

Learn NetInfo Network and System Administration

Get Started Learning NetInfo

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In this topic

Quick descriptions of

- NetInfo Network Information
- How NetInfo Works
- How to Control NetInfo

How to get started learning about NetInfo

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NetInfo Network Information

When you use a computer on a network, you typically access files and programs stored on other computers. Email or a company-wide application offers an example. Your request for service involves your user ID, your computer's host address, locations of remote programs and data, and more.

Network information management software provides a brokerage service for various service requests users place as they work on their network. NetInfo is a means of storing this network information.

In this set of topics you will learn about NetInfo, how it works, and how to control it.

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How NetInfo Works

NetInfo stores network information in a special database scheme called a domain. As various programs perform, they access information in one or more NetInfo domains.

For example, when you log in, the login program must verify your login ID and your password, then make your home directory current. In a traditional UNIX network, the login program is designed to look up the **/etc/passwd** file for this information. In a NetInfo network, the login program is designed to look in a NetInfo domain.

Similarly, when you access mail, shared applications, data, and other services, information about the server processes and the location of the files must be retrieved

from NetInfo, and therefore the programs you use must be designed for such a search.

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How to Control NetInfo

To control the way NetInfo manages network information, a system administrator must enter information into the correct places of the appropriate NetInfo domain.

To facilitate this, NetInfo comes with Graphical User Interface programs. Most of these have a special purpose, and include input error protection. One, NetInfoManager, is a general purpose program that you can use to access all information in all NetInfo domains. NetInfoManager does not provide error protection, so at first you should use it in read-only mode.

The most important special-purpose GUI Manager applications include HostManager, UserManager, NFSManager, and SimpleNetworkStarter.

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How to Get Started

This introduction to NetInfo and its GUI Manager applications is a set of RTF files with hyperlinks that invoke related files. Use the Edit application to read, and click diamonds to see related files.

Below, the section titled "Related Topics" presents your entry into this hypertext material. You can begin with any topic, although if you're new to NetInfo, we suggest you begin with the module "About the NetInfo file system."

As you read an "About..." file, you'll notice at the bottom is a "Related topics" section with links to detailed subtopics, with "concepts" grouped first, and "how-to" following.

Check it out. Put the mouse pointer on a diamond and click.

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Related topics (*click a LinkDiamond.tiff ↗*)

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Concepts

Here is a description of the way NetInfo organizes its information.

;NetInfo/AboutNetInfo.rtf;;↵ About the NetInfo file system

The detailed topics show you how to use NetInfoManager to get familiar with the NetInfo network information on your computer.

You can set up a NetInfo network with two or more domain levels.

;Setup/AboutSetup.rtf;;↵ About setting up a NetInfo network

The detailed topics show you how to use SimpleNetworkStarter to set up a two-level NetInfo domain network, and how to use NetInfoManager to expand a simple network to three and four domain levels.

Computers need to be connected to a network.

;NetworkComputers/AboutNetworkComputers.rtf;;↵ About networked computers

The detailed topics show you how to use HostManager to add, change, or modify computers on your network.

A NEXTSTEP computer uses Network File System (NFS) to share files.

;NetworkFiles/AboutNetworkFiles.rtf;;↵ About Network File System (NFS)

The detailed topics show you how to use NFSManager for various facets

of importing and exporting filesystems.

A user needs a login name and ID, a home directory, and a default group.

;UsersAndGroups/AboutUsersAndGroups.rtf;¬ About users and groups

The detailed topics show you how to use UserManager to add, change, and remove users and groups on your network.