

GNU screen

	Description	
GNU Screen GNU Screen Manual GNU Screen @ ArchLinux Wiki GNU Screen @ Gentoo Linux Wiki See also: Tmux Last updated on: 2026-03-16	When using Emacs in a ssh terminal session connected to a remote computer, the GNU screen utility provides protection against network issues such as VPN network disconnections. - If you get disconnected you can re-establish the connection and re-connect to your original GNU screen session and continue without loosing anything. That feature alone is worth learning to use GNU screen.  PEL provides a the .screenrc GNU screen configuration file. - It sets C-z as the GNU screen control command key sequence. C-z is a better choice than screen's default of C-a when using Emacs as it is used less often. See the notes in PEL's .screenrc file. - It also configures a nice status line, prevents the appearance of screen splash screen and some other niceties.	
GNU screen command line help	screen -h	Print the list of command line options available to GNU Screen.
List existing screen sessions	screen -ls	Use this to list attached and detached screen sessions.
Start a screen session		
Start unnamed session	screen	Create a new session.
Start a named session	screen -S NAME	Create a new session named NAME and update the terminal title with it.
Attach another client to currently attached session	Multiple GNU screen clients can attach to the same session, allowing multiple users to access the same remote shell.	
Multiple-user attach to existing attached GNU screen session	screen -x NAME	Attach a new client to an already attached GNU screen session. This allows multiple users to connect to the same shell.
Restore session	List existing sessions with. screen -ls and pick a name from the list. You can type only the prefix portion that uniquely identifies it.	
Restore detached session	screen -r NAME	Re-attach screen to session specified by NAME.
Force detach and re-attach to existing session	screen -d -r NAME	Detach the currently attached session specified by NAME and re-attach to it.
Inside Emacs	Since C-z is used for GNU screen command key, the Emacs command to suspend Emacs becomes the following under PEL	
Suspend Emacs session	C-x C-z z	Suspends Emacs session when screen is running.
GNU Screen operations	Once a GNU screen session is started, use the C-z key to issue a GNU screen command.	
Internal GNU screen help	C-z ?	Show a list of GNU screen command key bindings while GNU Screen is running.
Set a name to session	C-z : sessionname NAME	Name the current screen session to the specified NAME. - This is useful to name a screen session that was started without a name.  However, as described in the GNU Screen manual, the STY environment variable is not updated, which may lead to confusion later. - But, the new name will appear in the screen -ls command and it will allow identifying the screen session later if it ever gets disconnected. - It might help to set the title of the screen window accordingly with C-z A
Set window name	C-z A WINDOWNAME	Set the name of the screen window.
Enter Copy mode	C-z [	Enter Copy-mode. - Once in Copy mode, you can use the <up> and <down> keys to scroll and the following other keys. - Exit the copy-mode by typing q
• Scroll Up full screen	C-b	Scroll the display up a full screen <i>while in copy-mode</i>
• Scroll Up half screen	C-u	Scroll the display up half-a screen <i>while in copy-mode</i>
• Scroll Down full screen	C-f	Scroll the display down a full screen <i>while in copy-mode</i>
• Scroll Down half screen	C-d	Scroll the display down half-a screen <i>while in copy-mode</i>
• Exit Copy mode	q	Exit from copy-mode back to the terminal.
References:	GNU Screen @ Wikipedia : start here if you do not know what this program is. GNU Screen home page GNU Screen Manuals GNU Screen Manual - all in 1 HTML Page (useful to search)	
GNU Screen source code	GNU Screen Git Repository - Savannah	
Compile GNU Screen:	<pre>git clone https://git.savannah.gnu.org/git/screen.git cd screen/src ./autogen.sh ./configure --prefix=/usr/local \ --enable-pam \ --enable-colors256 \ --enable-rxvt_osc \ --enable-use-locale \ --enable-telnet make && make install</pre>	
Using Emacs within an GNU Screen Session	- By default GNU Screen uses the C-a key as the Screen command key. - To pass C-a to Emacs running inside a GNU Screen session: type C-a followed by a - Screen command key can be changed with the escape setting in the <code>~/.screenrc</code> file. See next lines for 2 examples: - To change it to C-^, write: escape ^^^ - The first ^^ is the caret representation of Control-^. The last ^ is the single key to type after to pass C-^ to the program running under Screen (like Emacs). Another character could be used, 6 for example. - To change it to C-z, write: escape ^zz	
Logging with Screen Use: C-z H	GNU screen supports dumping the current content of the screen to a file or log the complete window session to a file . - This second feature is quite useful when running long lasting commands like software builds preformed from a shell. - The session can be started inside a screen window, and hidden to speed it up while logging all the details inside the log file. - The log file will contain the entire output to stdout and stderr. It will also contain all the escape sequence codes printed on your shell to colonize it for example. - You can view this log file inside Emacs and use the pel-screen-log-fix-rendering command (bound to <f11> t s) to filter these escape codes out of the buffer and render the colours. See also: 🔗 Buffers , 🔗 Text Modes	
Multi-user screen	Use GNU screen to allow simultaneous access to a shell for several users! See: GNU Screen Manual - Multiuser Session https://aperiodic.net/screen/multiuser Unix & Linux: Sharing a terminal with multiple users (with screen or otherwise) 2012 UTOSC - Screen vs. tmux faceoff - Jon Jensen - Youtube video	