
Subject: impossible values in /etc/crontab due to randomization

Posted by [rsauvat](#) on Wed, 03 Nov 2010 12:06:29 GMT

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Hi.

I just realized that some of my /etc/crontab are set with impossible numbers for the hour field.

```
9 30 * * * root rm -f /var/spool/cron/lastrun/cron.daily
```

This seems to only appear on gentoo template and not debian/ubuntu for exemple.

This is the /etc/crontab from gentoo

```
# for vixie cron
# $Header: /var/cvsroot/gentoo-x86/sys-process/vixie-cron/files/crontab-3.0.1-r4,v 1.2 2009/05/12
09:13:46 bangert Exp $

# Global variables
SHELL=/bin/bash
PATH=/sbin:/bin:/usr/sbin:/usr/bin
MAILTO=root
HOME=/

# check scripts in cron.hourly, cron.daily, cron.weekly and cron.monthly
3 * * * * root rm -f /var/spool/cron/lastrun/cron.hourly
16 9 * * * root rm -f /var/spool/cron/lastrun/cron.daily
51 3 * * 6 root rm -f /var/spool/cron/lastrun/cron.weekly
32 3 1 * * root rm -f /var/spool/cron/lastrun/cron.monthly
*/10 * * * * root test -x /usr/sbin/run-crons && /usr/sbin/run-crons
```

And this is the part of the openvz script that set random times for cron.

```
cat crontab | awk '
BEGIN { srand(); }
{
    if ($0 ~ /^[ \t]*##/ || $0 ~ /^[ \t]+*$/) {
        print $0;
        next;
    }
    if ((n = split($0, ar, /[ \t]/)) < 7) {
        print $0;
        next;
    }
    # min
    if (ar[1] ~ /^[0-9]+$/) {
```

```

        ar[1] = int(rand() * 59);
    } else if (ar[1] ~ /^-\*[0-9]+$/) {
        r = int(rand() * 40) + 15;
        ar[1] = "-*/" r;
    }
    # hour
    if (ar[2] ~ /^[0-9]+$/) {
        ar[2] = int(rand() * 6);
    }
    # day
    if (ar[3] ~ /^[0-9]+$/) {
        ar[3] = int(rand() * 31) + 1;
    }
    line = ar[1];
    for (i = 2; i <= n; i++) {
        line = line " " ar[i];
    }
    print line;
}'

```

If you test it less than 10 times you will see an impossible value for the hour field.
 If someone as a solution for this problem it would be great.
