

5 interesting Ubuntu Terminal tips that many people don't know.

Discover hilarious Easter eggs in the Ubuntu Terminal, from the `sl` train to the `apt moo` cow and `sudo` that... insults users.

If you're new to the Terminal on Ubuntu, why not start with some fun? There are actually quite a few '**Easter eggs' on the command line** – they don't help with work, but they're certainly funny. Here are a few typical examples.

Linux programmers have long viewed personal computers as something **to be fun**, so they occasionally 'embed' little jokes into their software. While this article focuses on Ubuntu and illustrates with Ubuntu images, most of these examples work on almost any Ubuntu-based distribution, and some even run on other Linux distributions with the necessary packages installed.

When you type ls incorrectly and... a train appears.

If you use the Terminal frequently, you're probably very familiar with the command `ls` to view the contents of the current directory. But this is also a command that's very easy to type incorrectly – and there's even a program designed specifically to 'catch' that mistake.

Just type:

```
sl
```

(If the command has been set), you will see **a steam train running across the Terminal window**. The wordplay here is 'SL', which stands for sl – the same as the common typing error ls.



What's even more interesting is that each option (flag) produces a different type of ship. When you add `-F`, the ship will... fly above the window. With `-l`, the ship will be smaller. If you run:

```
sl -a
```

You even see 'passengers' on the ship shouting for help. It's a bit dark, but it's like typing the wrong command sometimes leading to... a really bad day.

The cow 'hiding' in APT

If you've ever installed software on Ubuntu, you're certainly familiar with **APT**, the default package manager. Few people know that APT also has a classic prank.

Just run:

```
apt moo
```

The terminal will display **a cow drawn with ASCII characters**, asking you about your 'cow moo' sound.



APT even teased this prank in their help section. If you view the help using ``@Apt.org` --help`, you'll see a description stating that APT has... 'cow powers'.

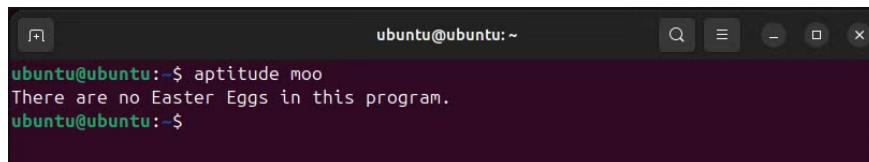
Aptitude version of the cow

If you're familiar with APT, you may have also heard of **Aptitude** – an alternative package management interface, notable for its TUI interface that runs directly in the Terminal. This tool isn't always pre-installed, but it can be added using:

```
sudo apt install aptitude
```

Aptitude continues the tradition of 'cow powers,' but in a more sophisticated way. When typing:

```
aptitude moo
```

A terminal window with a dark background and light text. The prompt is 'ubuntu@ubuntu: ~'. The user has entered 'aptitude moo' and the output is 'There are no Easter Eggs in this program.' followed by a new prompt 'ubuntu@ubuntu: ~\$'.

You will be... rejected. To see the full Easter egg, you need to be more persistent by requesting more 'detailed' output with the `-v` parameter. Keep adding the 'v' repeatedly:

```
aptitude -v moo
```

```
aptitude -vv moo
```

```
.
```

```
aptitude -vvvvvvv moo
```

It wasn't until the seventh attempt that Aptitude finally released the full content. This prank is so nonchalantly crafted that it's best to experience it firsthand.

Sudo... insults you when you type the wrong password.

Typing the wrong password is not uncommon, especially when using `sudo` to run commands with administrator privileges. Few people know that `sudo` has a built-in '**trolling' mode for users** , but it's disabled by default.

To enable it, you need to edit the `sudoers` file using the command:

```
sudo visudo
```

After entering the correct password, **the `/etc/sudoers.tmp` file** will open in the nano editor. Simply scroll down to the area of `??`lines starting with `Defaults` and add a new line:

```
Defaults insults
```

(Note: You must use the Tab key to align the spaces correctly.)

```
ubuntu@ubuntu: ~
GNU nano 7.2 /etc/sudoers.tmp *
#
# This file MUST be edited with the 'visudo' command as root.
#
# Please consider adding local content in /etc/sudoers.d/ instead of
# directly modifying this file.
#
# See the man page for details on how to write a sudoers file.
#
Defaults        env_reset
Defaults        mail_badpass
Defaults        secure_path="/usr/local/sbin:/usr/local/bin:/usr/sbin:/usr/bin:
Defaults        insults
# This fixes CVE-2005-4890 and possibly breaks some versions of kdesu
```

Save the file using **Ctrl+O** , exit nano with **Ctrl+X** , close Terminal, and then reopen it. From now on, every time you type the wrong sudo password, Terminal will randomly display a sarcastic message. If you feel offended, simply delete the line above.

```
ubuntu@ubuntu: ~
ubuntu@ubuntu:~$ sudo apt update
[sudo] password for ubuntu:
My pet ferret can type better than you!
[sudo] password for ubuntu:
What, what, what, what, what, what, what, what, what, what?
[sudo] password for ubuntu: 
```

Scanning the internet like... 'leet speak'

If you want to scan your network, see connected devices, or check open ports, nmap is a very familiar tool. It can be installed using:

```
sudo apt install nmap
```

Hidden within nmap's array of options is a very peculiar output style known as '**kiddie script**' , or more commonly known as **leet speak** – writing things like '1337 5p34k' or 'n00b'.

To activate it, add the option `-oS` to the end of the command, along with the output location. If you want to print directly to the Terminal, simply use a hyphen `-`:

```
nmap scanme.nmap.org -oS -
```

The command above will scan nmap's own test page, and all the results will be displayed in a hilariously funny 'leet' style.

```
ubuntu@ubuntu:~  
ubuntu@ubuntu:~$ nmap scanme.nmap.org -oS -  
Starting NMap 7.94SVN ( https://nmap.org ) at 2025-12-19 17:40 CST  
NMap Scan Report for scanme.nmap.org (45.33.32.156)  
Host IS Up (0.041s latency).  
Other addresses for scanme.nmap.org (Not scanned): 2600:3c01::f03c:91ff:FE18:bb2f  
Not shown: 996 closed tcp ports (conn-refused)  
PORT      STATE SERVICE  
22/tcp    open  ssh  
80/tcp    open  http  
9929/tcp  open  nping-Echo  
31337/tcp open  31337  
Nmap done: 1 IP address (1 host up) scanned in 0.90 seconds  
ubuntu@ubuntu:~$
```

You finished reading the article "**5 interesting Ubuntu Terminal tips that many people don't know.**" edited by the [TipsMake](#) team. We hope this article has provided you with many useful tech tips and tricks. You can search for similar articles on tips and guides. Thank you for reading and for following us regularly.