

The Well's Extract Command

a user guide

by

*Lisa R. Hirsch
Sunbear Systems*

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How to Use This Guide

This guide introduces the extract command and presents its many features in a task-oriented fashion. The first four pages discuss:

- ◆ how the Well works
- ◆ the extract command
- ◆ its syntax
- ◆ troubleshooting

Each topic that follows discusses how to accomplish a particular task using extract, such as reading all responses posted by a particular user.

Topics appear on the left-hand side of the page, with explanations and examples on the right. Major topic headings are under a heavy line and look like this:

By User...

Sub-headings are indented under a lightweight line and look like this:

By Conference

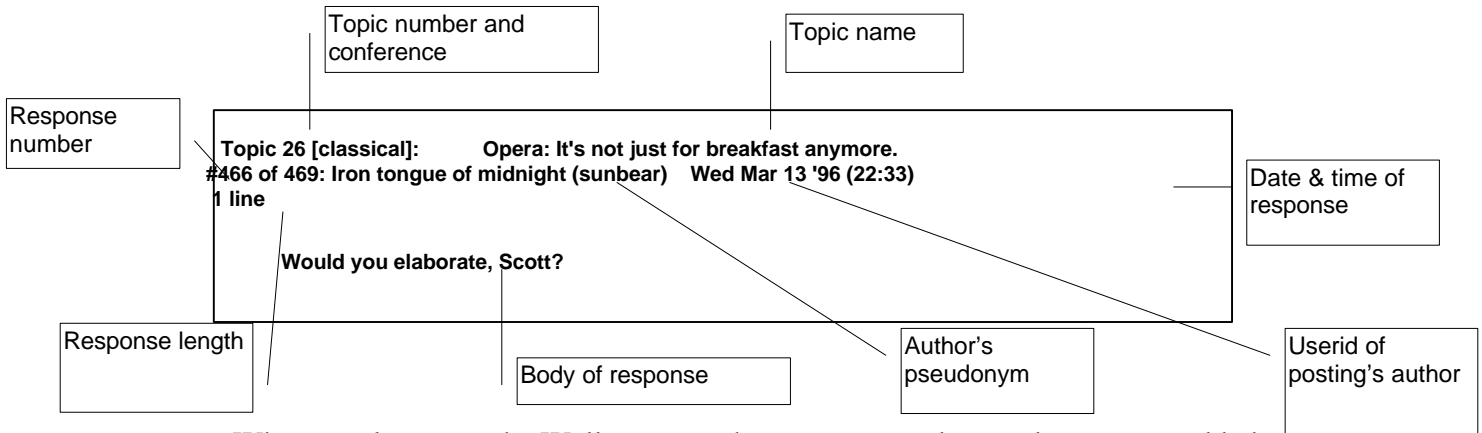
Examples look like this:

```
!extract -f "Eva Turner" classical
```

In the *Quick Reference Guide* you can find all switches in alphabetical order, and a brief discussion of their functions and any arguments they take. The *Index* gives page references for all subjects.

What Extract Does

The Well is organized into special interest areas called *conferences*, such as Books, Classical Music, News, and Current Events. Each conference contains many *topics*, with titles like "Opera: It's Not Just For Breakfast Any More," or "Sopranos," or "Those Bohemian Composers!" The Well's users add their own comments, called *postings* or *responses*, to topics that interest them. A typical posting looks like this:



When you log on to the Well, you use the *see* command to read responses added since your last session. The Well keeps track of what you have already read, so that you do not have to remember how much you've read. You see all new responses in chronological order, starting with those in the lowest-numbered topic and finishing with the highest-numbered.

The extract command provides an alternative to sequential reading. Use the extract command to read:

- Responses posted by the user or users you specify
- Responses posted between dates you specify
- Responses containing text you specify
- Responses that are *hidden* (concealed but not erased)
- Responses from a conference other than the one you are currently reading

These are only some of the possibilities, as you will see. The extract command is very flexible, and gives you many options for specifying exactly what you would like to read. For example, if you typed the following command from an OK prompt, it would display, on screen, the entire text of any responses made in the Classical Music conference between January 1, 1995 and December 31, 1995 containing the word "Mozart," whether the responses are in hidden responses or not, unless they were made by user sunbear. This command works whether you are in the Classical Music conference or not.

