

# screen primer

## Introduction

Screen is a window manager for text terminals. It's very useful for managing your virtual environment, particularly when you are teaching with other instructors.

Ansible installed a `.screenrc` configuration file onto your server and we'll assume that you are using the NSRC's custom screen configuration for these exercises.

You'll start a screen session from the command line. It's good practice to check what sessions are currently running on your server before starting a new one.

## Show existing screen sessions

Ssh to your server:

```
$ ssh nsrc@sl.ws.nsrc.org
```

List any existing screen sessions:

```
$ screen -ls
```

There shouldn't be any screen sessions.

## Start a new session

Now that you've confirmed that there are no sessions, create a new screen session named *workshopX* (e.g. *workshop1*, *workshop2*, *workshop3*). Agree with your partners what you will name your sessions. Each person should pick a unique session name in your group.

```
$ screen -S workshopX
```

You should see the status bar at the bottom of your screen with 3 windows named *shell1*, *shell2*, and *shell3*. You can also list your session and those of your partners with:

```
$ screen -ls
```

## Working with your session

You have 3 windows in your session. Let's create a new window. Type **C-x C-c** to create the new window. It will be named *bash*.

Let's give it a more useful name. Type **C-x A** (this is case-sensitive) and you'll see the following prompt at the bottom of your screen:

```
Set window's title to:
```

Delete *bash* and name your new window **compile**. The status bar at the bottom of your screen will be updated when you hit return.

Now navigate to a new window with **C-x n**. You can return to the previous window with **C-x p**.

Next navigate to the window labeled "shell2" and kill it with **C-x k**. Then type **y** to confirm that you want to kill the current window.

Let's start a program that will update continuously:

```
$ watch --interval 1 date
```

Finally detach from your session with **C-x d**.

Now you will connect to one of your partner's screen sessions. You should be at the command line and not in a screen session. If your partner created a session named workshop2, you would use

```
$ screen -r -d workshop2
```

Navigate through the windows until you find the one running the `watch --interval 1 date` command. Kill the process by typing **C-c** and then detach from your partner's session with **C-x d**.

## Command mode cheat sheet

**C == Control**

Screen's default command sequence is C-a. We've redefined this as C-x because C-a is used by other programs, most importantly bash command line editing.

**C-x C-c** *new window*

**C-x A** *name window*

**C-x k** *kill window*

**C-x d** *detach from session*

**C-x n,p** *next or previous window*

**C-x 1,2,3** *move to specific window*

**C-x ESC** *enter scrollbar mode*