

# CHOWN and CHMOD Examples

## Change the owner of a file

```
# ls -lart tmpfile    [ls is used to display the file/directory properties]
-rw-r--r-- 1 himanshu family 0 2012-05-22 20:03 tmpfile
# chown root tmpfile
# ls -l tmpfile
-rw-r--r-- 1 root family 0 2012-05-22 20:03 tmpfile
```

## Change the group of a file

Through the chown command, the group (that a file belongs to) can also be changed.

```
# ls -l tmpfile
-rw-r--r-- 1 himanshu family 0 2012-05-22 20:03 tmpfile
# chown :friends tmpfile
# ls -l tmpfile
-rw-r--r-- 1 himanshu friends 0 2012-05-22 20:03 tmpfile
```

## Change both owner and the group

```
# ls -l tmpfile
-rw-r--r-- 1 root family 0 2012-05-22 20:03 tmpfile
# chown himanshu:friends tmpfile
# ls -l tmpfile
-rw-r--r-- 1 himanshu friends 0 2012-05-22 20:03 tmpfile
```

## Change owner only if a file is owned by a particular user

Using chown “--from” flag, you can change the owner of a file, only if that file is already owned by a particular owner.

```
# ls -l tmpfile
-rw-r--r-- 1 root friends 0 2012-05-22 20:03 tmpfile
# chown --from=guest himanshu tmpfile
# ls -l tmpfile
-rw-r--r-- 1 root friends 0 2012-05-22 20:03 tmpfile
# chown --from=root himanshu tmpfile
# ls -l tmpfile
-rw-r--r-- 1 himanshu friends 0 2012-05-22 20:03 tmpfile
```

- In the example above, we verified that the original owner/group of the file ‘tmpfile’ was root/friends.
- Next we used the ‘--from’ flag to change the owner to ‘himanshu’ but only if the existing owner is ‘guest’.
- Now, as the existing owner was not ‘guest’. So, the command failed to change the owner of the file.
- Next we tried to change the owner if the existing owner is ‘root’ (which was true) and this time command was successful and the owner was changed to ‘himanshu’.

## Copy the owner/group settings from one file to another

This is possible by using the ‘--reference’ flag.

```
# ls -l file
-rwxr-xr-x 1 himanshu family 8968 2012-04-09 07:10 file
# ls -l tmpfile
```

```
-rw-r--r-- 1 root friends 0 2012-05-22 20:03 tmpfile
# chown --reference=file tmpfile
# ls -l tmpfile
-rw-r--r-- 1 himanshu family 0 2012-05-22 20:03 tmpfile
```

In the above example, we first checked the owner/group of the reference-file 'file' and then checked the owner/group of the target-file 'tmpfile'. Both were different. Then we used the chown command with the '-reference' option to apply the owner/group settings from the reference file to the target file. The command was successful and the owner/group settings of 'tmpfile' were made similar to the 'file'

## List all the changes made by the chown command

Use the verbose option -v, which will display whether the ownership of the file was changed or retained as shown below.

```
# chown -v -R guest:friends linux
changed ownership of `linux/redhat/rh7' to guest:friends
changed ownership of `linux/redhat' retained to guest:friends
ownership of `linux/redhat_sym' retained as guest:friends
ownership of `linux/ubuntu_sym' retained as guest:friends
changed ownership of `linux/linuxKernel' to guest:friends
changed ownership of `linux/ubuntu/ub10' to guest:friends
ownership of `linux/ubuntu' retained as guest:friends
ownership of `linux' retained as guest:friends
```

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