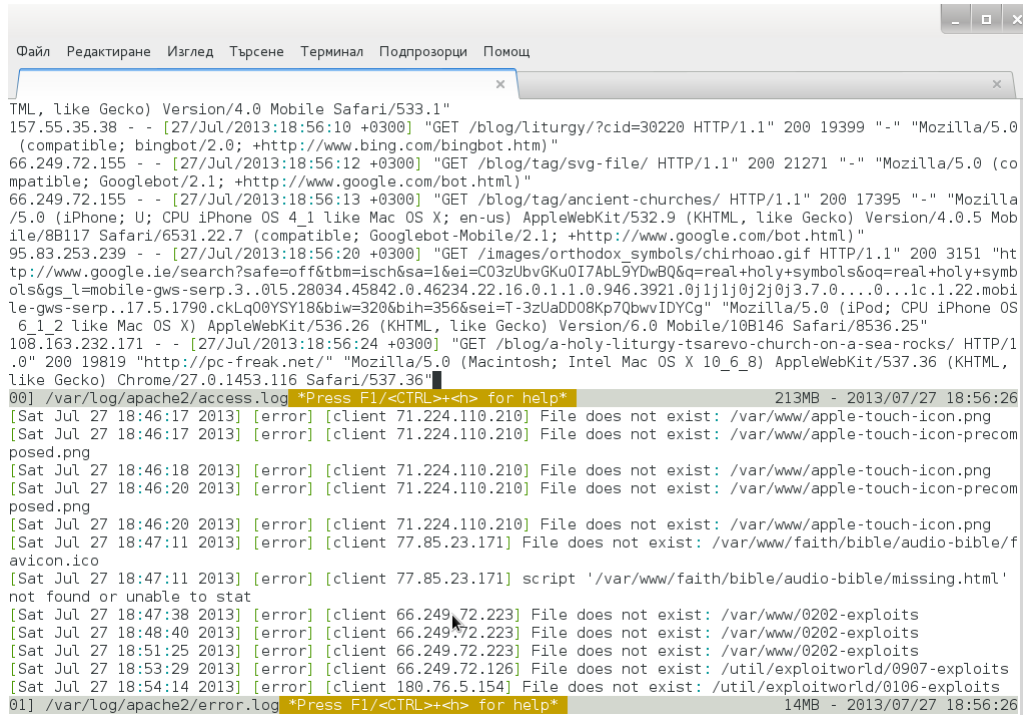


Tracking multiple log files in real time in Linux console / terminal (MultiTail)

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Whether you have to administer Apache, Nginx or Lighttpd, or whatever other kind of daemon which interactively logs user requests or errors you probably already know well of **tail** command (**tail -f /var/log/apache2/access.log**) is something Webserver Linux admin can't live without. Sometimes however you have number of Virtualhost (domains) each configured to log site activity in separate log file. One solution to the problem is to use **GNU Screen** (**screen** - terminal emulator) to launch multiple screen session and launch separate **tail -f /var/log/apache2/domain1/access.log**, **tail -f /var/log/apache2/domain2/access.log** etc. This however is a bit of hack and except configuring screen to show multiple windows on one Virtual Terminal (tty or vty in gnome), you can't really see output simultaneously in one separated window.

Here is where **multitail** comes handy. **MultiTail** is tool to visualize in real time log records output of multiple logs (tails) in one shared terminal Window. MultiTail is written to use **ncurses** library used by a bunch of other useful tools like **Midnight Command** so output is colorful and very nice looking.

Here is *MultiTail* package description on Debian Linux:

linux:~# **apt-cache show multitail|grep -i description -A 1**

Description-en: view multiple logfiles windowed on console

multitail lets you view one or multiple files like the original tail

--

Description-md5: 5e2f688efb214b063bdc418a705860a1

Tag: interface::text-mode, role::program, scope::utility, uitoolkit::ncurses,

root@noah:/home/hipo# apt-cache show multitail|grep -i description -A 1

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Multiple Tail is available across most Linux distributions to install on *Debian / Ubuntu / Mint etc. Linux:*

```
debian:~# apt-get install --yes multitail
```

...

