

Midnight Commander Guide

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What Is Midnight Commander?

- At its core, it is simply a file management tool that lets you easily copy/move/delete files and perform other operations on them.
- However, it is loaded with features.
- While it is text based, it is a **graphical** tool.
- It runs on Linux and comes with most distributions.
- Once you become good at it, you'll be able to do file manipulations faster than anyone using a non-text graphical tool.

How Do I Run It?

- Type `mc` on the command prompt

Why Did I Write This Guide?

- I routinely see people struggling to perform certain tasks on the command line that would be easy in Midnight Commander.
- I see shell wizards trying to construct a sophisticated chain of commands to do a task that could be easily done with Midnight Commander.
- I think people will greatly benefit from using it.

Beginner Friendly

- People who are not comfortable with the command line can use this as a crutch to do fairly simple operations in Linux.

Expert Friendly

- Midnight Commander does have a lot of powerful capabilities.
- It is not an alternative to the shell, but a supplement.
- **You don't lose the command prompt when using Midnight Commander!**
 - Far too many “experts” scoff at using such tools because “nothing is more powerful than the shell”.
 - You'll have access to virtually all your shell functions, etc in Midnight Commander!
- Use the right tool for the right job—if you can do it easily in Midnight Commander, don't waste keystrokes writing a complicated command in the shell!

Layout

```
...i/midnightcommanderpres ~.[^]> |<- ...commanderpres/literature ~.[^]>
'n  Name      Size  Modify time  'n  Name      Size  Modify time
/..  UP--DIR    Sep 7 23:11  /..  UP--DIR    Sep 7 23:16
/.svn 4096      Mar 11 2007  /qcomputer 4096      Apr 3 2008
/literature 4096      Apr 3 2008  ammann.pdf 197700    Apr 26 2007
/notes 4096      Sep 17 2007  Chico P-ch.pdf 519750    Sep 30 2007
/papers 4096      Mar 5 2007  dispersion.pdf 253007    Jun 4 2007
/phd 4096      Feb 24 2008  haomaris.pdf 81910     Apr 26 2007
/presentations 4096      Aug 18 2009  lattice-ics.pdf 1245684   Feb 24 2007
/revtex4 4096      Nov 6 2005  luchu.pdf 125045    Apr 26 2007
/tmp 4096      Nov 28 2007  nishiguchi.pdf 140388    Apr 26 2007
/tmp2 4096      Nov 28 2007  SiWAcO-tic.pdf 180057    Nov 11 2007
/windows 4096      Aug 16 2009  stroschio.pdf 1993272   Apr 26 2007
me2.eps 67051     Mar 25 2007  thesis2.pdf 3075150   Sep 30 2007
proof.pdf 140946    Apr 17 2007  Thesis.pdf 3434240   Sep 30 2007
scat.eps 60755     Mar 25 2007  vasiljeska.pdf 210040    Apr 26 2007

/literature 10G/523G (2%) | UP--DIR 10G/523G (2%)
Hint: The homepage of GNU Midnight Commander: http://www.midnight-commander.org
beetle_b ~/potpourri/midnightcommanderpres $ :~)11:17PM [1027] |
1Help 2Menu 3View 4Edit 5Copy 6Re-ov 7kdir 8Delete 9FullInfo10Quit
```

- Two panels: Left and right
- By default, a directory is shown in each panel.
- **Ctrl-u** will swap the panels.
- **Alt-i** will make the other panel show the same directory as the active panel.

Columns

```
<- ...commanderpres/literature -.[^]>
'n   Name          Size  Modify time
/..  UP--DIR          Sep  7 23:16
/qcomputer  4096 Apr  3 2008
ammann.pdf  197766 Apr 26 2007
Chico P~ch .pdf  519750 Sep 30 2007
dispersion.pdf 253007 Jun  4 2007
homerio.pdf  61010 Apr 26 2007
```

- Leftmost column is the name of the file or directory.
- The two dots denote the parent directory.
- *qcomputer* is a directory.
- If the filename does not fit in the column, there will be a ~ in the middle of the displayed name.
- Click on a column header to sort by that column. Click again to sort in reverse order.

Colors of Files

/tmp2	4096	Nov 28	2007
/windows	4096	Aug 16	2009
me2.eps	67051	Mar 25	2007
proof.pdf	146946	Apr 17	2007
scat.eps	60755	Mar 25	2007

- Different colors denote different types of files.
 - White → directory
 - Red → document
 - Cyan → image

Commands

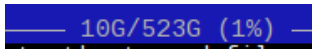
- On the bottom of the screen, you'll see:

```
1Help 2Menu 3View 4Edit 5Copy 6RenMov 7Mkdir 8Delete 9PullDn10Quit
```

- Each number denotes a function key.
 - So **F1** is help, **F3** is View, etc.
- You can also click on them.
- They'll be carved into your brain after a little use.
- You can opt not to have this shown all the time.

Space

- On the bottom right of each panel, you'll see



10G/523G (1%)

- Free space left on your partition

Shortcuts

- Many more commands are accessible using other keybindings.
- Relevant ones will be mentioned in each section.
- Midnight Commander docs convention:
 - **C-x** means Ctrl-x
 - **M-x** means Alt-x
- I'll continue to write them as Ctrl and Alt.

