

Linux Commando

Initially a Linux command-line interface blog, it has evolved to cover increasingly more GUI app topics. Instead of just giving you information like some man page, I illustrate their usage in real-life scenarios.

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Splitting up is easy for a PDF file

Occasionally, I needed to extract some pages from a multi-page pdf document. Suppose you have a 6-page pdf document named *myoldfile.pdf*. You want to extract into a new pdf file *mynewfile.pdf* containing only pages 1 and 2, 4 and 5 from *myoldfile.pdf*.

I did exactly that using *pdftk*, a command-line tool.

If *pdftk* is not already installed, install it like this on a Debian or Ubuntu-based computer.

```
$ sudo apt-get update
$ sudo apt-get install pdftk
```

Then, to make a new pdf with just pages 1, 2, 4, and 5 from the old pdf, do this:

```
$ pdftk myoldfile.pdf cat 1 2 4 5 output mynewfile.pdf
```

Note that *cat* and *output* are special *pdftk* keywords. *cat* specifies the operation to perform on the input file. *output* signals that what follows is the name of the output pdf file.

You can specify page ranges like this:

```
$ pdftk myoldfile.pdf cat 1-2 4-5 output mynewfile.pdf
```

pdftk has a few more tricks in its back pocket. For example, you can specify a *burst* operation to split each page in the input file into a separate output file.

```
$ pdftk myoldfile.pdf burst
```

By default, the output files are named *pg_0001.pdf*, *pg_0002.pdf*, etc.


pdftk is also capable of merging multiple pdf files into one pdf.

```
$ pdftk pg_0001.pdf pg_0002.pdf pg_0004.pdf pg_0005.pdf output mynewfile.pdf
```

That would merge the files corresponding to the first, second, fourth and fifth pages into a single output pdf.

If you know of another easy way to split up pages from a pdf file, please tell us in a comment. Much appreciated.

Two updates ([part 2](#), [part 3](#)) are available for this post.

Posted by [Peter Leung](#) 




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