

1.108.2

Find Linux documentation on the Internet

Weight 3

Linux Professional Institute Certification — 102

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[Context](#)

[Objective](#)

[Main Internet Sources](#)

[Usenet](#)

[Mailing Lists](#)

[Asking Questions on a
Mailing List](#)

[Online Magazines](#)

[License of this
Document](#)

Outline

Context
Objective
Main Internet Sources
Usenet

Mailing Lists
Asking Questions on a Mailing List
Online Magazines
License of this Document

1.108.2
Find Linux
documentation on the
Internet
Weight 3

Nick Urbanik

Context

Objective

Main Internet Sources

Usenet

Mailing Lists

Asking Questions on a
Mailing List

Online Magazines

License of this
Document

Topic 108 Documentation [8]

Where we are up to

- 1.108.1 Use and manage local system documentation [4]
- 1.108.2 **Find Linux documentation on the Internet [3]**
- 1.108.5 Notify users on system-related issues [1]

1.108.2
Find Linux
documentation on the
Internet
Weight 3

Nick Urbanik

Context

Objective

Main Internet Sources

Usenet

Mailing Lists

Asking Questions on a
Mailing List

Online Magazines

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Document

Description of Objective

1.108.2 Find Linux documentation on the Internet

Candidates should be able to find and use Linux documentation. This objective includes using Linux documentation at sources such as the Linux Documentation Project (LDP), vendor and third-party websites, newsgroups, newsgroup archives, and mailing lists.

1.108.2
Find Linux
documentation on the
Internet
Weight 3

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Context

Objective

Main Internet Sources

Usenet

Mailing Lists

Asking Questions on a
Mailing List

Online Magazines

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Key files, terms, and utilities include:

1.108.2 Find Linux documentation on the Internet

not applicable

1.108.2
Find Linux
documentation on the
Internet
Weight 3

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[Context](#)

Objective

[Main Internet Sources](#)

[Usenet](#)

[Mailing Lists](#)

[Asking Questions on a
Mailing List](#)

[Online Magazines](#)

[License of this
Document](#)

Main Internet Sources

- ▶ *The Linux Documentation Project*: <http://tldp.org/>
provides these documents in many formats:
 - HOWTOs about a large number of topics
 - ▶ Of variable quality and currency
 - Guides: free online books
 - FAQs: frequently asked questions, with answers
- ▶ Search using *Google*: <http://www.google.com/>
- ▶ *Google Groups* in <http://groups.google.com/>, and
- ▶ Usenet: news://comp.os.linux.*
 - ▶ Free 1 GB/month feed currently available from
<http://yottanews.com/>

comp.os.linux.* Usenet groups

- ▶ Can browse these from <http://groups.google.com.au/groups/dir?lnk=gh&hl=en&sel=33583540>
 - ▶ Can use a newsreader like Pan or Gnus (in Emacs) to browse a news server
-
- ▶ [comp.os.linux](#)
 - ▶ [comp.os.linux.admin](#)
 - ▶ [comp.os.linux.advocacy](#)
 - ▶ [comp.os.linux.alpha](#)
 - ▶ [comp.os.linux.announce](#)
 - ▶ [comp.os.linux.answers](#)
 - ▶ [comp.os.linux.development](#)
 - ▶ [comp.os.linux.embedded](#)
 - ▶ [comp.os.linux.hardware](#)
 - ▶ [comp.os.linux.help](#)
 - ▶ [comp.os.linux.m68k](#)
 - ▶ [comp.os.linux.misc](#)
 - ▶ [comp.os.linux.network](#)
 - ▶ [comp.os.linux.networking](#)
 - ▶ [comp.os.linux.portable](#)
 - ▶ [comp.os.linux.powerpc](#)
 - ▶ [comp.os.linux.questions](#)
 - ▶ [comp.os.linux.redhat](#)
 - ▶ [comp.os.linux.security](#)
 - ▶ [comp.os.linux.setup](#)
 - ▶ [comp.os.linux.x](#)
 - ▶ [comp.os.linux.xbox](#)

