

Fedora 18 Supports 256 Color Terminals

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You may not be aware of it but currently Linux terminal emulators such as *xterm* only supports 8 colors while those on Apple's OS X support 256 colors. Now, beginning with [Fedora 18](#), Fedora will also support 256 colors via the *xterm-256color* terminfo database entry.

To see how many colors a terminal supports:

```
$ echo $TERM
xterm-256color
$ tput colors
256
```

I have never liked the default colors produced by the `-color` option to *ls* and other utilities and, as a result, have normally removed such aliases from my *bash* startup scripts. Having 32 times more colors available gives me much more flexibility to use more visually appealing colors.

Not all applications and utilities can make use of 256 colors at present. Also, if you *ssh* to another system from a 256 color terminal, because *ssh* propagates the `TERM` environment variable, the other system will have to have a *xterm-256color* terminfo; otherwise you will have a degraded experience. A workaround to address this issue is set the remote system's `TERM` environmental variable back to a default such as *xterm*. This could be done for example by adding the following to your shell startup script on the remote system.

```
test "$SSH_CONNECTION" && export TERM=xterm
```

Note that virtual terminals in Fedora 18 will not support 256 colors.