

NAME

notmuch-search – search for messages matching the given search terms

SYNOPSIS

notmuch search [*option ...*] <*search-term*> ...

DESCRIPTION

Search for messages matching the given search terms, and display as results the threads containing the matched messages.

The output consists of one line per thread, giving a thread ID, the date of the newest (or oldest, depending on the sort option) matched message in the thread, the number of matched messages and total messages in the thread, the names of all participants in the thread, and the subject of the newest (or oldest) message.

See **notmuch-search-terms(7)** for details of the supported syntax for <search-terms>.

Supported options for **search** include

--format=(json|sexp|text|text0)

Presents the results in either JSON, S-Expressions, newline character separated plain-text (default), or null character separated plain-text (compatible with **xargs(1)** -0 option where available).

--format-version=N

Use the specified structured output format version. This is intended for programs that invoke **notmuch(1)** internally. If omitted, the latest supported version will be used.

--output=(summary|threads|messages|files|tags)

summary

Output a summary of each thread with any message matching the search terms. The summary includes the thread ID, date, the number of messages in the thread (both the number matched and the total number), the authors of the thread and the subject. In the case where a thread contains multiple files for some messages, the total number of files is printed in parentheses (see below for an example).

threads

Output the thread IDs of all threads with any message matching the search terms, either one per line (**--format=text**), separated by null characters (**--format=text0**), as a JSON array (**--format=json**), or an S-Expression list (**--format=sexp**).

messages

Output the message IDs of all messages matching the search terms, either one per line (**--format=text**), separated by null characters (**--format=text0**), as a JSON array (**--format=json**), or as an S-Expression list (**--format=sexp**).

files

Output the filenames of all messages matching the search terms, either one per line (**--format=text**), separated by null characters (**--format=text0**), as a JSON array (**--format=json**), or as an S-Expression list (**--format=sexp**).

Note that each message may have multiple filenames associated with it. All of them are included in the output (unless limited with the **--duplicate=N** option). This may be particularly confusing for **folder:** or **path:** searches in a specified directory, as the messages may have duplicates in other directories that are included in the output, although these files alone would not match the search.

tags

Output all tags that appear on any message matching the search terms, either one per line (**--format=text**), separated by null characters (**--format=text0**), as a JSON array (**--format=json**), or as an S-Expression list (**--format=sexp**).

--sort=(newest-first|oldest-first)

This option can be used to present results in either chronological order (**oldest-first**) or reverse chronological order (**newest-first**).

Note: The thread order will be distinct between these two options (beyond being simply reversed). When sorting by **oldest-first** the threads will be sorted by the oldest message in each thread, but when sorting by **newest-first** the threads will be sorted by the newest message in each thread.

By default, results will be displayed in reverse chronological order, (that is, the newest results will be displayed first).

--offset=[-]N

Skip displaying the first N results. With the leading '-', start at the Nth result from the end.

--limit=N

Limit the number of displayed results to N.

--exclude=(true|false|all|flag)

A message is called "excluded" if it matches at least one tag in search.exclude_tags that does not appear explicitly in the search terms. This option specifies whether to omit excluded messages in the search process.

true (default)

Prevent excluded messages from matching the search terms.

all Additionally prevent excluded messages from appearing in displayed results, in effect behaving as though the excluded messages do not exist.

false Allow excluded messages to match search terms and appear in displayed results. Excluded messages are still marked in the relevant outputs.

flag Only has an effect when **--output=summary**. The output is almost identical to **false**, but the "match count" is the number of matching non-excluded messages in the thread, rather than the number of matching messages.

--duplicate=N

For **--output=files**, output the Nth filename associated with each message matching the query (N is 1-based). If N is greater than the number of files associated with the message, don't print anything.

For **--output=messages**, only output message IDs of messages matching the search terms that have at least N filenames associated with them.

Note that this option is orthogonal with the **folder:** search prefix. The prefix matches messages based on filenames. This option filters filenames of the matching messages.

EXAMPLE

The following shows an example of the summary output format, with one message having multiple filenames.

```
% notmuch search date:today.. and tag:bad-news
thread:0000000000063c10 Today [1/1] Some Persun; To the bone (bad-news inbox u
thread:0000000000063c25 Today [1/1(2)] Ann Other; Bears (bad-news inbox unread
thread:0000000000063c00 Today [1/1] A Thurd; Bites, stings, sad feelings (bad-
```

EXIT STATUS

This command supports the following special exit status codes

- 20** The requested format version is too old.
- 21** The requested format version is too new.

SEE ALSO

notmuch(1), notmuch-address(1), notmuch-config(1), notmuch-count(1), notmuch-dump(1), notmuch-hooks(5), notmuch-insert(1), notmuch-new(1), notmuch-reply(1), notmuch-restore(1), notmuch-search-terms(7), notmuch-show(1), notmuch-tag(1)

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