Distribution Documentation

- ▶ Red Hat provides plenty of very high quality online books and documentation. These URLs are current 26 Oct 2005:
<http://www.redhat.com/docs/>, <http://www.redhat.com/docs/manuals/enterprise/>.
After you have read the *Red Hat Enterprise Linux Step by Step Guide*, I particularly recommend the *Red Hat Enterprise Linux Introduction to System Administration*, and the *Red Hat Enterprise Linux System Administration Guide*. Reading previous versions of these provided enough background for me to earn my RHCE.
- ▶ Ubuntu: <http://wiki.ubuntu.com/>
- ▶ Debian volunteers have created much useful documentation at <http://www.au.debian.org/doc/>
 - ▶ Read <http://www.au.debian.org/doc/manuals/apt-howto/about APT>
- ▶ Gentoo has some great documentation:
<http://www.gentoo.org/doc/en/>

Mailing Lists

- ▶ A *mailing list* is a discussion group over email
 - ▶ Mostly have a narrow technical focus
 - ▶ a great way to get help from an expert on the subject.
- ▶ You *subscribe* to a mailing list by:
 - ▶ Send email to the list server, or fill in a simple web form
 - ▶ The list server sends you an email
 - ▶ You reply to that email
- ▶ Any subscribed user can send an email to the list
 - ▶ All subscribed users will receive that email
 - ▶ Set one mail folder for each list
 - ▶ Set your email software to filter all list email into the right folder, to keep list email separate from your personal email.

Mailing Lists — Examples

- ▶ Red Hat and Fedora lists:
`http://www.redhat.com/mailman/listinfo`
- ▶ the Apache lists:
`http://httpd.apache.org/lists.html`
- ▶ the Samba lists: `http://lists.samba.org/`, plus many others (I subscribe to about 40!)

Asking Questions on a Mailing List

Before sending questions to a mailing list, read Eric Raymond's *How To Ask Questions The Smart Way*: <http://www.catb.org/~esr/faqs/smart-questions.html>.

Summary:

- ▶ Choose your forum carefully
- ▶ Web and IRC forums directed towards newbies often give the quickest response
- ▶ As a second step, use project mailing lists
- ▶ Use meaningful, specific subject headers
- ▶ Make it easy to reply
- ▶ Write in clear, grammatical, correctly-spelled language
- ▶ Send questions in formats that are easy to understand
- ▶ Be precise and informative about your problem
- ▶ Volume is not precision
- ▶ Don't claim that you have found a bug
- ▶ Grovelling is not a substitute for doing your homework
- ▶ Describe the problem's symptoms, not your guesses
- ▶ Describe your problem's symptoms in chronological order
- ▶ Describe the goal, not the step
- ▶ Don't ask people to reply by private email
- ▶ Be explicit about the question you have
- ▶ Don't post homework questions
- ▶ Prune pointless queries
- ▶ Don't flag your question as Urgent, even if it is for you
- ▶ Courtesy never hurts, and sometimes helps
- ▶ Follow up with a brief note on the solution

Online Magazines

Some online magazines include:

- ▶ **LWN.net:** <http://lwn.net/> Run by Jon Corbet, co-author of the O'Reilly book, *Linux Device Drivers*. LWN.net is, together with the Linux Kernel Mailing List, the best source of information relating to the kernel.
- ▶ **Alan Cox's Portaloo:**
<http://www.linux.org.uk/Portaloo.cs> This site is surprisingly useful; it collects the headlines from about 25 web sites with technical news, so that you can review the headlines from all the sites, and click on any headline that looks interesting. This takes you directly to the story. It saves me a lot of time.
- ▶ **Apache Week:** <http://www.apacheweek.com/>
- ▶ **NewsForge:** <http://www.newsforge.com/>
- ▶ **LinuxGazette:** <http://linuxgazette.net/>
 - ▶ note that the staff have moved from their original site at <http://linuxgazette.com/>
- ▶ **Linux Magazine:** <http://www.linux-mag.com/>
- ▶ **Linux Today:** <http://linxtoday.com/>



Slashdot.org: <http://slashdot.org/>: “News for Nerds. Stuff that Matters.”