On recent *Fedora / RHEL / CentOS etc. RPM based Linuces* to install:

```
[root@centos ~]# yum -y install multitail
```

...

On FreeBSD multitail is available to install from ports:

```
freebsd# cd /usr/ports/sysutils/multitail
```

```
freebsd# make install clean
```

...

Once installed to display records in multiple files lets say Apache domain name *access.log* and *error.log*

```
debian:~# multitail -f /var/log/apache2/access.log /var/log/apache2/error.log
```

...

It has very extensive help invoked by simply pressing h while running

Even better multitail is written to already have integrated color schemes for most popular Linux services log files

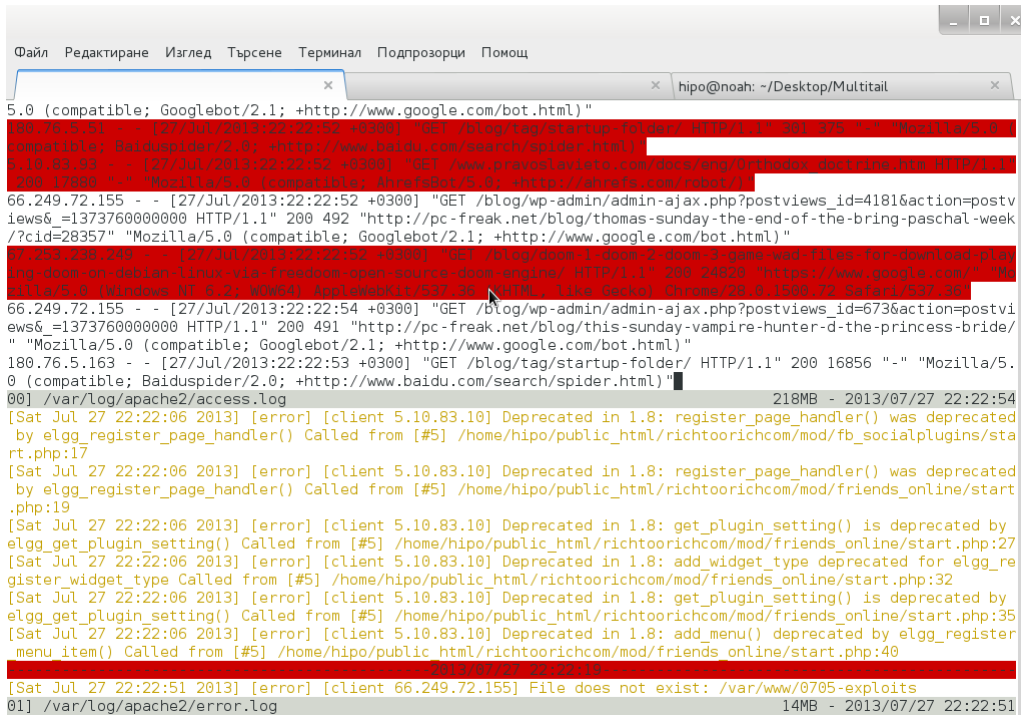
List of supported MulLog Color schemes as of time of writing article is:

acctail, acpitail, apache, apache_error, argus, asterisk, audit, bind, boinc, boinctail, checkpoint, clamav, cscriptexample, dhcpd, errrpt, exim, httping, ii, inn, kerberos, lambamoo, linipfw, log4j, mailscanner,

motion, mpstat, mysql, nagtail, netscapeldap, netstat, ntpcache, ntpd, oracle, p0f, portsentry, postfix, pptpd, procmail, qmt-clamd, qmt-send, qmt-smtpd, qmt-sophie, qmt-spamassassin, rsstail, samba, sendmail, smartd, snort spamassassin, squid, ssh, strace, syslog, tcpdump, vmstat, vnetbr, websphere, wtmptail

