[How-to] Set Terminal Folder-File Colors

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Recently I learned how to change the default colors applied to folders and files when using a console. I was encouraged to do this by the appearance of directories as blue on a black background. I can't see that color well, so I felt a bit stuck, and a change was in order. Further, my default rxvt terminal used a white background, and the prompt was light green, and my root account had no colors, so that's why I decided to figure this out.

I'm only a novice so I'm going to tell you what I did to make this work, but if there are other ways to accomplish the same thing perhaps others will provide enlightenment.

First, enter a command prompt and do this: **$ dircolors -p > ~/somefilename**
This will create a file in your home folder called **somefilename**. You can call this file anything you like, and I chose to create a hidden file called **.dircolorsrc** so I used **$ dircolors -p > ~/.dircolorsrc** (the . before dircolorsrc makes it a hidden file).

This file contains the color scheme for your folders and files and background, and any text attributes to apply such as blinking or reversed color. Later edit this file as you like, choosing colors that look good to you. The file explains itself as to what the codes mean, so you can play around with that once you learn how to test it. Leave that file alone for a bit, lets move on and come back to it.

Next we want to edit your **.bashrc** file. In your home folder you likely have a hidden file named .bashrc which contains actions to perform and preferences to set when a bash shell is started. There are a few things in this that we want to look at.
 Locate the part where you see: **eval "$(dircolors -b)"** and change this to:
eval "$(dircolors -b ~/.dircolorsrc)" replacing .dircolorsrc with whatever filename you had chosen.
 This command exports the chosen colors to the environment variable **LS_COLORS** for any bash shell that is started under your account.
 Ensure you have the line **alias ls='ls --color=auto'** in your aliases so you will get your colors when you use the ls command.

Now you will have two files in your home folder to work with, .dircolorsrc containing all your default colors and **.bashrc** which reads your color scheme and exports it to the appropriate environment variable for use by terminals.

In order to see changes to your colors file take effect use these steps:

1) Edit your colors file, e.g. ~/.dircolorsrc
2) Save the file
3) **$ source ~/.bashrc**

You should see your new color scheme in the terminal window when you use ls.

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In order to apply these same colors to root do this:

1) su to root account
2) Copy your colors file to the root home folder,
   e.g. # cp /home/*username*/.dircolorsrc /root/.dircolorsrc
3) Edit **/root/.bashrc** to use this file in the same way we did for the
   user account.
4) # source /root/.bashrc

You should now see the same color scheme in the root account.

RECAP OF STEPS

1) $ dircolors -p > ~/.dircolorsrc
2) $ nano ~/.bashrc
   eval "`dircolors -b ~/.dircolorsrc`"
   alias ls='ls --color=auto'
3) $ vim ~/.dircolorsrc
4) $ source ~/.bashrc

I made the colors slightly different for the root account, using yellow for
the basic file and directory foreground color instead of white.

EXAMPLE FILES

I use a background on everything to ensure that no matter what the default
background color of my terminal, it will always show the foreground and
background text colors that I've chosen.

