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[Linux Configuration Files and What They Do](#)

System configuration files.

I will try to list here some of the configuration files found in a Linux system, and what they are useful for:

- `/etc/profile` - System wide environment variables for all users.
- `/etc/aliases` - Where the user's name is matched to a nickname for e-mail.
- `/etc/fstab` - List of devices and their associated mount points. Edit this file to add CD-ROMs, DOS partitions and floppy drives at startup.
- `/etc/mtab` - This changes continuously as the file `/proc/mount` changes. In other words, when filesystems are mounted and unmounted, the change is immediately reflected in this file.
- `/etc/mtools.conf` - Configuration for all the operations (mkdir, copy, format, etc.) on a DOS-type filesystem.
- `/etc/motd` - Message of the day broadcast to all users at login.
- `/etc/rc.d/rc.local` - Bash script that is executed at the end of the login process. Similar to `autoexec.bat` in DOS. You can put your own initialization stuff in here if you don't want to do the full Sys V style init stuff.
- `/etc/crontab` - Lists commands and times to run them for the cron daemon.
- `/etc/cron.*` - There are 4 directories that automatically execute all scripts within the directory at intervals of hour, day, week or month.
- `/etc/group` - Similar to `/etc/passwd` but for groups rather than users.
- `/etc/gshadow` - Used to hold the group password and group administrator password information for shadow passwords.
- `/etc/hosts` - A list of all known host names and IP addresses on the machine.
- `/etc/hosts.allow` - Man page same as `hosts_access`. Read by `tcpd` at least.
- `/etc/hosts.deny` - Man page same as `hosts_access`. Read by `tcpd` at least.
- `/etc/httpd/conf` - Parameters for the Apache web server.
- `/etc/inittab` - Specifies the run level that the machine should boot into.
- `/etc/resolv.conf` - Defines IP addresses of DNS servers.
- `/etc/smb.conf` - Config file for the SAMBA server. Allows file and print sharing with Microsoft clients.
- `/etc/passwd` - The user database with fields giving the username, real name, home directory, encrypted password and other information about each user.
- `/etc/printcap` - A configuration file for printers.
- `/etc/rc.d/rc0.d` - Contains files used to control run level 0. Usually these files are softlink files.
- `/etc/rc.d/rc1.d` - Contains files to control run level 1. Scripts beginning with an S are for start, K for kill.
- `/etc/rc.d/rc.sysinit` - Init runs this when it starts.
- `/etc/sysconfig/clock` - Used to configure the system clock to Universal or local time and set some other clock parameters.
- `/etc/sysconfig/i18n` - Controls the system font settings.
- `/etc/sysconfig/init` - This file is used to set some terminal characteristics and environment variables.
- `/etc/sysconfig/keyboard` - Used to configure the keyboard.
- `/etc/sysconfig/network-scripts/ifcfg-interface` - Defines a network interface.
- `/etc/X11/xorg.conf` - Config file for X11. Here you can setup the mouse, keyboard, monitor and video card.
- `/proc/cpuinfo` - Information about the processor such as its type, make and performance.
- `/proc/devices` - A list of devices configured into the currently running kernel.
- `/proc/dma` - Shows which DMA channels are being used at the moment.
- `/proc/filesystems` - Filesystems that are configured into the kernel. The file used to detect filesystems if the `/etc/filesystems` does not exist.
- `/proc/ioports` - Shows which I/O ports are in use at the moment.
- `/proc/interrupts` - Shows which interrupts are in use and how many of each there have been.
- `/proc/kcore` - An image of the physical memory of the system.
- `/proc/kmsg` - Messages output by the kernel. These are also routed to `syslog`.
- `/proc/ksyms` - Symbol table for the kernel.
- `/proc/loadavg` - The load average of the system.
- `/proc/meminfo` - Information about memory usage, both physical and swap.
- `/proc/modules` - Which kernel modules are currently loaded.
- `/proc/mounts` - Contains information on filesystems currently mounted, similar to `/etc/mtab`.
- `/proc/net` - Contains status information about network protocols.
- `/proc/self` - A symbolic link to the process directory of the program that is looking at `/proc`. When 2 process look at `proc`, they get different links.
- `/proc/stat` - Various statistics about the

system such as the number of page faults since the system was booted.`/proc/uptime` - The time the system has been up.`/proc/version` - The kernel version.