

How to Automatically Copy a File During Linux User Creation?

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If you have been a sysadmin in a company for a long time, then you will usually change the Linux server settings according to what you want, for example, you [create a recycle bin in your Linux server](#). If there is a new sysadmin, it will take a long time to explain what you are changing. Therefore, you plan to create a readme.txt file on the Linux server that contains the changes you made on the Linux server and automatically copy a file during Linux user creation.

Problem

How to automatically copy a file during Linux user creation?

Solution

Go to the `/etc/skel` folder, which contains files and directories. If a new Linux user is created, all the files and directories in this folder will be copied to the Linux user's folder. Below is an image of the contents of the skel folder in the RockyLinux distro, and the contents of the skel folder can be different in each Linux distro:

```
[root@RockyLinux9 skel]# ls -al
total 24
drwxr-xr-x.  2 root root  62 Nov  3 09:29 .
drwxr-xr-x. 89 root root 8192 Feb 11 17:31 ..
-rw-r--r--.  1 root root  18 Apr 30 2024 .bash_logout
-rw-r--r--.  1 root root 141 Apr 30 2024 .bash_profile
-rw-r--r--.  1 root root 492 Apr 30 2024 .bashrc
[root@RockyLinux9 skel]#
```



The skel folder in the RockyLinux distro

If you want to copy a file to each new Linux user, create the file in the /etc/skel folder. For example, you create a readme.txt file like the following command:

```
echo 'This is a readme.txt file' > /etc/skel/readme.txt
```

```
[root@RockyLinux9 skel]# echo "This is a readme.txt file" > /etc/skel/readme.txt
[root@RockyLinux9 skel]#
[root@RockyLinux9 skel]# ls -al
total 28
drwxr-xr-x. 2 root root 80 Feb 11 18:41 .
drwxr-xr-x. 89 root root 8192 Feb 11 17:31 ..
-rw-r--r--. 1 root root 18 Apr 30 2024 .bash_logout
-rw-r--r--. 1 root root 141 Apr 30 2024 .bash_profile
-rw-r--r--. 1 root root 492 Apr 30 2024 .bashrc
-rw-r--r-- 1 root root 26 Feb 11 18:41 readme.txt
[root@RockyLinux9 skel]#
```

Create a readme.txt file

After that, create a new Linux user, for example, bob. Use the command below to create a user named bob on Linux:

```
useradd -m bob
```

The -m option tells useradd to create the user's home directory. Then, check the bob folder if the readme.txt file is in the bob folder by using the command below:

```
ls -l /home/bob
cat /home/bob/readme.txt
```

```
[root@RockyLinux9 skel]# useradd -m bob
[root@RockyLinux9 skel]#
[root@RockyLinux9 skel]# ls -al /home/bob
total 16
drwx----- 2 bob bob 80 Feb 11 18:42 .
drwxr-xr-x. 5 root root 47 Feb 11 18:42 ..
-rw-r--r-- 1 bob bob 18 Apr 30 2024 .bash_logout
-rw-r--r-- 1 bob bob 141 Apr 30 2024 .bash_profile
-rw-r--r-- 1 bob bob 492 Apr 30 2024 .bashrc
-rw-r--r-- 1 bob bob 26 Feb 11 18:41 readme.txt
[root@RockyLinux9 skel]#
[root@RockyLinux9 skel]# cat /home/bob/readme.txt
This is a readme.txt file
[root@RockyLinux9 skel]#
```

Check in the user folder

From the image above, you can see that the readme.txt file is already in the bob folder automatically. To be more sure, try creating a new Linux user, and the readme.txt file should appear in your new user.

Note

Make sure to use the `-m` option when creating a new user in Linux so that the file(s) or folder(s) can be automatically copied from the skel folder.

References

[youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)
[linux.org](https://www.linux.org)