Navigation

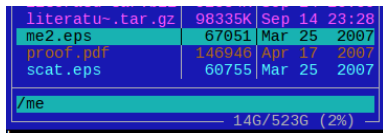
```
<- .../midnightcommanderpres --[A]> <- ...commanderpres/literature --[A]>
'n Name Size Modify time 'n Name Size Modify time
/.. UP--DIR Sep 7 23:11 /.. UP--DIR Sep 7 23:16
/.svn 4896 Mar 11 2007 /qcomputer 4896 Apr 3 2008
/literature 4896 Apr 3 2008 ammann.pdf 197768 Apr 26 2007
/notes 4896 Sep 17 2007 chico P-ch.pdf 510758 Sep 30 2007
/papers 4896 Mar 5 2007 dispersion.pdf 253807 Jun 4 2007
/phd 4896 Feb 24 2008 hoornaris.pdf 61910 Apr 26 2007
/presentations 4896 Aug 18 2009 lattice-ics.pdf 1245084 Feb 24 2007
/revtex4 4896 Nov 6 2005 luchi.pdf 125845 Apr 26 2007
/tmp 4896 Nov 28 2007 hishiguchi.pdf 140388 Apr 26 2007
/tmp2 4896 Nov 28 2007 SIMWaco-tic.pdf 180057 Nov 11 2007
/windows 4896 Aug 16 2009 strosccio.pdf 1993272 Apr 26 2007
me2.eps 67051 Mar 25 2007 thesis2.pdf 3978158 Sep 30 2007
proof.pdf 146046 Apr 17 2007 Thesis.pdf 3434248 Sep 30 2007
stat.eps 60755 Mar 25 2007 vasiljeska.pdf 210040 Apr 26 2007

/literature UP--DIR
10G/523G (2%) 10G/523G (2%)
hint: The homepage of GNU Midnight Commander: http://www.midnight-commander.o
beetle_b ~/potpourri/midnightcommanderpres $ -:11:17PM [1027]
[help] [2Menu] [3View] [4Edit] [5Copy] [6Re-ov] [7Mkdir] [8Delete] [9Pulld] [10Quit]
```

- At any given time, the cursor is either in the left or the right panel.
- Use the cursor keys to navigate.
- **TAB** jumps from one panel to the other.
- To enter a directory, navigate to its name and press **Enter**.

Jump to File/Directory

- You can jump to a file/directory by pressing **Alt-s** and typing the file name.
- It does a find-as-you-type search, so it will put the cursor on the desired item very quickly.



```
literatu~.tar.gz 98335K Sep 14 23:28
me2.eps         67051 Mar 25 2007
proof.pdf      146946 Apr 17 2007
scat.eps       60755 Mar 25 2007

/me
14G/523G (2%)
```

- Press **Alt-s** to go to the next match.

Changing the View

- Press **Alt-t** to cycle the way the column is displayed.

```
< ~/tmp/midnightcommanderpres/literature .[^]>
Permission Nl Owner Group Size Modify time 'Name
drwxr-xr-x 13 mueen mueen UP--DIR Sep 22 19:31 ..
drwxr-xr-x 2 mueen mueen 4096 Apr 3 2008 qcomputer
-rw-r--r-- 1 mueen mueen 197766 Apr 26 2007 ammann.pdf
-rw-r--r-- 1 mueen mueen 519750 Sep 30 2007 Chico PhysRe~pproach .pdf
-rw-r--r-- 1 mueen mueen 253007 Jun 4 2007 dispersion.pdf
-rw-r--r-- 1 mueen mueen 61910 Apr 26 2007 haomaris.pdf
-rw-r--r-- 1 mueen mueen 1245684 Feb 24 2007 lattice_dynamics.pdf
-rw-r--r-- 1 mueen mueen 125045 Apr 26 2007 luchu.pdf
-rw-r--r-- 1 mueen mueen 140388 Apr 26 2007 nishiguchi.pdf
-rw-r--r-- 1 mueen mueen 186057 Nov 11 2007 SiNWAcoustic.pdf
-rw-r--r-- 1 mueen mueen 1993272 Apr 26 2007 stroschio.pdf
-rw-r--r-- 1 mueen mueen 3975159 Sep 30 2007 thesis2.pdf
-rw-r--r-- 1 mueen mueen 3434246 Sep 30 2007 Thesis.pdf
-rw-r--r-- 1 mueen mueen 210040 Apr 26 2007 vasilaska.pdf
```

Selecting Files Individually

- **Insert** to select/deselect file under the cursor
 - It toggles the selection state.
 - Same as **0** on the numeric keypad—easier to use.
- ***** inverts the selection of all files in the panel.
- Right clicking a file will select it.

Selected Files

```
< ..tcommanderpres/literature --[ ^ ]>
'n      Name          Size  Modify time
/..      UP--DIR    Sep  7 23:20
/qcomputer 4096    Apr  3 2008
ammann.pdf 197766  Apr 26 2007
Chico Ph~ch .pdf 519750 Sep 30 2007
dispersion.pdf 253007 Jun  4 2007
haomaris.pdf 61910  Apr 26 2007
lattice_~ics.pdf 1245684 Feb 24 2007
luchu.pdf 125045 Apr 26 2007
nishiguchi.pdf 140388 Apr 26 2007
SiNWAcoustic.pdf 186057 Nov 11 2007
strosccio.pdf 1993272 Apr 26 2007
thesis2.pdf 3975159 Sep 30 2007
Thesis.pdf 3434246 Sep 30 2007
vasileska.pdf 210040 Apr 26 2007

----- 579,452 bytes in 3 files -----
strosccio.pdf
----- 10G/523G (1%) -----
```

- 3 files have been selected.
- A summary is displayed at the bottom.

