

NAME

cron – clock daemon

SYNOPSIS

/etc/cron

DESCRIPTION

Cron executes commands at specified dates and times according to the instructions in the file */usr/lib/crontab*. Since *cron* never exits, it should only be executed once. This is best done by running *cron* from the initialization process through the file */etc/rc*; see *init* (VIII).

Crontab consists of lines of six fields each. The fields are separated by spaces or tabs. The first five are integer patterns to specify the minute (0-59), hour (0-23), day of the month (1-31), month of the year (1-12), and day of the week (1-7 with 1=monday). Each of these patterns may contain a number in the range above; two numbers separated by a minus meaning a range inclusive; a list of numbers separated by commas meaning any of the numbers; or an asterisk meaning all legal values. The sixth field is a string that is executed by the Shell at the specified times. A percent character in this field is translated to a new-line character. Only the first line (up to a % or end of line) of the command field is executed by the Shell. The other lines are made available to the command as standard input.

Crontab is examined by *cron* every hour. Thus it could take up to an hour for entries to become effective. If it receives a hangup signal, however, the table is examined immediately; so 'kill -1 ...' can be used.

FILES

/usr/lib/crontab

SEE ALSO

init(VIII), *sh*(I), *kill* (I)

DIAGNOSTICS

None – illegal lines in crontab are ignored.

BUGS

A more efficient algorithm could be used. The overhead in running *cron* is about one percent of the machine, exclusive of any commands executed.