tips and techniques

how to speak UNIX
When Technical Support Hotline subscribers contact NeXTedge Technical Support by phone, we need to communicate a lot of information to you, and you need your questions answered as quickly as possible. During a typical call, it's easy to spend a great deal of time communicating words like fstab, exportfs, and fsck. To circumvent the problem of communicating UNIX jargonÐsuch as, special characters, keys, file names, and commandsÐpronunciation conventions have developed. This article lists many of the most frequently used terms and procedures you're likely to hear on a call to support.

- When specifying a pathname, we don't pronounce the slashes between the pathname components.   For example, /usr/template/client/etc is pronounced ªuser template client etcetera.º

- Because case is significant, we typically indicate when a character in a file name is uppercase.

- When entering a long file name in a shell, it isn't usually necessary to type every character in the name. You can use the shell's file-expansion capability. For example, suppose you need to type /usr/template/client/etc/netinfo. In the shell, all you need to type is:

  ```
  /u<Esc>/te<Esc>/c<Esc>/e<Esc>/neti<Esc>
  ```

  The shell completes each file name when you press Esc (emacs edit mode users need to press Esc twice).

· We generally don't specify spaces for command arguments. For example, we pronounce ls-lg as ªl s dash l g.º

Table 1 lists common conventions for pronunciation. Your familiarity with these conventions will allow us to help you more quickly.

Table 2 illustrates the conventions for telling you how to perform procedures.

table 1: characters, file names, and commands

character	pronunciation
/	slash
!	bang
#	pound
|	pipe
.	dot or period
*	star, asterisk, or wildcard
~	tilde or twiddle
-	dash
$	dollar
&	ampersand

file name	pronunciation
/etc	et-see, E-T-C, or etcetera
/etc/passwd	password
/etc/exports	exports
/etc/fstab	F-S tab
/etc/hosts	hosts
/etc/hostconfig	host config

```
/usr              user
/usr/adm          user A-D-M
/usr/adm/lpd-errs user A-D-M L-P-D errors
/tmp              temp
/dev              dev
/tmp              temp
/dev              dev
```

command	pronunciation
cat	cat
exportfs	export F-S
fsck	fisk or F-S-C-K
ifconfig	I-F config or ifconfig
ls	list or L-S
ls -lag	L-S dash L-A-G
niutil	N-I U-til
nidump	N-I dump
ping	ping
su	sue or S-U
sync	sink

table 2: how to perform procedures

Pull up a console.
Choose Console from the Workspace Tools menu.

Run rc in the background.
In single-user mode, type /bin/sh /etc/rc & at the ª#º prompt.

R-login into the machine name.
In a Terminal window, type rlogin name.

Type Command-tilde.
Hold down the Command key on the right side of the keyboard and then press the tilde key (don't press the Shift keyÐyou're actually using the backquote key) in the upper-left corner of the numeric keypad.

Type Command-Command-tilde.
Hold down both Command keys and then press the tilde key (backquote key).

Type Command-Alt-star.
Hold down the Command and Alternate keys on the left of the keyboard and then press the asterisk key in the upper right corner of the numeric keypad.

Halt the machine.
As root, type the UNIX command halt in a Terminal window.

List what file systems are mounted.
Type the command df or mount in a Terminal window.

Boot the machine single user.
Type bsd -s in the ROM monitor window.

troubleshooting gray screens
In certain situations, a NeXTdimension, NeXTcube, or NeXTstation system may display a blank, gray screen. In most cases, the gray screen is a result of the computer mistakenly trying to talk to a nonexistent monitor, and a hardware repair is

necessary.   However, if a NeXTdimension falls prey to a gray screen, there is a simple software solution to try before contacting a service provider.

symptom
The NeXTdimension system appears to boot normally, but when it starts the WindowServer it displays a gray screen. If you're booting in verbose mode, the last line to be displayed will be ªStarting NeXTdimension server.º

cause
Preferences behaves as if a monochrome monitor is attached that's the main screen (screen 0).
solution

1. Enter the ROM monitor (after the system test, press and hold down the Command key and press the key).

2. Boot the system to single-user mode using the ROM monitor command:

```
bsd -s
```

3. At the single-user prompt, type the following:

```
/bin/sh /etc/rc
```

4. After lots of messages about starting up daemons scroll by, type the following:

```
niutil -destroy . /screens/MegaPixel
```

This action destroys the portion of the local NetInfo /screens database that says the MegaPixel Display should be used as the main screen.   The WindowServer will

correctly reconstruct this portion of the database when it starts up.

5. Power off the system power backup and enter the ROM monitor.

6. Type bsd at the ªNeXT>º prompt.

7. Once the system comes up with the WindowServer running on the NeXTdimension display and finishes the boot process, go into Preferences and reset the boot device to the correct   boot device.

If the NeXTdimension doesn't respond, or if a NeXTcube or NeXTstation is displaying a gray screen, contact your service provider.