

cut (output columns from files)

This command is used to “cut out” columns from plain text tables. Have a look at this example:

```
mount | cut -d " " -f 3
```

This will extract the third column from *mount*'s output. The *mount* command outputs a listing of the form:

```
DEVICE on DIR type TYPE (OPTIONS)
```

This is basically a table with six columns. The command *cut -f 3* will limit output to the third column or “field”. The *-d* option sets the table delimiter. In the command shown above, a whitespace character (“ ”) is specified as a delimiter. By default, *cut* assumes that table columns are delimited by a tab stop.

Here is another example of how *cut* may be put to use:

```
cut -d : -f 3 /etc/group
```

This will extract the third column from the file */etc/group*, providing a list of group numbers. The file's columns are delimited by a colon (:).