To tell it what kind of log Color scheme to use from cmd line use:

debian:~# multitail -C apache /var/log/apache2/access.log /var/log/apache2/error.log



```
5.0 (compatible; Googlebot/2.1; +http://www.google.com/bot.html) "
[66.76.5.51] - - [27/Jul/2013:22:22:52 +0300] "GET /blog/tag/startup-folder HTTP/1.1" 200 492 "-" "Mozilla/5.0
compatible; Baiduspider/2.0; +http://www.baidu.com/search/spider.html"
5.10.83.93 - - [27/Jul/2013:22:22:52 +0300] "GET /www.pravoslavieto.com/doc/eng/Orthodox-doctrine.htm HTTP/1.1"
200 17880 "-" "Mozilla/5.0 (compatible; AbrarBot/5.0; +http://abrara.com/robot/)"
66.249.72.155 - - [27/Jul/2013:22:22:52 +0300] "GET /blog/wp-admin/admin-ajax.php?postviews_id=4181&action=postv
iews&=1373760000000 HTTP/1.1" 200 492 "http://pc-freak.net/blog/thomas-sunday-the-end-of-the-bring-paschal-week
/?cid=28357" "Mozilla/5.0 (compatible; Googlebot/2.1; +http://www.google.com/bot.html)"
66.249.72.155 - - [27/Jul/2013:22:22:52 +0300] "GET /blog/atom-1-atom-2-atom-3-atom-wait-files-for-download-play
ing-doom-on-debian-linux-via-freebsd-open-source-doom-engine/ HTTP/1.1" 200 24620 "https://www.google.com/"
Mozilla/5.0 (Windows NT 6.2; WOW64; AppleWebKit/537.36 (KHTML, like Gecko) Chrome/29.0.1500.72 Safari/537.36
66.249.72.155 - - [27/Jul/2013:22:22:54 +0300] "GET /blog/wp-admin/admin-ajax.php?postviews_id=6736&action=postvi
ews&=1373760000000 HTTP/1.1" 200 491 "http://pc-freak.net/blog/this-sunday-vampire-hunter-d-the-princess-bride/"
"Mozilla/5.0 (compatible; Googlebot/2.1; +http://www.google.com/bot.html)"
180.76.5.163 - - [27/Jul/2013:22:22:53 +0300] "GET /blog/tag/startup-folder/ HTTP/1.1" 200 16856 "-" "Mozilla/5.
0 (compatible; Baiduspider/2.0; +http://www.baidu.com/search/spider.html)"
00] /var/log/apache2/access.log 218MB - 2013/07/27 22:22:54
[Sat Jul 27 22:22:06 2013] [error] [client 5.10.83.10] Deprecated in 1.8: register_page_handler() was deprecated
by elgg_register_page_handler() Called from [#5] /home/hipo/public_html/richoorichcom/mod/fb_socialplugins/sta
rt.php:17
[Sat Jul 27 22:22:06 2013] [error] [client 5.10.83.10] Deprecated in 1.8: register_page_handler() was deprecated
by elgg_register_page_handler() Called from [#5] /home/hipo/public_html/richoorichcom/mod/friends_online/start
.php:19
[Sat Jul 27 22:22:06 2013] [error] [client 5.10.83.10] Deprecated in 1.8: get_plugin_setting() is deprecated by
elgg_get_plugin_setting() Called from [#5] /home/hipo/public_html/richoorichcom/mod/friends_online/start.php:27
[Sat Jul 27 22:22:06 2013] [error] [client 5.10.83.10] Deprecated in 1.8: add_widget_type deprecated for elgg_re
gister_widget_type Called from [#5] /home/hipo/public_html/richoorichcom/mod/friends_online/start.php:32
[Sat Jul 27 22:22:06 2013] [error] [client 5.10.83.10] Deprecated in 1.8: get_plugin_setting() is deprecated by
elgg_get_plugin_setting() Called from [#5] /home/hipo/public_html/richoorichcom/mod/friends_online/start.php:35
[Sat Jul 27 22:22:06 2013] [error] [client 5.10.83.10] Deprecated in 1.8: add_menu() deprecated by elgg_register
menu_item() Called from [#5] /home/hipo/public_html/richoorichcom/mod/friends_online/start.php:40
[Sat Jul 27 22:22:51 2013] [error] [client 66.249.72.155] File does not exist: /var/www/0705-exploits
01] /var/log/apache2/error.log 14MB - 2013/07/27 22:22:51
```

