Refer to your shell's documentation for details about the options it supports.

echo examples

```
echo Hello, World!
```

Outputs the following text:

```
Hello, world!
```

```
x=10
```

```
echo The value of x is $x.
```

Entering these two commands will output the following text:

```
The value of x is 10.
```

```
echo -e 'Here \bthe \bspaces \bare \bbackspaced.'
```

Outputs the following text:

```
Herethespacesarebackspaced.
```

Note that in order for the escape sequence to be protected from the shell, we have enclosed the echo string in quotes.

```
echo -e 'Here\nwe\nhave\ninserted\nnewlines.'
```

Outputs the following text:

```
Here
we
have
inserted
newlines.
```

```
echo -e 'Here\twe\thave\tinserted\thorizontal\ttabs.'
```

Outputs the following text:

```
Here    we      have    inserted        horizontal      tabs.
```

```
echo -e 'This line is not completely \cprinted.'
```

Outputs the following text:

```
This line is not completely
```

```
echo 'This text is now in a text file.' > textfile.txt
```

Writes the text **This text is now in a text file.** to the file **textfile.txt**.
If **textfile.txt** does not exist, it will be created; if **textfile.txt** already exists, it will be overwritten.

```
echo 'This text is now in a text file.' >> textfile.txt
```

Appends the text **This text is now in a text file.** to the file **textfile.txt**.
If **textfile.txt** does not exist, it will be created.

```
echo *
```

Output a string comprising the name of each file in the working directory, with each name separated by a space. For example, if you have three files in your working directory, output may resemble the following:

```
flower.jpg document.doc readme.txt
```

```
echo * | wc -w
```

This command will output the three filenames, just as above, but instead of printing them to the terminal, it will pipe the output to the **wc** command, which will display a count of the number of words in the output; this is a quick and simple way to find

out how many files are in the working directory. So if we have three files, the output of this command will be:

```
3
```

For more on this particular topic, see "How can I see how many files or directories are in a Linux directory?"

Related commands

cat — Output the contents of a file.
printf — Write formatted output.
tac — Output the contents of files in reverse order.
tee — Route a file's contents to multiple outputs.
touch — Update the timestamp of a file or directory.
tr — Translate one set of characters to another.