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How can I create a symbolic link in Terminal?

What command is used to create a symbolic link/soft link?



edited Mar 26 '15 at 22:20

| IconDaemon | 9,281 | 6 | 25 | 38

asked Dec 31 '13 at 17:49

Patrick

1.284 2 7 3

5 Answers

```
ln(1) link, ln — make links

Create a symbolic link.

the optional path to the intended symlink if omitted, symlink is in . named as destination

can use . or ~ or other relative paths

ln — s /path/to/original /path/to/symlink

the path to the original file/folder can use . or ~ or other relative paths

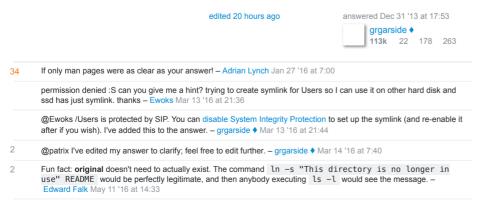
$ echo content > original $ ln — s original symlink $ ls — s original symlink $ ls — la original symlink  
-rw-r--r-- 1 grgarside staff 8 28 Jan 18:44 original lrwxr-xr-x 1 grgarside staff 8 28 Jan 18:44 symlink —> original $ cat symlink content
```

For more information about In(1) see the man page.

The path to the symlink is optional; if omitted, <code>ln</code> defaults to making a link with the same name as the destination, in the current directory:

```
$ cd ~/Documents
$ ln -s ../Pictures
$ ls -l Pictures
lrwxr-xr-x 1 user staff 11 Feb 1 17:05 Pictures -> ../Pictures
```

To create a symlink to replace a system directory (e.g. if you want to have <code>/Users</code> pointing to another disk drive), you need to disable System Integrity Protection. You can re-enable it after the symlink is set up.



The command is called $\ \ln$. If used with the option $\ -s$ it will create a symbolic link in the current directory:

ln -s /any/file/on/the/disk linked-file

answered Dec 31 '13 at 17:54

patrix ◆
44.9k 12 95 131

- Does the linked-file have to exist first? I get a file not found error on the target. AlxVallejo Oct 26 '16 at 14:26
- 2 The file not (you get an error message if it does), but all directories in any path. If you are stuck, feel free to ask a new question using the Ask Question button at the top right. Include a link to this question to provide context. patrix ♦ Oct 26 16 at 17:06

Symbolic link should not exist before you run this command. But a valid path is required as far as I know. If the output file's folder not exists before you run this command, you will get No such file or directory error as well. — Deniz Kaplan Dec 19 '17 at 11:23

I know this question is explicitly asking about the Terminal, but if you're in GUI Land and don't want to enter Terminal Land, you can use SymbolicLinker. This puts a "Make Symbolic Link" option in your Services menu in Finder.

A context menu for a folder, showing a "Services" submenu, with "Make Symbolic Link" hilighted

A context menu for a symbolic link, with "Make Symbolic Link" hilighted

answered Apr 27 '16 at 16:49

Ben Leggiero

- 3 I'd love to know why this was downvoted so I can make higher-quality answers from now on :) Ben Leggiero Apr 27 '16 at 22:43
- 7 probably because the question was "How can I create a symbolic link in Terminal?" But I am not downvoting you :) vedrano Apr 29 '16 at 14:55
- @EdwardFalk I think in El Capitan, you can hold Command + Option while dragging a file... will update the answer later Ben Leggiero Nov 9 '16 at 14:27
- @BenLeggiero That makes an alias. Andy Stewart Dec 29 '16 at 15:11
- 2 @BenLeggerio, The difference is explained here: apple.stackexchange.com/questions/2991/... MiB Feb 25 '17 at 3:25

It's just ln -s <source> <destination> .

answered Apr 27 '16 at 18:56

TheSqrtMinus1

ln -s /some/dir/ ~/Desktop/dir

You can also create a symlink for directory using the same command

ln -s "\$(pwd)" ~/Desktop/dir

To create symlink to current directory you are in.

pwd prints the working directory

\$() outputs the result as argument while "" changes it into literals in case your directory names contains spaces

answered Dec 15 '17 at 3:52

