Basic UNIX Commands

The UNIX operating system has evolved into quite a monster. The number of commands is large, however, one can operate quite well by just becoming familiar with a few of them. One frustrating factor in learning UNIX is that there are several flavors of UNIX and each has its own peculiarities.

- **passwd** → Allows the user to change their password.
- **man** → Manual listing of a command. This is UNIX’s HELP.
- **clear** → Clears the Screen.
- **ls** → Lists the files in the current directory. `ls -l` gives a long listing.
- **mkdir** → Makes a new directory within the current directory.
- **cd** → Changes the current directory.
- **pwd** → Tells you your current directory.
- **cat** → Lists the contents of a text file to the screen (conCATenate to the screen).
- **more** → Lists the contents of a text file to the screen one page at a time.
- **cp** → Copies one file into another file. `cp file1 file2`.
- **mv** → Moves one file to another (really is a rename but can cross directories).
- **rm** → Removes a file. Since UNIX recognizes wildcards (*), `rm *` is dangerous!
- **vi** → The standard UNIX editor.
- **ps** → List active processes on this system.
- **chmod** → Changes the permissions associated with files.
- **mail** → Method for sending mail locally or on the internet.
- **talk** → Allows one user to ”talk” to another.
- **echo** → Displays characters to the screen.
- **who** → Tells you who is logged on this system.
- **finger** → A more elaborate ”who” command.
- **sleep** → Makes your login shell sleep for a specified period of time.
- **grep** → Searches for strings within files.
- **cut** → Cuts fields out of files (i.e. column 3).
- **paste** → Pastes files together side by side.
- **sed** → Stream editor.

Here are a few commands which are useful within a Shell Script Program:

- **shift** → In Shell programs, this allows you to look at the next argument.
- **case** → A selection of choices is made possible.
- **while** → A looping structure.
- **for** → A looping structure.
- **if** → A conditional statement for making choices.
- **read** → Allows input into a variable.