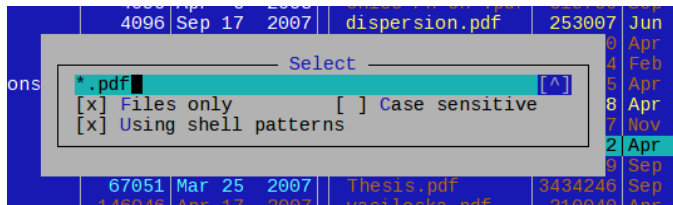
Basic Actions on Selected Files

1Help 2Menu 3View 4Edit 5Copy 6RenMov 7Mkdir 8Delete 9PullDn10Quit

- Press **F5/F6** to copy/move the selected files.
- **F8** to delete them.

Selecting Files by Pattern

- + lets you specify a pattern of files to select:



- If *shell patterns* is unchecked, regular expression matching will be used.
- - is the same as +, but is for deselecting.
- By default pattern based selection does not select directories.

Copying

The screenshot shows the Midnight Commander interface with a copy dialog box open. The dialog box is titled "Copy" and contains the following text:

```
Copy 3 files with source mask:
[ ] Using shell patterns
to:
/home/mueen/got/pour1/midnightcommanderpres/Temp2/
[ ] Follow links      [ ] Dive into subdir if exists
[x] Preserve attributes  [ ] Stable Symlinks
[ < OK > ] [ Background ] [ Cancel ]
```

The background shows two panels of file listings. The left panel shows files like intersubband.fig, intersubband.jpg, and intra*. The right panel shows files like urb2.png, urout, and UP--DIR. The bottom status bar shows "4,510,105 bytes in 3 files" and "15G/523G (2%)".

- **F5** on selected files to copy
 - **F5** on a single file/directory without selecting it works as well.
- By default, the directory in the opposing panel is already filled in as the destination.
 - **Idiom**: Navigate to the target directory in the opposite panel before pressing **F5**.

Moving/Renaming

- **F6** to move/rename
- Options are identical to that for copying.

It's Still There!

```
beetle_b ~ $  
1Help 2Men
```

- The command prompt is always present at the bottom of the screen!
- Virtually all your shell wizardry will continue to work.
- Need to press **Alt-TAB** for TAB autocompletion.
- **Ctrl-o** will hide the panels.
 - Handy if the command you typed outputs something to the screen and is “behind” the panels.
 - When the panels are hidden, **TAB** provides autocompletion.

Prompt Related Keybindings

- **Alt-Enter** on any file makes it appear on the prompt.
- **Ctrl-Shift-Enter** does the same thing, but with the full path included.
- **Ctrl-x t** will type out all your selected files to the prompt.
 - **Ctrl-x Ctrl-t** does the same for the opposing panel.
- **Ctrl-x p** or **Ctrl-a** will type out the current path to the prompt.
 - **Ctrl-x Ctrl-p** will type out the opposing panel's path to the prompt.

Super Enter

- **Enter** on a filename can be made to do magic.
- On an image it can/will launch an image viewing program.
- On a video it can/will start playing the video.
- On an audio file it can/will play the file.
- On a document (PDF, DOC, etc) it can/will launch the appropriate viewer.
- On an executable it will run the executable.
- To customize the action it performs on a file, go to *Edit Extension File* in the *Command* menu.

Archives

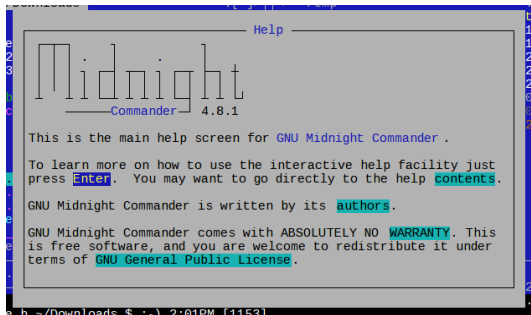
- **Enter** on an archive file (e.g. zip, tar, etc.) will navigate into the archive and display it as if it were a regular directory.
- You can view files inside the archive.
- You can select files in the archive and copy them to a real directory.
- You can even copy files into an archive.
 - Well, except for tar—that's a limitation of the tar format.
- I handle most archive files via Midnight Commander.

Quip

Sane people don't remember all the command line options for tar, zip, etc.

Accessing help

- **F1** will always help you:



The screenshot shows a terminal window displaying the help screen for GNU Midnight Commander. The title bar at the top reads "Help". The main content is enclosed in a rectangular box and includes the following text:

```
Midnight  
Commander 4.8.1
```

This is the main help screen for GNU Midnight Commander .

To learn more on how to use the interactive help facility just press **Enter**. You may want to go directly to the help **contents**.

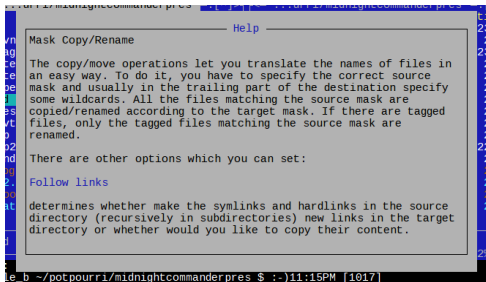
GNU Midnight Commander is written by its **authors**.

GNU Midnight Commander comes with ABSOLUTELY NO **WARRANTY**. This is free software, and you are welcome to redistribute it under terms of **GNU General Public License**.

The terminal prompt at the bottom shows the user is in the directory ~/Downloads, with a shell prompt \$, and the time is 2:01PM on 11/5/13.

