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tmux

Productive Mouse-Free Development

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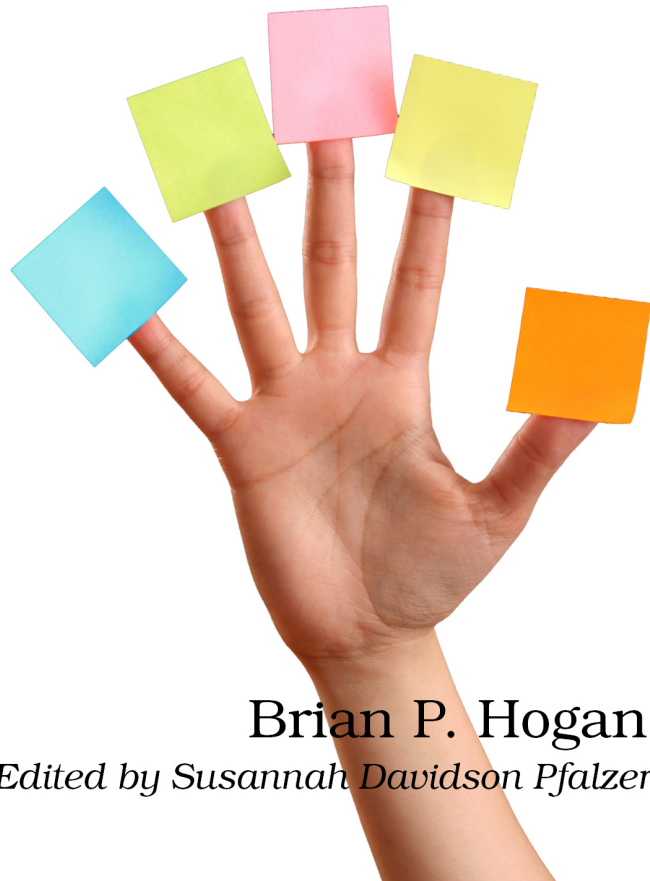
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# tmux

Productive  
Mouse-Free  
Development



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## 2.4 Customizing the Status Bar

The tmux status bar can display pretty much any information we want. We can use some predefined components or create our own by executing shell commands.

The status bar, by default, looks like this:

```
[development] 0:bash*                                "example.local" 00:44 02-Nov-1
```

On the left side, we have the name of the tmux session followed by the list of windows. The list of windows shows the numerical index of the current window and its name. On the right side, we have the hostname of our server followed by the date and time. Let's customize the content of our status bar.

### Configuring Status Bar Items

The status bar consists of three components: a left panel, the window list, and a right panel. We can change the content in the left or right panels of the status bar using a combination of text and variables. [Table 1, Status line variables, on page 5](#) shows the possible variables we can use in our status bar.

Variable	Description
#H	Hostname of local host
#h	Hostname of local host without the domain name
#F	Current window flag
#I	Current window index
#P	Current pane index
#S	Current session name
#T	Current window title
#W	Current window name
##	A literal #
\$(shell-command)	First line of the shell command's output
#[attributes]	Color or attribute change

Table 1—Status line variables

For example, if we wanted to show just the name of the current tmux session on the left side, we'd use the set-option -g status-left option with the #S value, like this:

```
set -g status-left "#S"
```

But we can also make it stand out more by using an attribute to set the foreground color, like this:

```
set -g status-left "#[fg=green]#S"
```

We can add as many attributes and items to the status bar as we want. To demonstrate, let's alter the left side of the status bar so it shows the session name in green, the current window number in yellow, and the current pane in cyan.

```
set -g status-left "#[fg=green]#S #[fg=yellow]#I #[fg=cyan]#P"
```

We can add any arbitrary text into the status bar, too. Let's add text to make the session, window, and pane more noticeable, like this:

```
config/tmux.conf
set -g status-left-length 40
set -g status-left "#[fg=green]Session: #S #[fg=yellow]#I #[fg=cyan]#P"
```

We set the status-left-length option because the output we've specified is too long for the default length, so we have to make that region wider.

We can also configure the right side of the status bar. Let's add the current date and time.

```
set -g status-right "#[fg=cyan]%d %b %R"
```

This formats the date as "13-Jan 13:45," but you can format it however you'd like, using the standard strftime() time formatting mechanism used in many programming languages.<sup>4</sup>

It's a good idea to turn on UTF-8 support in the status bar, especially if you're interested in using those characters.

```
set -g status-utf8 on
```

We can take things a step further by incorporating shell commands into the mix by using the #(shell-command) variable to return the result of any external

4. See <http://www.foragoodstrftime.com/> for a handy tool to help you find the perfect time format.

command-line program into the status bar. We'll go into this in detail in [Adding Battery Life to the Status Line, on page ?](#).

## Keeping Status Bar Info Up to Date

We've added the current time and some other dynamic information to our status bar, but we need to tell tmux how often to refresh that information periodically. By default, tmux refreshes the status bar every 15 seconds. We can specify exactly how quickly tmux refreshes its status bar with set-option -g status-interval followed by the refresh interval in seconds, like this:

```
set -g status-interval 60
```

This would refresh the status bar every 60 seconds. Keep in mind that if you're firing off shell commands, those will be executed once per interval, so be careful not to load too many resource-intensive scripts.

## Centering the Window List

We can also control the placement of the window list. By default, the window list is left-aligned, but we can center the window list in between the left and right status areas with a single configuration change:

```
config/tmux.conf
set -g status-justify centre
```

With this in place, the window list appears centered. As we create new windows, the window list shifts accordingly, staying in the center of the status bar.

## Identifying Activity in Other Windows

In the same way, we want to be notified when something happens in one of the other windows in our session so we can react to it. We'll do that by adding a visual notification, like this:

```
setw -g monitor-activity on
set -g visual-activity on
```

Now when one of the other windows has some activity, it'll stand out with a cyan background, like the "webserver" window shown here:

```
Session: development 1 1 1:editor* 2:webserver# 3:dbconsole- 30 Jan 21:48
```