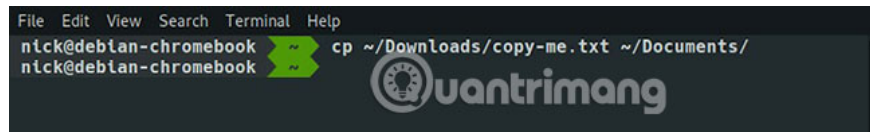


How to copy (and paste) files and folders from the Linux command line

Copying and pasting files is one of the most basic things you can do on your computer. On Linux, you have several options to accomplish this.

Copying and pasting files is one of the most basic things you can do on your computer. On Linux, you have several options to accomplish this. On the command line, everything takes place more directly, allowing you more control and in some cases, simplifying things significantly.

Copy a single file

A terminal window with a dark background and light text. The menu bar at the top reads 'File Edit View Search Terminal Help'. The prompt is 'nick@debian-chromebook'. The command entered is 'cp ~/Downloads/copy-me.txt ~/Documents/'. The prompt is repeated on the next line. A green cursor is visible. A watermark for 'uantrimang' is overlaid on the terminal output.

Whenever you want to copy a file or directory in the Linux command line, you will use the **cp** command. **cp** stands for **copy**. The syntax is also simple. Use **cp** followed by the file you want to copy and the destination where you want to reach the copy.

```
cp your-file.txt ~/Documents/
```

Of course, the above command assumes that your file is in the same directory you are working on. You can specify both the original file location and where you want to place the copy.

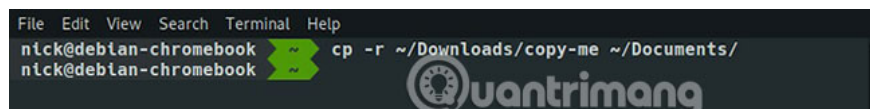
```
cp ~/Downloads/your-file.txt ~/Documents/
```

You also have the option to rename your file while copying it. Specify a new name at the destination.

```
cp ~/Downloads/your-file.txt ~/Documents/new-name.txt
```

Refer to the article: [How to copy and rename files in Linux](#) for more details.

Copy a directory and its content

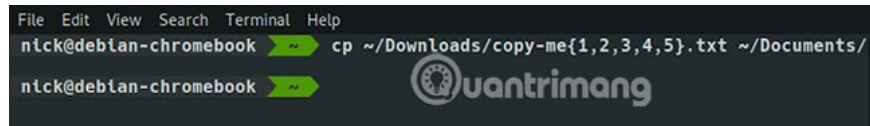
A terminal window with a dark background and light text. The menu bar at the top reads 'File Edit View Search Terminal Help'. The prompt is 'nick@debian-chromebook'. The command entered is 'cp -r ~/Downloads/copy-me ~/Documents/'. The prompt is repeated on the next line. A green cursor is visible. A watermark for 'uantrimang' is overlaid on the terminal output.

To copy a directory and its contents, you will need to issue **cp** to copy. This is quite simple with the **-r** flag .

```
cp -r ~/Downloads/pictures-directory ~/Pictures/family-vacation-pics
```

All the rest of the syntax is identical. Flag **-r** is used to inform **cp** that it is working with a directory and must copy its contents.

Copy multiple files



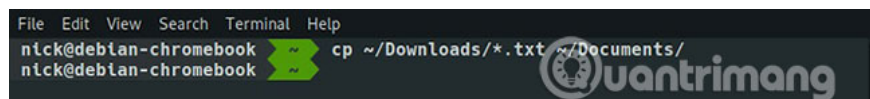
```
File Edit View Search Terminal Help
nick@debian-chromebook ~$ cp ~/Downloads/copy-me{1,2,3,4,5}.txt ~/Documents/
nick@debian-chromebook ~$
```

You can also copy multiple files. The Linux command line allows you to target multiple items at once with brackets **{}** . You can use them to list the names of each file that will be copied with commas.

```
cp ~/Downloads/{file1.txt,file2.jpg,file3.odt} ~/Documents/
```

All 3 files are in different file types and will be copied into the **Documents** folder .

Copy all files of the same type



```
File Edit View Search Terminal Help
nick@debian-chromebook ~$ cp ~/Downloads/*.txt ~/Documents/
nick@debian-chromebook ~$
```

If you have a lot of files of the same type to copy, you can use wildcards ***** . This asterisk or wildcard requires the Linux command line to take care of everything placed there. So if you tell Linux to copy ***.jpg** , it will copy all JPG files, regardless of the name or anything that appears before the **.jpg** extension.

```
cp ~/Downloads/*.jpg ~/Pictures/
```

If you want to use a variety of files, assume JPG and PNG, you can use curly braces **{}** .

```
cp ~/Downloads/*.{jpg,png} ~/Pictures/
```

Move a file or folder

If you're looking to move a file from one place to another, but don't make a copy, you can do it easily, but moving a file requires using the **mv** command . The syntax is very similar to **cp**.

```
mv ~/Downloads/your-file.txt ~/Documents/
```

Similarly, you can also rename it.

```
mv ~/Downloads/your-file.txt ~/Documents/renamed.txt
```

There is a big difference between **cp** and **mv**. You do not need the **-r** flag to move the entire directory.

```
mv ~/Downloads/downloaded-folder ~/Pictures/vacation-pics
```

That's all it takes to copy (and paste) files and folders from the Linux command line. You are ready to start copying and moving your files from the command line! You may find that using the command line can be very effective in some situations. However, in other situations, using the GUI will be easier. After working with Linux for a while, you will find out what is the best option for you.

Hope you are succesful.

You finished reading the article "**How to copy (and paste) files and folders from the Linux command line**" 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.