Context Sensitive help

- **F1** will give you context sensitive help.
- Pressing it in a dialog window will explain all the options in the dialog:



Basic Viewing

- **F3** on a file to view it.

```
comprapp.m 842/2864 29%
%This code will plot the absolute values of the components of u (displacement
%of the phonon modes) vs qz for fixed R. To calculate which qz's to take,
%I used Ez and assumed phonon absorption. Used energy conservation rules to
%get qz then.

clear
clc

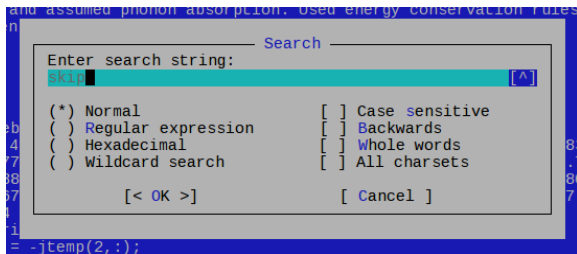
test=0; %Debugging
jorig = [2.4048256 3.8317060 5.1356223 5.520781 6.3801619 7.01559 7.58834 8.41724
8.65373 8.77148 9.76102 9.93611 10.17347 11.06471 11.08637 11.61984 11.7915344 12.
22509 12.33860 13.01520 13.32369 13.3543 13.58929 14.37254 14.9309177086 16.47063
18.0710639679 19.61586 21.2116366299 22.76008 24.3524715308 25.90367 27.49348 ; 0
1 2 0 3 1 4 2 0 5 3 6 1 4 7 2 0 8 5 3 1 9 6 4 0 1 0 1 0 1 0 1 0 ];
jtemp = jorig;
jtemp(2,:) = -jtemp(2,:);
j = [jorig jtemp];

load -ascii indeck
disp('Enter the mode you wish to see (1-24):');
mode= indeck(1);
%mode=input(' Mode = ');
1Help 2UnWrap 3Quit 4Hex 5Goto 6 7Search 8Raw 9Format10Quit
```

- Geared towards text formats

Searching in View Mode

- When viewing a file, **F7** lets you search it:



- Click on the caret to see your search history.
 - By the way, this history feature is in many dialog boxes throughout Midnight commander.
 - You can also access it using **Ctrl-h**.
- After the first match, **Ctrl-s** finds the next match.

Some Keybindings

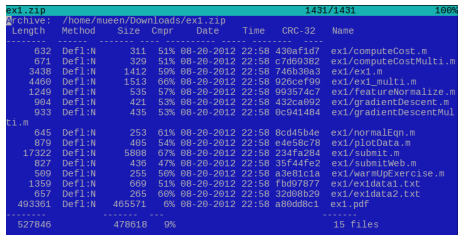
- **F2** unwraps the text.
- **F5** lets you jump to a position in the file (line number, percentage, etc).
- **Ctrl-f**: View the next file
- **Ctrl-b**: View the previous file

More on Viewing

- When viewing a HTML, PDF, DOC or similar document, Midnight Commander will try to show you only the text of the document.
 - So an HTML file will be shown formatted without all the tags.
- If you want to view the “unprocessed” version of the file, press **F8** or click on **Raw**.
- You can view the contents of a gzipped text file.
- You can specify an external viewer, but why would you?
 - From the main menu, *Options*, and then *Configuration* lets you disable the internal viewer.

Non-Text Files

- Recall: You can do magic by pressing Enter on files.
- There is also some magic related to viewing files.
- Pressing **F3** on a zip file gives the screen on the right.
- To customize the magic, from the main menu select *Command and Edit Extension File*



The screenshot shows the Midnight Commander interface displaying the contents of a zip file named 'ex1.zip'. The file list is as follows:

Length	Method	Size	Cmpr	Date	Time	CRC-32	Name
632	Defl:N	311	51%	08-20-2012	22:58	430af1d7	ex1/computeCost.m
671	Defl:N	329	51%	08-20-2012	22:58	c7d69382	ex1/computeCostMulti.m
3438	Defl:N	1412	50%	08-20-2012	22:58	746b38a3	ex1/ex1.m
4468	Defl:N	1513	66%	08-20-2012	22:58	926cef99	ex1/ex1_multi.m
1249	Defl:N	535	57%	08-20-2012	22:58	993574c7	ex1/featureNormalize.m
904	Defl:N	421	53%	08-20-2012	22:58	432ca692	ex1/gradientDescent.m
933	Defl:N	435	53%	08-20-2012	22:58	0c941484	ex1/gradientDescentMulti.m
645	Defl:N	253	61%	08-20-2012	22:58	8cd45b4e	ex1/normalEqn.m
879	Defl:N	485	54%	08-20-2012	22:58	e4e58c78	ex1/plotData.m
17322	Defl:N	5808	67%	08-20-2012	22:58	234fa284	ex1/submit.m
627	Defl:N	436	47%	08-20-2012	22:58	35f44fe2	ex1/submitWeb.m
580	Defl:N	255	56%	08-20-2012	22:58	a3e81c1a	ex1/warmUpExercise.m
1350	Defl:N	600	51%	08-20-2012	22:58	fb097877	ex1/exidat1.txt
657	Defl:N	265	60%	08-20-2012	22:58	32d98829	ex1/exidat2.txt
493361	Defl:N	465571	6%	08-20-2012	22:58	a80dd8c1	ex1.pdf

Summary: 527846 bytes, 478618 bytes compressed, 9% compression, 15 files.

