

Picante shell: pipes

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Spicy food should cause chemical burns, or spontaneous human combustion. Your mouth should feel as if it's tangled with an angry badger. Capillaries in your nose should burst. Your gut should sue for punitive damages. If not, your food just isn't spicy enough.

At least, that's how I feel. So, when I say things like, "Here, try some of these mild command-line recipes; they're really quite tasty", you might keep that in mind. One man's "mild" is another man's, "I think you've poisoned me".

If you are ready, settle in, dish up, and keep a nice lager handy. You'll probably need it before we're done.

Base ingredients: input and output

The "Unix Way" is a bit like salsa. (It's also like the Tao, or like processed cheese, or like the way puppy toes smell like popcorn.) As with salsa, there are many ingredients, and no one definition. Many kinds of salsa are made with tomatoes. Others are made without. Some are mild. Some are slightly tingly (these are labeled, "Hot!" in American supermarkets). People recognize salsa when they see it, but there is no one way of making it.

And so the Unix Way is not a single thing, nor a collection of specific things, but a way of combining things. Many have summed up the Unix Way as, "Do one thing, and do it well". What that misses is a simple concept most of us learned on the playground: "Play well with others".

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