How to Create and Print a Text File in Linux Debian Distribution

So you just set up Linux Debian distribution and have no idea where to start but you need to create and print a document. This tutorial will walk you through setting up a folder for your documents, creating a text file, then printing the text file. You'll need your login information and root (administrator) and/or sudo (temporary administrator) privileges. The task may seem daunting now that you have the proverbial world at your hands with a Linux Operating System (OS). Don't worry, this will walk you step by step through creating your text document.

You should have your login information, and a printer connected to your network or computer. If you don't have this information this tutorial will not work for you. This tutorial will show you new commands and break down each step for the novice user. You will have to create your own text for the document but that won't be as difficult as learning an entire new OS. This should only take a few minutes to complete, unless your printer is from the Jurassic Era, like most are.

Unless specified do not type the quotation marks in this tutorial. The quotations are there to separate the commands from the rest of the step, and to help create a user-friendly environment. Linux is a case-sensitive command line. Follow the exact casing for the commands in the quotations.

Opening Linux Terminal

If you're familiar with opening the Linux Terminal Skip to **Installing VIM** section.

1. **Click on the bottom left menu icon on your home screen**
2. **Navigate to System Tools**
3. **Find LXTerminal**
4. **Double-click on LXTerminal.** You will see your username followed by the @ symbol and the distribution you're using followed by a colon. This is the command-line referred to throughout this tutorial, it is similar to the command-prompt on a Windows OS.

5. **Type the command "cd ~".** This brings you to your home directory where you can add documents and folders.

Installing VIM

In order to create a text or .txt document you will need to install a text creator. For this tutorial we'll be using VIM. VIM is a user-friendly text editor.

1. If you know that VIM is installed on your machine skip to the next section, otherwise **type "vim" in the command line.**

2. **Press the** **key.**

If you get an error continue the steps below. If you see "VIM - Vi Improved" followed by a version that is less than 8.0 follow the steps below. If you see "VIM - Vi Improved" followed by a version equal to or greater than 8.0 skip to **Creating a Folder** section.

3. **In the VIM type ":q".**
4. **Press** This is to get out of the VIM without saving
5. **Type "sudo apt update".**
6. **Press**
7. **Wait for the update to finish.** This can take up to 5 minutes.

The command line will reappear when complete. The last line in the terminal above the command line should state "# packages can be upgraded. Run 'apt list --upgradable' to see them."

```
142 packages can be upgraded. Run 'apt list --upgradable' to see them.
student@lintro:~$
```

8. **Type "sudo apt install vim".**

9. **Press**

10. If prompted **Type "Y" to continue the install process.** This is acknowledging the size of the update that will be applied to your computer.

11. **Wait for the install to be complete.** This can take up to 5 minutes

12. **Repeat steps 1 and 2 to confirm the version.**

Creating a Folder

Once VIM is installed on your computer you'll need a place to hold these .txt documents. Linux uses directories in place of folders. Essentially for this tutorial they are the same thing.

1. **In the command line type "mkdir 'My Text Files'"**. Inside the single quotation marks enter your own name for this directory.

If it's one word the single quotation marks are unnecessary but if it's multiple words the single quotations are crucial.

2. **Type "ls" into the command line**, the l is lowercase L. You should see all of your directories in blue including the new directory.

```
student@lintro:~$ ls
'$numb'    Documents    filesystemslab      myfile              samplefiles.tar
 4         Downloads    green               mysampledata.text   storage.txt
 A         e            guess.sh            'My Text Files'     Templates
 B         E            guess.sh.save       out                 test
 backup    empty        guess.sh.save.1     Pictures            testguess.sh
 bin       experiment   IT1510              Public              truck
 blue      Experiment   LinuxTutorialWork   purple              Videos
 C         f            looper              quiz                vitest
 content   F            looper.md5          red                 yellow
 D         filename     looper.tar          rush
 Desktop   filename1    Music               samplefiles
```

3. **Type "cd *"** where the * should be the name of your directory you just created.

Remember the commands are case-sensitive. If you used a capital for this directory, make sure you follow the casing. Also remember to use the single quotations if you used multiple words.

Creating the Text File

Now that we're in the directory where we want to store our .txt documents, let's create our first one.

1. **Type "vim test".**
2. **Press**

Your command line should be replaced by a screen with ~ down the side. You will be in command mode to start. You won't be able to type normal text, this is normal, follow the steps below.

3. **Press the** **key to exit command mode and start insert mode.** This allows you to type text normally.
4. **Type "This is my test .txt document".**
5. **Press the**

key
6. **Type ":x".**
7. **Press**

This will return you to your command line
8. **Type "cat test".** This shows text we entered earlier in the command line.

You're now ready to create your .txt document to print

9. **Type "vim".**
10. **Press**

The VIM - Vi IMproved screen will appear again.

11. **Press the** **key to exit command mode.**
12. **Fill out your text document.**

If you're typing and nothing is being entered just press the key again.

Once completed and you're ready to save the document continue below.

13. **Press the**

key.
14. **Type ":w *"** where the * should be what you'd like to save your text document as.
15. **Press**

16. **Type ":x".**
17. **Press**

Printing Your .txt File

Here's the final moment, is your printer going to work? The .txt document is ready for its final step.

1. **Type "sudo lp *"** where the * should be the name of the file you saved in step 14 from the last section. The l is a lowercase L.

If the document starts printing go to step 14; if not, continue the steps below.

2. **Click on the bottom left menu icon.**

3. **Navigate to System Tools.**

4. **Select the File Manager.**

5. **Find your directory you created.** Look in your Home Folder

6. **Double click the directory you created.**

7. **Find your document you created.** It should have the same name you saved in step 13 from the last section without quotations if there's multiple words.

8. **Right click on that document.**

9. **Select Print Settings.**

10. **Navigate to the desired printer on the pop-up screen.**

11. **Select the printer.**

12. **Navigate to the add option.** Top left side.

13. **Choose your document.**

14. **Retrieve your document from your printer.**

15. **Verify the information and that the printer did its job correctly.** If it didn't print, wait 3-5 minutes (sometimes the signal takes a while to travel to the era of your printer). Then repeat steps 7-13.

16. **Feel accomplished!** You just conquered creating a .txt document in the Linux command line.

Conclusion

This wraps up creating and printing a text document. You can use the terminal for much more than this, just look up other Linux terminal tutorials. If you're stuck and need another folder refer back to the **Creating a Folder** section. Enjoy your operating system without bloatware. Customize your OS and have a peace of mind that even though your printer is slower than a Brontosaurus; you can create a text document through Linux command-line.