How to change default Text editor in Linux

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  This is a very trivial question but, as I thought someone that is starting with Linux basics Operating might be interested I will shortly explain in this small article **how to change default text editor on Linux.**

  Changing default text editor is especially helpful if you have to administer a newly purchased **dedicated servers, that comes with default Operating System preinstalled.**

  By default many Linux distributions versions such as Debian / Ubuntu comes with nano comes with a default text editor nano (ANOther enhanced free Pico editor clone) many people as me are irritated and prefer to use instead vim (Vi Improved), mcedit (the Midnight Commander), joe or emacs as a default.

1. Changing default console text editor on Debian based Linux

On Debian / Ubuntu / Mint and other deb based distributions the easiest way to change text editor is with **update-alternatives** cmd.

    update-alternatives --config editor

```
root@jeremiah:~# update-alternatives --config editor
There are 9 choices for the alternative editor (providing /usr/bin/editor).

  Selection    Path                  Priority   Status
------------------------------------------------------------
  0            /usr/bin/joe           70        auto mode
* 1            /bin/nano              40        manual mode
  2            /usr/bin/jmacs         50        manual mode
  3            /usr/bin/joe           70        manual mode
  4            /usr/bin/jpico         50        manual mode
  5            /usr/bin/jstar         50        manual mode
  6            /usr/bin/mcedit        25        manual mode
  7            /usr/bin/rjoe          25        manual mode
  8            /usr/bin/vim.basic     30        manual mode
  9            /usr/bin/vim.tiny      15        manual mode

Press <enter> to keep the current choice[*], or type selection number: _
```

Using Debian update-alternatives is useful as it makes the change OS global wide and the default **mc** viewer program **mcview** will also understand the change in the default text editor, which makes it the preferrable way to do it on deb based OS family.

An alternative way to set the default programs for the OS system wide is to create the respective symbolic link in **/etc/alternatives** actually what **update-alternatives** wrapper script does is exactly this it creates the required symlink.

2. Changing default text editor on any Linux

To change the text editor for only a single system existing user in /etc/passwd you need to edit $HOME/.bashrc, e.g. ~/.bashrc on Debian based Linux or on Fedora / RHEL / CentOS by adding to ~/.bash_profile

> **vim ~/.bashrc**

And add

alias editor=vim

or

export EDITOR='/path/to/text-editor/program'
export VISUAL='/path/to/text-editor/program'

To change to mcedit for example when opening in any program that triggers to run default text editor

export EDITOR='/usr/bin/mcedit'
export VISUAL='/usr/bin/mcedit'

To make the change system wide on any Linux distribution you have to add the **export EDITOR /
export VISUAL at the end of /etc/bash.bashrc**

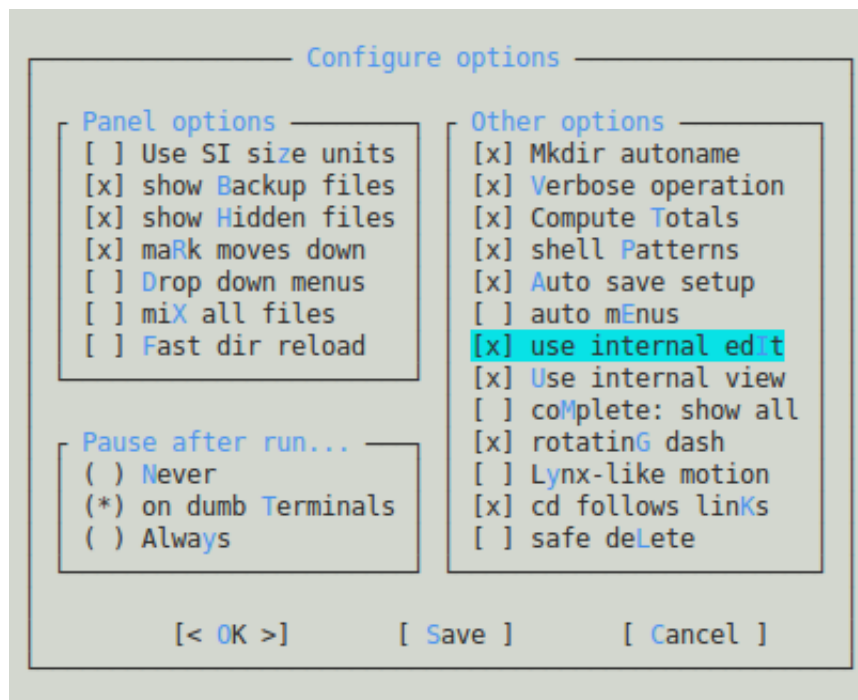**To load the newly included .bashrc* instructions use source command**

source ~/.bashrc

3. Changing the default text editor for mcview if all else fails

Once **mc** is running, use following menu keys order (also visible from **Midnight Commander**) menus:

   F9 Activates the top menu.
 o Selects the Option menu.
 c Opens the configuration dialog.
 i Toggles the use internal edit option.
 s Saves your preferences.

```
┌──────────────────── Configure options ─────────────────────┐
│  ┌ Panel options ──────┐  ┌ Other options ──────────┐      │
│  [ ] Use SI size units    [x] Mkdir autoname               │
│  [x] show Backup files    [x] Verbose operation            │
│  [x] show Hidden files    [x] Compute Totals               │
│  [x] maRk moves down      [x] shell Patterns               │
│  [ ] Drop down menus      [x] Auto save setup              │
│  [ ] miX all files        [ ] auto mEnus                   │
│  [ ] Fast dir reload      [x] use internal edIt            │
│                           [x] Use internal view            │
│                           [ ] coMplete: show all           │
│  ┌ Pause after run... ──┐  [x] rotatinG dash               │
│  ( ) Never                [ ] Lynx-like motion             │
│  (*) on dumb Terminals    [x] cd follows linKs             │
│  ( ) Always               [ ] safe deLete                  │
│                                                            │
│        [< OK >]        [ Save ]        [ Cancel ]          │
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That's all folks Enjoy !