Useful feature is to run command display in separate Windows while still following log output, i.e.:

[root@centos:~]# multitail /var/log/httpd.log -l "netstat -nat"

...

Multitail can also merge output from files in one Window, while in second window some other log or command output is displayed. To merge output from Apache access.log and error.log:

debian:~# multitail /var/log/apache2/access.log -I /var/log/apache2/error.log

When merging two log files output to show in one Window it is useful to display each file output in different color for the sake of readability

For example:

debian:~# multitail -ci green /var/log/apache/access.log -ci red -I /var/log/apache/error.log

```
[Sat Jul 27 21:45:42 2013] [error] [client 46.161.41.24] script '/var/www/mediawiki/index.php' not found or unable to stat
[Sat Jul 27 21:46:10 2013] [error] [client 66.249.72.223] (13)Permission denied: file permissions deny server access: /var/www/sploits/exploit-dbcom/platforms/freebsd/local/22574.pl
[Sat Jul 27 21:46:47 2013] [error] [client 78.164.206.20] script '/var/www/wp-login.php' not found or unable to stat
[Sat Jul 27 21:46:48 2013] [error] [client 78.164.206.20] File does not exist: /var/www/administrator
[Sat Jul 27 21:46:48 2013] [error] [client 78.164.206.20] script '/var/www/admin.php' not found or unable to stat
[Sat Jul 27 21:46:48 2013] [error] [client 78.164.206.20] File does not exist: /var/www/bitrix
[Sat Jul 27 21:46:48 2013] [error] [client 78.164.206.20] script '/var/www/admin/login.php' not found or unable to stat
[Sat Jul 27 21:46:48 2013] [error] [client 78.164.206.20] File does not exist: /var/www/user
216.59.3.106 - - [27/Jul/2013:21:47:06 +0300] "GET /blog/what-is-the-facebook-recommended-profile-picture-logo-size-for-better-seo-marketing-few-basic-facebook-marketing-tips/ HTTP/1.0" 301 474 "http://www.pc-freak.net/blog/what-is-the-facebook-recommended-profile-picture-logo-size-for-better-seo-marketing-few-basic-facebook-marketing-tips/" "Mozilla/5.0 (Windows; U; Windows NT 6.1; en-US; AppleWebKit/532.2 (KHTML, like Gecko) Chrome/4.0.221.7 Safari/532.2"
70.73.129.44 - - [27/Jul/2013:21:47:12 +0300] "GET /images/gdmsetup_debian_linux_screenshot.png HTTP/1.1" 200 90352 "https://www.google.ca/" "Mozilla/5.0 (Linux; Android 4.2.1; ME301T Build/JOP40D) AppleWebKit/537.36 (KHTML, like Gecko) Chrome/28.0.1500.94 Safari/537.36"
66.249.72.155 - - [27/Jul/2013:21:47:19 +0300] "GET /blog/tag/gnome-desktop-environment/ HTTP/1.1" 200 30453 "-" "Mozilla/5.0 (compatible; Googlebot/2.1; +http://www.google.com/bot.html)"
00] /var/log/apache2/access.log *Press F1/<CTRL>+<h> for help* 217MB - 2013/07/27 21:47:22
```

To display output from 3 log files in 3 separate shared Windows in console use:

linux:~# multitail -s 2 /var/log/syslog /var/log/apache2/access.log /var/log/apache2/error.log

For some more useful examples, [check out MultiTail's official page examples](#)

There is plenty of other useful things to do with *multitail*, for more RTFM :)