Editing Files

- **F4** to edit a file

```
geogcontest05.txt [----] 0 L: [ 23+ 0 23/669 ] *(565 /22839b) 0065 0x041
Answer: Alexandria

3) Barchan refers to what landscape feature?
a) Cliffs b) Sand Dune
(More detailed choices, I did not get them down)
Answer: Sand Dune

Digression: From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barchan:

A barchan dune is an arc-shaped sand ridge, comprised of well-sorted
sand. This type of dune possesses two "horns" that face downwind, with
the slip face (the downwind slope) at the angle of repose, or
approximately 32 degrees. The upwind side is packed by the wind, and
stands at about 15 degrees. Simple barchan dunes may stretch from meters
to a hundred meters or so between the tips of the horns.

Simple barchan dunes may appear as larger, compound barchan or
megabarchan dunes, which may migrate with the wind. Barchans and
megabarchans may coalesce into ridges that extend for hundreds of
kilometers.

1Help 2Save 3Mark 4Replac 5Copy 6Move 7Search 8Delete 9PullDn 10Quit
```

Selecting Text

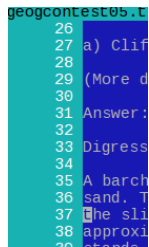
- **F3** to select some text, **F3** again to stop selecting.
 - **F5** to copy selected text elsewhere
 - **F8** to delete selected text

```
A barchan dune is an arc-shaped sand ridge, comprised of well-sorted sand. This type of dune possesses two "horns" that face downwind, with the slip face (the downwind slope) at the angle of repose, or approximately 32 degrees. The upwind side is packed by the wind, and stands at about 15 degrees. Simple barchan dunes may stretch from meter to a hundred meters or so between the tips of the horns.
```

- **Ctrl-u** to undo
- **Alt-r** to redo
- Clipboard:
 - **Ctrl-Ins** to copy
 - **Shift-Del** to cut
 - **Shift-Ins** to paste

Navigation

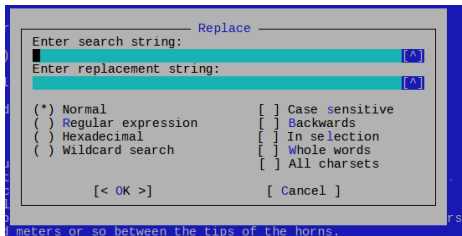
- **Alt-b** to jump to matching bracket, brace or parenthesis
- **Alt-k** to bookmark line
- **Alt-j** and **Alt-i** to navigate to next/previous bookmark
- **Alt-o** to clear bookmarks
- **Alt-l** to jump to line
- **Alt-n** to display line numbers (see image on right)



```
geogcontest05.t
26
27 a) Clif
28
29 (More d
30
31 Answer:
32
33 Digress
34
35 A barch
36 sand. T
37 the sli
38 approxi
39 standa
```

Replacing Text

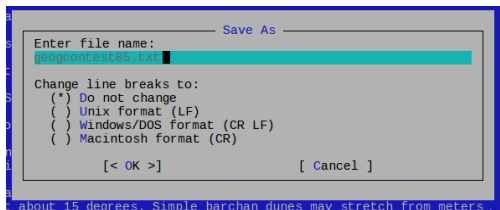
- **F4** to replace text



- **F7** to search—same dialog as with viewing

Saving

- **F2** to save the current file
- **F12** to save as a new file:



Syntax Highlighting

- Supports syntax highlighting:

```
/home/mue-oustic.py [----] 0 L: ( 1+ 0 1/ 77) *(0 /2236b) 0035 0x023
# This file contains code to calculate relevant aspects of the longitudinal acoust
from numpy import *
from scipy.special import jvp, trapz, j0
from scipy.special import jn as besselj
from scipy.integrate.quadrature import simps, quadrature
from useful import *

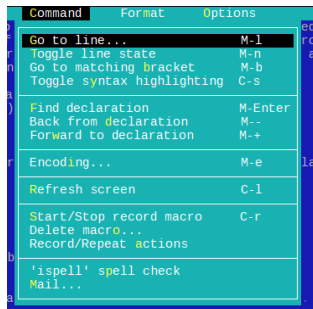
import psycho
psycho.full()

h=1.0546e-34
rho=2330.0
```

- **Ctrl-s** to enable if not already enabled

More Options

- **F9** to get a drop down menu
- Lots of goodies in the menus

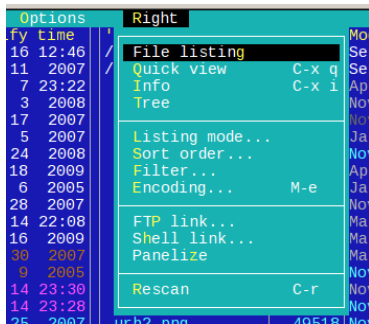


Some Comments about Editing

- I'm impressed with how many people I've met who regularly *use* the editor, but have never heard of Midnight Commander.
 - It can be launched by typing *mcedit* on the command line.
- I use it mostly for quick and dirty edits.
- You can make an external editor your default:
 - From the main menu, *Options*, and then *Configuration* lets you disable the internal editor.

Bringing up the menu

Under many contexts, **F9** will bring up a menu:



- The **Right** menu impacts the right panel. **Left** acts on the left panel.
- Take some time to go through the main menus. There are many features/customizations in there.
- I've shown some examples on the next few slides.

