

Notes 5: Handling Text Files

Each of the commands used for handling text files

Cat

Definition

Displays the content of a file

Usage

```
cat+option+files to display
```

Examples

- Display the content of a file located in the pwd
 - `cat todo.lst`
- Display the content of a file using absolute path
 - `cat ~/Documents/todo.lst`

Tac

Definition

Displays content of a file in reverse order

Usage

```
tac+option+files to display
```

Examples

- Display the content of a file located in the pwd
 - `tac todo.md`
- Display the content of a file using absolute path
 - `tac ~/Documents/todo.md`

Head

Definition

Displays the top N number of lines of a given file

Usage

```
head+option+file
```

Examples

- Display the first 10 lines of a file
 - `head ~/Documents/Book/dracula.txt`
- Display the first 5 lines of a file
 - `head -5 ~/Documents/Book/dracula.txt`
- Display the first line of multiple files using wildcards
 - `head -n 1 *.csv *.py`

Tail

Definition

Displays the last N number of a file

Usage

`tail+option+file`

Examples

- Display the last 10 lines of a file
 - `tail ~/Documents/Book/dracula.txt`
- Display the last 5 lines of multiple files
 - `tail -n 5 dracula.txt bible.txt warandpeace.txt`

Cut

Definition

Extracts a specific part of each line in a file and displays it

Usage

`cut+option+file`

Examples

- Display a list of all users in the system
 - `cut -d ';' -f1 /etc/passwd`
- Display a list of all users with their login shell
 - `cut -d ':' -f1,7 /etc/passwd`

Sort

Definition

Used for sorting files

Usage

`sort+option+file`

Examples

- Sort a file
 - `sort users.lst`
- Sort a file in reverse order
 - `sort -r users.txt`
- Sort a file with numeric data
 - `sort -n phones.txt`

WC

Definition

Prints the number of lines, bytes, and characters in a file

Usage

`wc+option+file`

Examples

- Display the number of characters in a file
 - `wc -m users.txt`
- Display the number of lines in a file
 - `wc -l users.txt`
- Display the number of words in a file
 - `wc -w users.txt`

diff

Definition

Compares files and displays the differences between them

Usage

`diff+option+file1+file2`

Examples

- Display the difference between two files
 - `diff cars.csv cars-backup.csv`
- Display the difference between two files in a column format
 - `diff -y cars.csv cars-backup.csv`

Grep

Definition

Searches text in a given file

Usage

`grep+option+search criteria+file`

Examples

- Search any line that contains the word "dracula" in the given file
 - `grep 'dracula' ~/Documents/dracula.txt`
- Search for all lines that do not contain the word "war"
 - `grep -v 'war' ~/Documents/Books/war-and-peace.txt`