

Mac OS HFS+ case-insensitiveness screws SVN

So I work on OS X for a few years now, but until today that I didn't really care about the underlying HFS+ file system. But while working on a project using SVN, I got this unexpected error message:

```
gianpaolo-del-mattos-macbook-pro:trunk Gianpaolo$ svn update
svn: URL 'svn+ssh://...../webinterface/files/lib/webmin' of existing directory '...../webinterface/files/lib/Webmin' does not match
expected URL 'svn+ssh://...../webinterface/files/lib/Webmin'
```

What had happened? Looking into the repository I found two folders, one by the name of 'webmin' and the other being 'Webmin'. Googling for the error message I found references to SVN on Windows, having issues checking out folders by the same name onto a case-insensitive NTFS.

I thought OS X would be case-sensitive, it's basically UNIXish in its core, right? WRONG.

For historical reasons, OS X uses HFS+ with case-sensitivity disabled by default. Thus folders 'webmin' and 'Webmin' or even 'webmiN' are the same.

Test this on your own. Fire up a terminal and create a folder called 'Test'.

```
mkdir Test
```

Now try to enter it using the name of 'TEST':

```
cd TEST
```

You'll notice that it indeed works. HFS+ default settings are case-preserving, but nevertheless case-insensitive.

Solution? One possible work-around would be to REFORMAT the whole disk using HFS+ with case-sensitivity enabled, which would require a complete reinstall of OS X. There's some issues with this, though. Various sources report, that some applications may not work properly on case-sensitive HFS+ volumes.

So, a more versatile, but albeit complicated, work-around would be to create virtual disk image and use this to store case-sensitive content.

For this you need to start "Disk Utility". Although my screenshot is in german language, you should get the point easily.