- ▶ A new news story posted about every hour or two
- ▶ Read the story
- ▶ I usually read the *front page* of Slashdot every day or two
- ▶ Don't waste *too* much time reading the comments, unless you have a spare lifetime.
 - ▶ There are a lot of adolescents with a lot of time on their hands who contribute thousands of not-very useful comment here.
 - ▶ Welcome to the troll wars!
 - ▶ The moderation system ensures that mainly the early posters get moderated highly, and not necessarily for the merit of what they say!
 - ▶ a vast number of readers/posters.

[Context](#)

[Objective](#)

[Main Internet Sources](#)

[Usenet](#)

[Mailing Lists](#)

[Asking Questions on a Mailing List](#)

[Online Magazines](#)

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Topics Covered

Context

Objective

Main Internet Sources

Usenet

Mailing Lists

Asking Questions on a Mailing List

Online Magazines

License of this Document

1.108.2
Find Linux
documentation on the
Internet
Weight 3

Nick Urbanik

Context

Objective

Main Internet Sources

Usenet

Mailing Lists

Asking Questions on a
Mailing List

Online Magazines

License of this
Document

Topics Covered

Context

Objective

Main Internet Sources

Usenet

Mailing Lists

Asking Questions on a Mailing List

Online Magazines

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1.108.2
Find Linux
documentation on the
Internet
Weight 3

Nick Urbanik

Context

Objective

Main Internet Sources

Usenet

Mailing Lists

Asking Questions on a
Mailing List

Online Magazines

License of this
Document

Topics Covered

Context

Objective

Main Internet Sources

Usenet

Mailing Lists

Asking Questions on a Mailing List

Online Magazines

License of this Document

1.108.2
Find Linux
documentation on the
Internet
Weight 3

Nick Urbanik

Context

Objective

Main Internet Sources

Usenet

Mailing Lists

Asking Questions on a
Mailing List

Online Magazines

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Document

Topics Covered

Context

Objective

Main Internet Sources

Usenet

Mailing Lists

Asking Questions on a Mailing List

Online Magazines

License of this Document

1.108.2
Find Linux
documentation on the
Internet
Weight 3

Nick Urbanik

Context

Objective

Main Internet Sources

Usenet

Mailing Lists

Asking Questions on a
Mailing List

Online Magazines

License of this
Document

Topics Covered

Context

Objective

Main Internet Sources

Usenet

Mailing Lists

Asking Questions on a Mailing List

Online Magazines

License of this Document

1.108.2
Find Linux
documentation on the
Internet
Weight 3

Nick Urbanik

Context

Objective

Main Internet Sources

Usenet

Mailing Lists

Asking Questions on a
Mailing List

Online Magazines

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Topics Covered

Context

Objective

Main Internet Sources

Usenet

Mailing Lists

Asking Questions on a Mailing List

Online Magazines

License of this Document

1.108.2
Find Linux
documentation on the
Internet
Weight 3

Nick Urbanik

Context

Objective

Main Internet Sources

Usenet

Mailing Lists

Asking Questions on a
Mailing List

Online Magazines

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Topics Covered

Context

Objective

Main Internet Sources

Usenet

Mailing Lists

Asking Questions on a Mailing List

Online Magazines

License of this Document

1.108.2
Find Linux
documentation on the
Internet
Weight 3

Nick Urbanik

Context

Objective

Main Internet Sources

Usenet

Mailing Lists

Asking Questions on a
Mailing List

Online Magazines

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Document

Topics Covered

Context

Objective

Main Internet Sources

Usenet

Mailing Lists

Asking Questions on a Mailing List

Online Magazines

License of this Document

1.108.2
Find Linux
documentation on the
Internet
Weight 3

Nick Urbanik

Context

Objective

Main Internet Sources

Usenet

Mailing Lists

Asking Questions on a
Mailing List

Online Magazines

License of this
Document

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1.108.2
Find Linux
documentation on the
Internet
Weight 3

Nick Urbanik

[Context](#)

[Objective](#)

[Main Internet Sources](#)

[Usenet](#)

[Mailing Lists](#)

[Asking Questions on a
Mailing List](#)

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