

AI-03997 Keep SSH Running tmux

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I opened an ssh session of my vm via browser GCP VM method but the session times out and turn off my htop and btop. I want these two Linux apps running for my visual under the hood metric dashboard, possible? Tell me.

The reason htop and btop terminate when your browser-based GCP SSH session times out is that they are running as child processes of that specific SSH shell. When the shell disconnects, it sends a hangup signal (SIGHUP) to all active processes inside it, killing them.

To keep these terminal dashboards running continuously in the background—even if you close the browser window—you need to use a terminal multiplexer.

Here are the two best ways to do this:

Method 1: Using tmux (Recommended)

tmux creates a persistent session on your VM that remains active regardless of your connection status.

1. **Install tmux** (if it isn't already installed):`sudo apt update && sudo apt install tmux -y`
- 2.
3. **Start a new tmux session**:`tmux new -s dashboard`
- 4.
5. **Launch your app**: Run btop or htop inside this new window.

6. **Disconnect safely:** If you want to close it manually without killing the app, press Ctrl + B, release, and then press D (to **Detach**).
7. **Reconnect later:** Next time you log into your GCP VM via the browser, simply run: `tmux attach -t dashboard`
8. Your dashboard will be exactly as you left it, with unbroken history.

Method 2: Using screen (Alternative)

screen functions similarly to tmux and is lightweight.

1. **Install screen:** `sudo apt install screen -y`
- 2.
3. **Start a screen session:** `screen -S dashboard`
- 4.
5. **Launch your app** (htop or btop).
6. **Detach:** Press Ctrl + A, then D.
7. **Resume:** When you reconnect to the VM, resume the session with: `screen -r dashboard`
- 8.

A Quick Note on "Always-On" GCP Visuals

Using tmux or screen will keep the tools processing data in the background, which is perfect for maintaining cumulative metrics (like btop's network data or uptime). When you log back in via the GCP browser SSH and attach to the session, the visual graph will instantly pop back up.

Would you like to know how to split a tmux screen so you can view both htop and btop simultaneously side-by-side in a single window?

To view both htop and btop side-by-side inside a single tmux window, you will use **panes**.

If you are already inside your tmux session (e.g., `tmux attach -t dashboard`), follow these steps:

1. Split the Screen

By default, tmux uses the prefix shortcut **Ctrl + B**. You press this first, release it, and then type a command key.

- **To split vertically (side-by-side):** Press Ctrl + B, then type %
- **To split horizontally (top-and-bottom):** Press Ctrl + B, then type "

Choose the vertical split (%) for the best dashboard layout. Your cursor will automatically move to the new pane.

2. Launch the Apps

1. In your current pane, type btop and hit enter.
2. Switch to the empty pane by pressing Ctrl + B, followed by the **Arrow Key** pointing toward the empty pane.
3. Type htop and hit enter.

Handy Navigation Shortcuts

Now that your dashboard is split, here are the essential shortcuts to manage it:

- **Switch between panes:** Ctrl + B, then use any **Arrow Key** (\leftarrow, \rightarrow, \uparrow, \downarrow) to jump in that direction.
- **Toggle a pane to fullscreen:** If you want to temporarily zoom in on btop to read a detailed log, select its pane and press Ctrl + B, then Z. Press Ctrl + B, then Z again to unzoom back to the side-by-side layout.
- **Resize panes:** Press Ctrl + B, then **hold down the Ctrl key** while pressing the arrow keys to adjust the boundary line.

Next time your GCP browser session times out, just reconnect and run tmux attach -t dashboard. Both apps will still be running side-by-side exactly where you left them.