Menus (File)

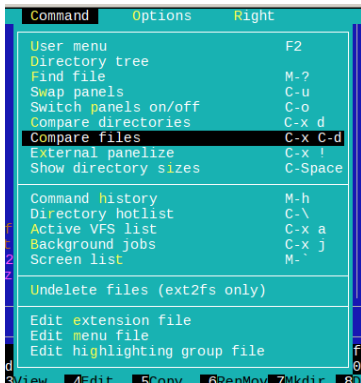
File	Command	Options
View	F3	
View file...		
Filtered view	M-!	
Edit	F4	
Copy	F5	
Chmod	C-x c	
Link	C-x l	
Symlink	C-x s	
Relative symlink	C-x v	
Edit symlink	C-x C-s	
Chown	C-x o	
Advanced chown		
Rename/Move	F6	
Mkdir	F7	
Delete	F8	
Quick cd	M-c	
Select group	+	
Unselect group	-	
Invert selection	*	
Exit	F10	

- You can do more than just move and copy files.
- Quick cd will let you quickly move to another directory without messing up whatever you had typed in the command line.

Quip

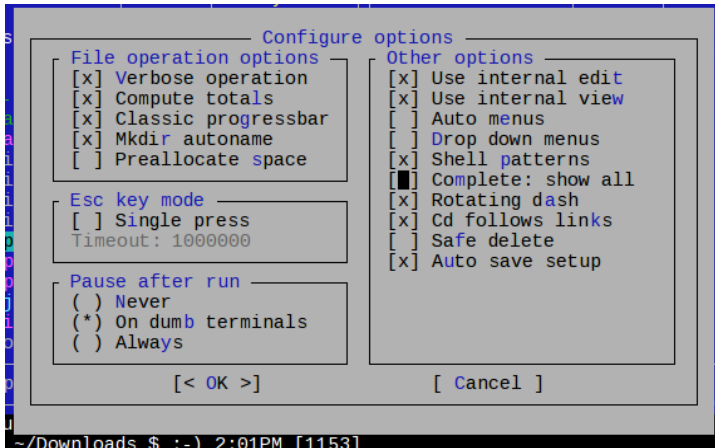
Did I mention that you still have the command line in Midnight Commander?

Menus (Command)

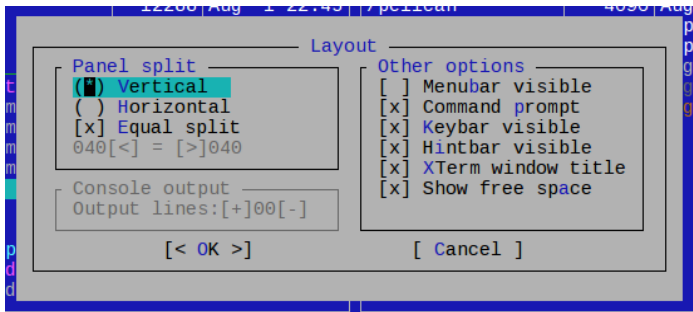


- **External panelize** will let you panelize the results of an external (e.g. shell) command.
- **Directory hotlist** is essentially a way to bookmark commonly accessed directories.
- **Edit extension file** lets you customize the command that is executed when you view a filetype or press Enter on it.
 - For example, you can have it display EXIF headers for an image file when you “view” it, and launch an image viewer when you press Enter on an image file.

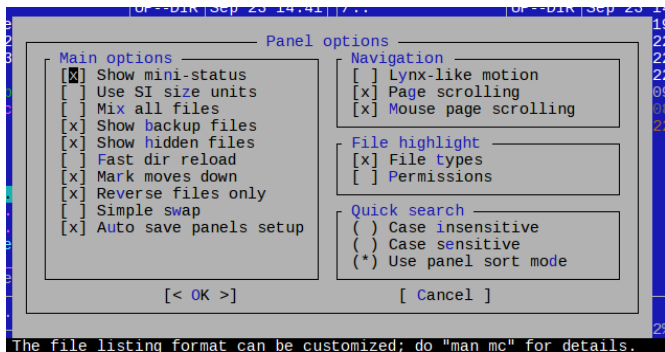
Configuration



Layout



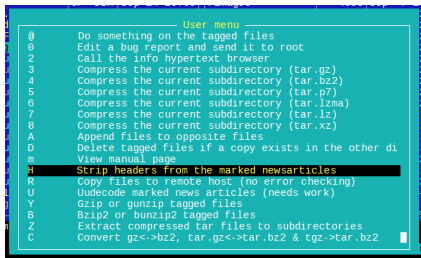
Panel



- Lynx-like motion allows you to enter/exit a directory with the left/right arrow keys. It's quite handy.

User Menu

- Press **F2** to access the user menu:

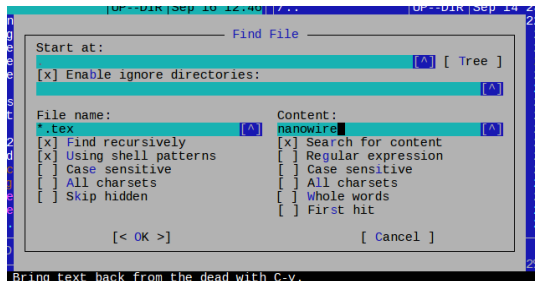
A screenshot of the Midnight Commander terminal window showing the User Menu. The menu is titled "User menu" and lists various actions with their corresponding keyboard shortcuts. The "Strip headers from the marked newsarticles" option is highlighted with a black background and white text. The menu items are: @ Do something on the tagged files, 0 Edit a bug report and send it to root, 2 Call the info hypertext browser, 3 Compress the current subdirectory (tar.gz), 4 Compress the current subdirectory (tar.bz2), 5 Compress the current subdirectory (tar.p7), 6 Compress the current subdirectory (tar.lzma), 7 Compress the current subdirectory (tar.lz), 8 Compress the current subdirectory (tar.xz), A Append files to opposite files, D Delete tagged files if a copy exists in the other di, = View manual page, H Strip headers from the marked newsarticles (highlighted), R Copy files to remote host (no error checking), U Uudecode marked news articles (needs work), Y Gzip or gunzip tagged files, B Bzip2 or bunzip2 tagged files, Z Extract compressed tar files to subdirectories, C Convert gz->bz2, tar.gz->tar.bz2 & tgz->tar.bz2.

```
      User menu
@ Do something on the tagged files
0 Edit a bug report and send it to root
2 Call the info hypertext browser
3 Compress the current subdirectory (tar.gz)
4 Compress the current subdirectory (tar.bz2)
5 Compress the current subdirectory (tar.p7)
6 Compress the current subdirectory (tar.lzma)
7 Compress the current subdirectory (tar.lz)
8 Compress the current subdirectory (tar.xz)
A Append files to opposite files
D Delete tagged files if a copy exists in the other di
= View manual page
H Strip headers from the marked newsarticles
R Copy files to remote host (no error checking)
U Uudecode marked news articles (needs work)
Y Gzip or gunzip tagged files
B Bzip2 or bunzip2 tagged files
Z Extract compressed tar files to subdirectories
C Convert gz->bz2, tar.gz->tar.bz2 & tgz->tar.bz2
```

