

How do I keep color output when paginating shell output through less?

Let's say that you like the color output that comes out of `ls` (different colors for different file types). But when you have lots of files and want to paginate it through `less`, you lose the color output. So how do we keep the colors?

You need to give the `-r` flag to `less` to tell it to pass through the color escape sequences:

```
ls | less -r
```

That might not work because on some systems `ls` is set as an alias to:

```
ls --color=auto
```

(you can find out by typing “`alias ls`”)

That makes it show color only for interactive terminals (sort of...) but piping into `less` isn't an interactive terminal.

So you can do this:

```
ls --color | less -r
```

or

```
ls --color=always | less -r
```

That's probably too much trouble, so you can set up an alias by editing your `~/.bash_profile` and adding this: (if you're using `bash` as your shell)

```
alias lsl='ls --color=always | less -r'
```

You can change `lsl` to whatever name you like.

Or if you want a long directory listing, you can do something like this:

```
alias lsl='ls -alg --color=always | less -r'
```

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