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# OCLUG IRC Chat

## What is IRC?

IRC stands for Internet Relay Chat and it is one of the oldest and most established ways of chatting live on the Internet. There are many IRC networks consisting of many servers, OCLUG has joined the [Open and Free Technology Community Network](#). You can access an oftc server with any IRC client by connecting to irc.oftc.net and joining `#oclug`. Additionally, on the same network, there is also an `#oclug-www` channel used by the site's Webmasters for collaboration.

## IRC Basics

To connect to an IRC network, first you need an IRC client. There is a good chance, if you already have Linux installed, that it came with one. Command line clients include `ircii/epic` and `irssi`, the graphical clients include `X-Chat` which is available for several different operating systems. `Firefox` web browser also comes with an IRC client.

Next you need to know some of the basic commands. all IRC commands start with the `/` character and many can take options and are entered right at the input line in your IRC client. IRC is divided up into channels, all of which start with the `#` character.

`/server {servername}` - This command will connect you to an IRC server.

`/join {#channel}` - This will put you onto a CB like channel so that you can communicate with others on the same channel just by typing at your input line.

`/nick {nickname}` - This command allows you to change the Nickname by which you're known.

`/msg {nickname} {message}` - This command allows you to send a private message to someone else on the server. Messaging people you do not know is considered impolite on many servers.

`/who {#channel}` - This will give you a list of who is on a channel.

`/whois {nickname}` - This will give you some more information about a given user.

`/part {#channel} {part message}` - This will cause you to leave the specified channel and will if provided display a parting message.

`/quit {#channel} {quit message}` - This will cause your IRC client to exit and if specified will send the quit message to all the channels you are currently talking on.

These basics should be enough to get you going on IRC. Remember basic etiquette, listen before you speak and think about what you're saying before you hit the enter key.

## Warnings

There are many social rules involved with IRC but you'll pick up on them as time goes on. There are some things you do need to be aware of right away though.

- You should not IRC as root. Doing so leaves you open to potential remote mischief and is just not a good idea.
- Do not accept file transfers from people you do not know. You never know what they've got.

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