- You can apply a command to all selected files.
- You can create a compressed archive of the current directory—I use this all the time.
- You can edit a configuration file to customize what options are displayed here—press **F1** for details.

Finding Files

- Press **Alt-?** to search for files:



Quip

Poor man's *grep* and
find

- The content field is optional.
- Numerous options are supported.

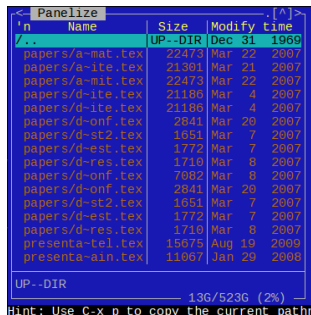
Results of File Search

```
Find File
/home/mueen/tmp/midnightcomma-es/presentations/JP-Feb-2008
28:main.tex
127:main.tex
/home/mueen/tmp/midnightcomma-sentations/group-Jan-27-2008
28:main.tex
127:main.tex
220:main.tex
237:main.tex
283:main.tex
295:main.tex
/home/mueen/tmp/midnightcomma-esentations/2009-08-21-intel v
Finished
Found: 459
[< Chdir >] [ Again ] [ Suspend ] [ Quit ]
[ Panelize ] [ View - F3 ] [ Edit - F4 ]
```

- All the search results are listed.
- Can easily view/edit any file in the results.
- The **Panelize** command at the bottom is useful.

Example Use Case

- Let's say I want to find all JPG files under a directory and delete them (or move them to a dedicated *images* directory).
- Problem:** The JPG files are scattered across many subdirectories.
- Solution:** Use the search results (as shown in the previous slide), and select **Panelize**:
- All the results are shown as if they were in one directory. You can now manipulate them any way you wish (e.g. select all and delete).



The screenshot shows the Midnight Commander interface with a search window titled "Panelize". The window displays a list of files and directories with columns for Name, Size, Modify, and time. The files are listed in a single directory view, representing the results of a search across multiple subdirectories.

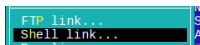
Name	Size	Modify	time
UP--DIR		Dec 31	1969
papers/a-mat.tex	22473	Mar 22	2007
papers/a-ite.tex	21301	Mar 21	2007
papers/a-mit.tex	22473	Mar 22	2007
papers/d-ite.tex	21186	Mar 4	2007
papers/d-ite.tex	21186	Mar 4	2007
papers/d-onf.tex	2841	Mar 20	2007
papers/d-st2.tex	1651	Mar 7	2007
papers/d-est.tex	1772	Mar 7	2007
papers/d-res.tex	1710	Mar 8	2007
papers/d-onf.tex	7082	Mar 8	2007
papers/d-onf.tex	2841	Mar 20	2007
papers/d-st2.tex	1651	Mar 7	2007
papers/d-est.tex	1772	Mar 7	2007
papers/d-res.tex	1710	Mar 8	2007
presenta-tel.tex	15675	Aug 19	2009
presenta-ain.tex	11067	Jan 29	2008

UP--DIR 13G/523G (2%)

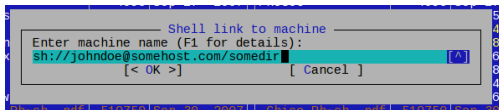
Hint: Use C-x p to copy the current path

Remote File Systems (FTP)

- Did you notice this in the menu?

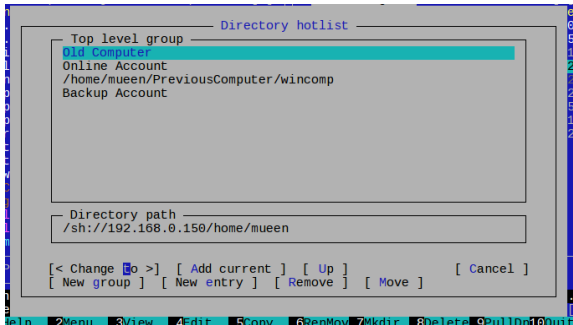


- You can (S)FTP to a remote machine and navigate its directories with Midnight Commander:



- It will show up like any other directory. You can view files, copy back and forth, etc.
- Midnight Commander is my main FTP tool.

Directory Hotlist



- You can bookmark a directory.
- You can even bookmark a remote location—very handy.

The Default Key Bindings Suck!

Problem

The default key bindings suck! I want to change them!

