

Automatic tasks

Linux distributions allow you to configure your scripts so that they are executed for a given time period or at certain hour/day.

Configuring a Cron task

The main configuration file for cron, `/etc/crontab`, contains the following lines::

```
SHELL=/bin/bash
PATH=/sbin:/bin:/usr/sbin:/usr/bin
MAILTO=root
HOME=/

# run-parts
01 * * * * root run-parts /etc/cron.hourly
02 4 * * * root run-parts /etc/cron.daily
22 4 * * 0 root run-parts /etc/cron.weekly
42 4 1 * * root run-parts /etc/cron.monthly
```

The first four lines are variables used to configure the environment in which the cron tasks are run. The value of the `SHELL` variable tells the system which shell environment to use (in this example the bash shell), and the `PATH` variable defines the path used to execute commands. The output of the cron tasks are emailed to the username defined with the `MAILTO` variable. If the `MAILTO` variable is defined as an empty string (`MAILTO=""`), email will not be sent. The `HOME` variable can be used to set the home directory to use when executing commands or scripts.

Each line in the `/etc/crontab` file has the format:

minute hour day month dayofweek command

- minute ? any integer from 0 to 59
- hour ? any integer from 0 to 23
- day ? any integer from 1 to 31 (must be a valid day if a month is specified)
- month ? any integer from 1 to 12 (or the short name of the month such as jan, feb, and so on)
- dayofweek ? any integer from 0 to 7 where 0 or 7 represents Sunday (or the short name of the week such as sun, mon, and so on)
- command ? the command to execute. The command can either be a command such as `ls /proc >> /tmp/proc` or the command to execute a custom script that you wrote.

For any of the above values, an asterisk (*) can be used to specify all valid values. For example, an asterisk for the month value means execute the command every month within the constraints of the other values.

A hyphen (-) between integers specifies a range of integers. For example, 1-4 means the integers 1, 2, 3, and 4.

A list of values separated by commas (,) specifies a list. For example, 3, 4, 6, 8 indicates those four specific

integers.

The forward slash (/) can be used to specify step values. The value of an integer can be skipped within a range by following the range with /. For example, 0–59/2 can be used to define every other minute in the minute field. Step values can also be used with an asterisk. For instance, the value */3 can be used in the month field to run the task every third month.

Any lines that begin with a hash mark (#) are comments and are not processed.

How to start an automatic execution of a script on hosting plan?

First it needs to be verified whether the script works in **shell** mode. In order to do it you need to place **#!/usr/local/bin/php**, for php script, **#!/usr/bin/perl**, for perl, lub **#!/bin/bash**, for shell script. Then use **chmod 700 skrypt.cgi** command for the script. If you have **telnet/ssh** access you may check it by **./script.cgi**.

Remember to use **cd /home/login** command at the beginning of the script. You may use absolute path to indicate the file.

After verification of the script in **shell** mode, you need to contact Client Service Panel by email and provide the following data:

- domain name
- absolute path to the script (e.g. /home/login/script.cgi),
- hour and day of the script execution