

This is how the entire operating system is built. Many UNIX programmers will tell you that this is where the power is. Like beer, this may be an acquired taste, popular but acquired.

Back to the topic. A crontab file can have any number of commands, although it can only process one command per line. One more thing to remember: after the last command, you must have a blank line or the crontab will not run.

What does a crontab line look like?

The way the schedule looks is very cryptic but it's really very simple. There are five fields to the schedule. They are noted in bold below:

MINUTE(0-59) **HOUR**(0-23) **DAY-OF-MONTH**(1-31) **MONTH-OF-YEAR**(1-12) **DAY-OF-WEEK**(0-6) Note: 0 = Sunday. Also note that the **ASTERISK (*)** stands for a **WILDCARD** meaning it will match any value.

Example 1:

```
0 * * * * /etc/dotthis.abc
```

This means literally “execute the script located at /etc/dotthis.abc” whenever the clock is equal to 0 minutes on ANYDAY, ANY HOUR, ANY DAY-OF-MONTH, ANY DAY-OF-WEEK. So the script is set to run ONCE PER HOUR EXACTLY ON THE HOUR regardless of what day it is or what hour.



Example 2:

```
0 0 * * * /etc/dothat.now
```

This is a little more picky. This crontab runs again whenever the internal clock hits ZERO (0) Minutes, but instead of running once per minute it will only run once per day. Why? Because we also set the HOUR to zero so both the MINUTE and the HOUR must be equal to zero before crontab will execute /etc/dothat.now. So this example runs once per day at midnight, server time.

Example 3:

```
21 14 * * 2 /yellow/brick/road/wizard.exe
```

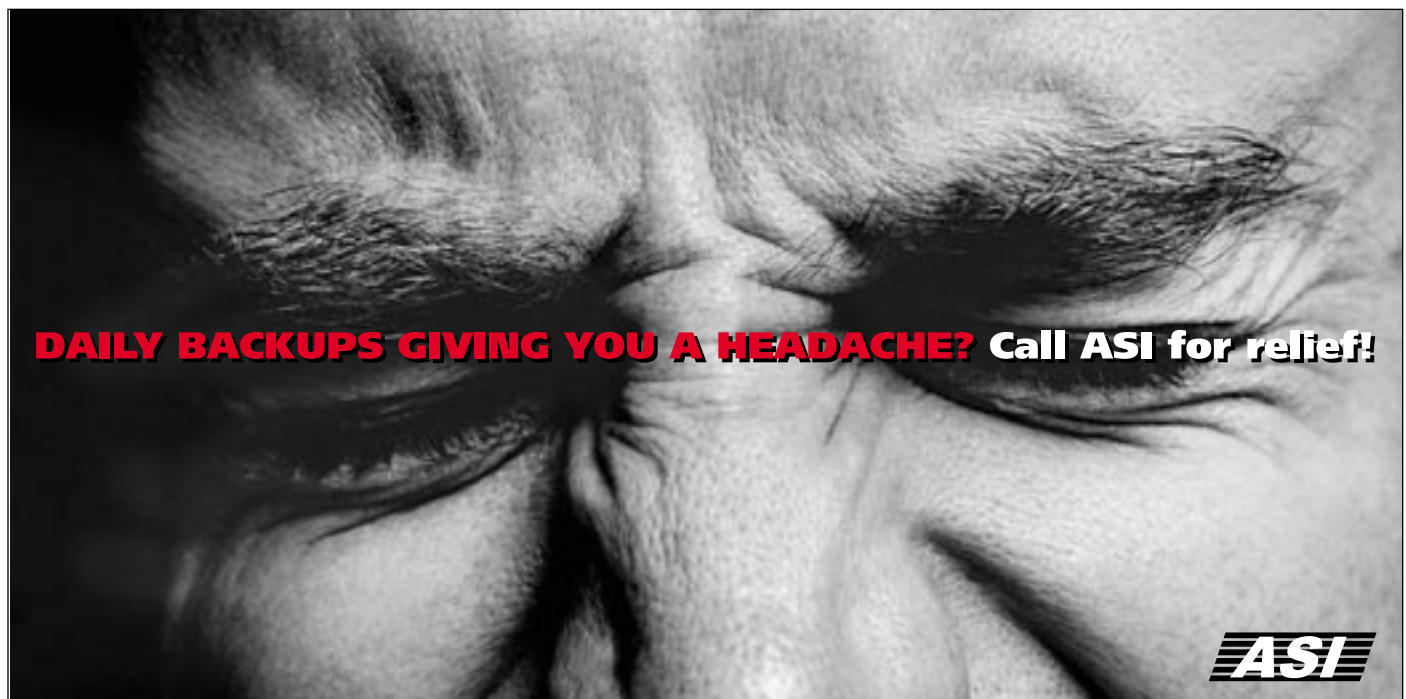
This example sets a crontab entry to run only on Tuesday at 2:21 PM. Note that this is written in military style time, i.e. 14:21.

In the next issue (Part III), I will explore more details regarding UNIX Shell Scripting, and in particular the remarkable iSeries QSHELL environment.



Thibault Dambrine works as an independent contractor in Calgary, Alberta. You can visit the iSeries / AS/400 related website he manages at <http://www.tylogix.com> or e-mail him directly at thibault.dambrine@tylogix.com.

The author disclaims all warranties, whether express or implied, including, but not limited to, the implied warranties of merchantability and fitness for a particular purpose. Any trademarks and product or brand names referenced in this document are the property of their respective owners.



DAILY BACKUPS GIVING YOU A HEADACHE? Call ASI for relief!



While daily backups may be giving you a headache, you know it's nothing like the headache you'd have if you lost your corporate data! · Call ASI for our **Backup Relief Kit**, and learn how you can have all the best features of automated, off-site data backups without the headaches. · ASI has been providing networking and supply chain solutions for over 14 years— including the **IBM® iSeries™** — and have helped many companies avoid serious headaches. Ask for our **Backup Relief Kit**, and see how we can help you. **APPLICATION SOLUTIONS INC.**

CALL (905) 513-9366 EXT. 4484 OR REQUEST YOUR KIT ONLINE AT WWW.ASIWMS.COM/KIT