Here's my **.dircolorsrc** file to contrast with yours.

```
# Configuration file for dircolors, a utility to help you set the
# LS_COLORS environment variable used by GNU ls with the --color option.
# The keywords COLOR, OPTIONS, and EIGHTBIT (honored by the
# slackware version of dircolors) are recognized but ignored.
# Below, there should be one TERM entry for each termtype that is colorizable
TERM linux
TERM linux-c
TERM mach-color
TERM console
TERM con132x25
TERM con132x30
TERM con132x43
TERM con132x60
TERM con80x25
TERM con80x28
TERM con80x30
TERM con80x43
TERM con80x50
TERM con80x60
TERM cygwin
TERM dtterm
```

```
TERM mlterm
TERM putty
TERM xterm
TERM xterm-color
TERM xterm-debian
TERM rxvt
TERM rxvt-unicode
TERM screen
TERM screen-bce
TERM screen-w
TERM vt100
TERM Eterm
# Below are the color init strings for the basic file types. A color init
# string consists of one or more of the following numeric codes:
# Attribute codes:
# 00=none 01=bold 04=underscore 05=blink 07=reverse 08=concealed
# Text color codes:
# 30=black 31=red 32=green 33=yellow 34=blue 35=magenta 36=cyan 37=white
# Background color codes:
# 40=black 41=red 42=green 43=yellow 44=blue 45=magenta 46=cyan 47=white
NORMAL 00 # global default, although everything should be something.
FILE 01;37;40 # normal file
DIR 01;37;44 # directory
LINK 01;36;40 # symbolic link. (If you set this to 'target' instead of a
# numerical value, the color is as for the file pointed to.)
FIFO 40;33 # pipe
SOCK 01;35 # socket
DOOR 01;35 # door
BLK 40;33;01 # block device driver
CHR 40;33;01 # character device driver
ORPHAN 40;31;01 # symlink to nonexistent file
SETUID 37;41 # file that is setuid (u+s)
SETGID 30;43 # file that is setgid (g+s)
STICKY_OTHER_WRITABLE 30;42 # dir that is sticky and other-writable (+t,o+w)
OTHER_WRITABLE 34;42 # dir that is other-writable (o+w) and not sticky
STICKY 37;44 # dir with the sticky bit set (+t) and not other-writable
# This is for files with execute permission:
#EXEC 01;30;42
EXEC 01;32;40
# List any file extensions like '.gz' or '.tar' that you would like ls
# to colorize below. Put the extension, a space, and the color init string.
# (and any comments you want to add after a '#')
# If you use DOS-style suffixes, you may want to uncomment the following:
#.cmd 00;32 # executables (bright green)
#.exe 00;32
#.com 00;32
#.btm 00;32
#.bat 00;32
.tar 01;31;40 # archives or compressed (bright red)
.tgz 01;31;40
.arj 01;31;40
.taz 01;31;40
.lzh 01;31;40
.zip 01;31;40
.z 01;31;40
```

```
.Z 01;31;40
.gz 01;31;40
.bz2 01;31;40
.deb 01;31;40
.rpm 01;31;40
.jar 01;31;40
# image formats
.wmv 01;35;40
.WMV 01;35;40
.jpg 01;35;40
.JPG 01;35;40
.jpeg 01;35;40
.JPEG 01;35;40
.gif 01;35;40
.GIF 01;35;40
.bmp 01;35;40
.BMP 01;35;40
.pbm 01;35;40
.PBM 01;35;40
.pgm 01;35;40
.PGM 01;35;40
.ppm 01;35;40
.PPM 01;35;40
.tga 01;35;40
.TGA 01;35;40
.xbm 01;35;40
.XBM 01;35;40
.xpm 01;35;40
.XPM 01;35;40
.tif 01;35;40
.TIF 01;35;40
.tiff 01;35;40
.TIFF 01;35;40
.png 01;35;40
.PNG 01;35;40
.mov 01;35;40
.MOV 01;35;40
.mpg 01;35;40
.MPG 01;35;40
.mpeg 01;35;40
.MPEG 01;35;40
.avi 01;35;40
.AVI 01;35;40
.fli 01;35;40
.FLI 01;35;40
.gl 01;35;40
.GL 01;35;40
.dl 01;35;40
.DL 01;35;40
.xcf 01;35;40
.XCF 01;35;40
.xwd 01;35;40
.XWD 01;35;40
# audio formats
.flac 01;35;40
```

```
.FLAC 01;35;40
.mp3 01;35;40
.MP3 01;35;40
.mpc 01;35;40
.MPC 01;35;40
.ogg 01;35;40
.OGG 01;35;40
.wav 01;35;40
.WAV 01;35;40
.auf 01;35;40
.AUF 01;35;40
--------------------------------------------------------------------------
```

Here's my **.bashrc** file.
```
--------------------------------------------------------------------------
# ~/.bashrc: executed by bash(1) for non-login shells.
# see /usr/share/doc/bash/examples/startup-files (in the package bash-doc)
# for examples

# If not running interactively, don't do anything:
[ -z "$PS1" ] && return

# don't put duplicate lines in the history. See bash(1) for more options
#export HISTCONTROL=ignoredups

# check the window size after each command and, if necessary,
# update the values of LINES and COLUMNS.
shopt -s checkwinsize

# enable color support of ls and also add handy aliases
if [ "$TERM" != "dumb" ]; then
eval "`dircolors -b ~/.dircolorsrc`"
alias ls='ls --color=auto'
#alias dir='ls --color=auto --format=vertical'
#alias vdir='ls --color=auto --format=long'
fi

# some more ls aliases
alias ll='ls -l'
alias la='ls -la'
alias l='ls -CF'
#alias start='startxfce4'

# set variable identifying the chroot you work in (used in the prompt below)
if [ -z "$debian_chroot" -a -r /etc/debian_chroot ]; then
debian_chroot=$(cat /etc/debian_chroot)
fi

# set a fancy prompt (non-color, unless we know we "want" color)
case "$TERM" in
xterm-color)
# PS1='${debian_chroot:+($debian_chroot)}\[\033[01;32m\]\u@\h\[\033[00m\]:\[\0
33[01;34m\]\w\[\033[00m\]\$ '
 ;;
*)
```

```
PS1='${debian_chroot:+($debian_chroot)}\u@\h:\w\$ '
;;
esac

# Comment in the above and uncomment this below for a color prompt
PS1='${debian_chroot:+($debian_chroot)}\n\[\033[01;33;40m\] \u:
\[\033[01;32m\]\w \[\033[00m\]\n\$ '

# If this is an xterm set the title to user@host:dir
case "$TERM" in
xterm*|rxvt*)
PROMPT_COMMAND='echo -ne "\033]0;${USER}@${HOSTNAME}: ${PWD}\007"'
;;
*)
;;
esac

# enable programmable completion features (you don't need to enable
# this, if it's already enabled in /etc/bash.bashrc and /etc/profiles
# sources /etc/bash.bashrc).
#if [ -f /etc/bash_completion ]; then
# . /etc/bash_completion
#fi
----------------------------------------------------------------------------

Happy coloring.
```

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