Solution

Despite what the Internet tells you, with a recent enough Midnight Commander, one *can* change the key bindings.

Quip

But you'll need a PhD to figure out how.

I Can't Select Text With My Mouse

Problem

I can't select text with my mouse!

Solution

- Hold down the **Shift** button while selecting your text.
- Do likewise when pasting with the mouse.

Some keys don't work!

Problem

Some Alt/F# keys don't work!

Solution

- Sometimes the window manager or terminal software gobbles up those keybindings.
- Press **Esc**, release it, and then press the key.
 - So for **Alt-d** you would press and release **Esc** and then press **d**.
- But really, just redefine your window manager's/terminal emulator's keys. . .

When I Quit I'm In The Wrong Directory!

Problem

When I quit Midnight Commander, I'm in the directory I was in when I launched it. I want to quit to the directory Midnight Commander was last in!

- This is a **major** pain.
- Most Linux distributions will come with shell scripts to fix this.
- I have the following line in my `.zshrc`:

```
.zshrc
```

```
source /usr/libexec/mc/mc.sh
```


Quitting Into the Wrong Directory

```
/usr/libexec/mc/mc.sh
```

```
# Don't define aliases in plain Bourne shell  
[ -n "${BASH_VERSION}${KSH_VERSION}${ZSH_VERSION}" ] || return 0  
alias mc='. /usr/libexec/mc/mc-wrapper.sh'
```

```
/usr/libexec/mc/mc-wrapper.sh
```

```
MC_USER='id | sed 's/[^(]*((//;s/).*/''  
MC_PWD_FILE="${TMPDIR-/tmp}/mc-${MC_USER}/mc.pwd.$$"  
/usr/bin/mc -P "$MC_PWD_FILE" "$@"  
  
if test -r "$MC_PWD_FILE"; then  
    MC_PWD='cat "$MC_PWD_FILE"'  
    if test -n "$MC_PWD" && test -d "$MC_PWD"; then  
        cd "$MC_PWD"  
    fi  
    unset MC_PWD  
fi  
  
rm -f "$MC_PWD_FILE"  
unset MC_PWD_FILE
```

Temporary Do Something Else

Problem

I'm viewing/editing a file and I suddenly realize I need to copy a file somewhere. It's a pain to quit the viewer to do this task.

Solution

While viewing/editing, press **Alt-'**.

My Screen is Garbled Up

```

pmsetmp/midnightcommanderpres 3 17:22 /papers 4096 Mar 5 2007
pms-gene-0.0.tgz 12352K Sep 3 17:08 /phd 4096 Feb 24 2008
/literature 4096 Apr 3 2008 /presentations 4096 Aug 18 2009
/notes 4096 Sep 17 2007 /revtex4 4096 Nov 6 2005
/papers 4096 Mar 5 2007 /tmp 4096 Nov 28 2007
/phd 4096 Feb 24 2008 /tmp2 4096 Sep 14 22:08
/presentations 4096 Aug 18 2009 /windows 4096 Aug 16 2009
/revtex4 4096 Nov 6 2005 besint.m 190 Sep 22 19:31
/tmp 4096 Nov 28 2007 besslder.m 188 Sep 22 19:31
/tmp2 4096 Sep 14 22:08 Chico Ph~ch .pdf 519750 Sep 30 2007
/windows 4096 Aug 16 2009 ECE355Finala.ppt 113664 Sep 22 19:31
besint.m 190 Sep 22 19:31 geogcont-t05.txt 22830 Nov 9 2005
besslder.m 188 Sep 22 19:31
Chico Ph~ch .pdf 519750 Sep 30 2007 Chico PhysRevB_73_-nuum approach .pdf
ECE355Finala.ppt 113664 Sep 22 19:31 -- 146/523G (2%) --
geogcont-t05.txt 22830 Nov 9 2005 besslder.m 188 Sep 22 19:31
literatu-.tar.bz2 91504K Sep 14 23:38 Chico Ph~ch .pdf 519750 Sep 30 2007
literatu-.tar.gz 98335K Sep 14 23:28 writeConfig:7 mkdir 8 delete 9 pullOnQuit
me2.eps 87051 Mar 25 2007 okular(30508)/kdecore (KConfigS
keleton) KCoreConfigSkeleton::writeConfig:
besslder.m besslder.m
KCoreConfigSkeleton::writeConfig:
okular(30508)/kdecore (KConfigSkeleton) KCore
configSkeleton::writeConfig:
  
```

Problem

My display got messed up!

Solution

Press **Ctrl-l** to redraw the display.

Update the Panel!

Problem

Some of the files in my directory changed. Midnight Commander doesn't pick up these changes. It's a pain to exit the directory and re-enter it.

Solution

Press **Ctrl-r** to refresh the panel.

Blue?! Yechh! I Want to Change the Colors!

Problem:

Blue?! Yechh! I want to change the colors!

Solution

- To run in B/W mode, launch it with the `-b` option.
- Otherwise see <https://www.midnight-commander.org/wiki/doc/common/skins> for details on how to change the appearance.

I want Midnight Commander in Windows!

Problem

I want Midnight Commander in Windows!

Solution

- Try Far Manager (<http://www.farmanager.com/>).
- There's also an unofficial Midnight Commander for Windows (<http://sourceforge.net/projects/mcwin32/>).

History

- In 1986 Peter Norton developed *Norton Commander* for DOS.
- It was very powerful, and alleviated the pain of writing commands in DOS.
- The product more or less died once everyone switched to Windows.
- Many clones have been developed, but Midnight Commander is the most featureful for the Linux environment.

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