Many commands can accept input from a facility called *standard input*. By default, standard input gets its contents from the keyboard, but like standard output, it can be redirected. To redirect standard input from a file instead of the keyboard, the "<" character is used like this:

[me@linuxbox me]$ sort < file\_list.txt

In the above example we used the [sort](http://linuxcommand.org/man_pages/sort1.html) command to process the contents of file\_list.txt. The results are output on the display since the standard output is not redirected in this example. We could redirect standard output to another file like this:

[me@linuxbox me]$ sort < file\_list.txt > sorted\_file\_list.txt

As you can see, a command can have both its input and output redirected. Be aware that the order of the redirection does not matter. The only requirement is that the redirection operators (the "<" and ">") must appear after the other options and arguments in the command.

25 \* \* \* \* /usr/bin/php /home/sean/fof/update-quiet.php > /dev/null 2>&1

At 25 minutes after the hour, a PHP script is executed. The output is redirected to /dev/null and the error stream is redirected to the standard out stream with **2>&1**.

Recall that all programs have a standard output stream and an error stream, with normal redirects only working on the latter. The **2>&1** ensures that errors are redirected, too. Without this the regular output would be redirected but not the errors, resulting in an email. This may be desirable in some cases.