## strings

coursera.org/learn/linux-tools-for-developers/supplement/KO8ta/strings

**strings** is used to extract all printable character strings found in the file or files given as arguments. It is useful in locating human-readable content embedded in binary files; for text files, you can just use **grep**.

For example, to search for the string **my\_string** in a spreadsheet:

```
$ strings book1.xls | grep my_string
```

The screenshot below shows a search of a number of programs to see which ones have GPL licenses of various versions.

```
File Edit View Search Terminal Help
License
                               v3+/Autoconf: GNU
                                                                                            version 3 or
 License
                               v3+/Autoconf: GNU
                                                                                            version 3 or later
                                                                                            version 3 or later
 License
                              v3+/Autoconf: GNU
plugin_is_GPL_compatible
fatal: extension: library `%s': does not define `plugin_is_GPL_compatible' (%s)
c7:/tmp>strings --print-file-name /usr/bin/a* | grep GPL
/usr/bin/aclocal: License GPLv2+: GNU GPL version 2 or later <http://gnu.org/licenses/gpl-2.0.html>
/usr/bin/aclocal-1.13: License GPLv2+: GNU GPL version 2 or later <http://gnu.org/licenses/gpl-2.0.html>
/usr/bin/arch: License GPLv3+: GNU GPL version 3 or later <http://gnu.org/licenses/gpl.html>.
/usr/bin/autoconf: License GPLv3+/Autoconf: GNU GPL version 3 or later
/usr/bin/autoheader: License GPLv3+/Autoconf: GNU GPL version 3 or later
plugin_is
                                       compatible
                                                                                                                ersion 3 or later <a href="http://gnu.org/licenses/gpl.html">http://gnu.org/licenses/gpl.html</a>.

nf: GNU GPL version 3 or later

nf: GNU GPL version 3 or later

PL version 2 or later <a href="http://gnu.org/licenses/gpl-2.0.html">http://gnu.org/licenses/gpl-2.0.html</a>

GNU GPL version 2 or later <a href="http://gnu.org/licenses/gpl-2.0.html">http://gnu.org/licenses/gpl-2.0.html</a>

conf: GNU GPL version 3 or later

nf: GNU GPL version 3 or later

conf: GNU GPL version 3 or later
/usr/bin/autoheader: License
/usr/bin/autom4te: License GPI
                                                                                 GPLv3+/Autoconf: GNU
                                                                                P v2+: GNU GPL version
nse GPLv2+: GNU GPL ver
GPLv3+: GNU GPL version
GPLv3+/Autoconf: GNU G
 /usr/bin/automake: License
/usr/bin/automake-1.13: License 6
/usr/bin/autopoint: License
/usr/bin/autoreconf: License
                                                                                PLv3+/Autoconf: GNU G
/usr/bin/autoscan: License
/usr/bin/autoupdate: License GP v3+/Autoconf: GNU GPL version 3 or later /usr/bin/awk: plugin_is_GPL_compatible /usr/bin/awk: fatal: extension: library `%s': does not define `plugin_is_GPL_compatible' (%s)
c7:/tmp>
```