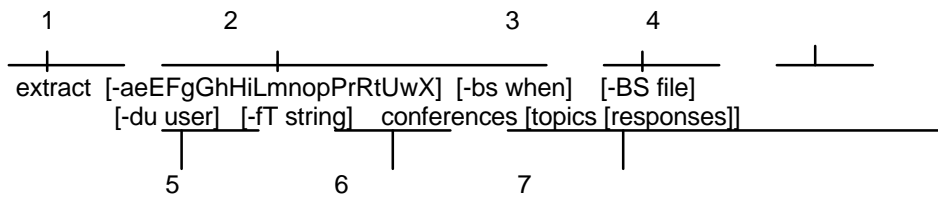
```
extract -h -w -b 01/01/96 -s 12/31/94 -d sunbear -f Mozart classical
```

In this example, *-h*, *-w*, *-b*, *-s*, *-d*, and *-f* are all *switches*, or options that control what the extract command does. *-b*, *-s*, *-d* and *-f* are all followed by *arguments*, which limit what each switch does. The conference name in this example is an argument of the extract command itself.

Switch	Effect	Argument
-h	include text in hidden responses	none
-w	extract entire posting containing text specified by -f switch	none
-b	extract responses <i>before</i> date specified	date (01/01/96)
-s	extract responses <i>since</i> date specified	date (12/31/94)
-d	exclude responses by user(s) specified	userid(s) (sunbear)
-f	extract responses containing text specified by argument	text (Mozart)

Extract Syntax

Extract's syntax consists of the command itself, followed by any number of switches and the arguments needed by each switch.



Label 1 is the extract command. The switches and other commands group as follows:

- Label 2 - switches not taking arguments
- Label 3 - switches taking date or time arguments
- Label 4 - switches with a file name as an argument
- Label 5 - switches with one or more userids as arguments
- Label 6 - switches with a text string as an argument
- Label 7 - conference name(s), which take topic numbers and response numbers as arguments

Extract requires that you:

- ◆ Specify at least one conference each time you use extract.
- ◆ Be a member of any private (restricted-membership) conferences you extract responses from.

When you use extract, the responses scroll to your screen without any breaks. The Well's conferences are large. If you extract an entire conference, hundreds of screens will scroll past too fast to read. To read what you extract one screen at a time, either:

Use the *-m* switch, which would go before *-b* in the example above, *or*
Put *| more* at the end of the command: *- extract classical | more*

Either of these will invoke a *pager*, a program that lets you read text one page at a time and that gives you the option of interrupting by typing *q*, for quit, at the end of each page. If you forget to use a pager, control-C (^C) will break the command.

If Your Command Doesn't Work

You can tell from your results whether you've made a syntax error or not. Extract returns a stream of responses or gives you an error message, as follows. In such cases, refer to this guide to check your syntax.

```
OK (? for help): extract -f "Eva Turner"
extract: no such conference 'Turner'
```

```
OK (? for help): !extract -f "Eva Turner"
Usage: extract [-aeEFgGhHiLmnopPrRtUwX] [-bs when] [-BS file]
-du user] [-fT string] conferences [topics [responses ...]]
```

You must examine your output for more subtle errors, such as giving incorrect date and/or time boundaries in your command.

By Conference, Topic, and Response Number...

By Conference

To extract an entire conference, follow the extract command with the name(s) of any conferences you wish to extract:

extract conference(s)

extract classical extracts the entire Classical Music Conference.

extract classical misc extracts the entire Classical Music and Miscellaneous conferences.

Note: The Well's conferences are large! Use additional selection criteria to limit the amount of material you extract.

By Topic

To extract one or more topics from a given conference, follow the extract command with the name of the conference and the numbers of any topics you wish to extract.

extract conference topic#(s)

extract books 175 extracts topic 175 from the Books conference.

extract books 175-180 extracts topics 175 through 180 from the Books conference.

By Response

To extract responses by response number, follow the conference name and topic number with the response numbers.

extract conference topic# response #(s)

extract books 175 2 extracts topic 175, response 2 from the Books conference.

extract books 175 2-70 extracts topic 175, responses 2 through 70 from the Books conference.

By .cflist

You can use your .cflist, a file containing the names of all

the conferences you usually read, to extract all new responses in those conferences.

```
extract -n @.cflist
```

The above extracts all new responses from the conferences on your .cflist, as if you had used the *see new* command.

Use the -E switch to exclude private conferences when you refer to your .cflist.

By User...

To extract responses posted by specific users, use the -u switch, and follow it with the userid(s) of the desired users. Specify as many users as you wish.

```
extract -u userid(s) conference(s)
```

extract -u sunbear classical 175 extracts all responses user sunbear made in the Classical Music conference, topic 175.

extract -u sunbear bryan classical 175 extracts all responses by users sunbear and bryan from the Classical Music conference, topic 175.

extract -u sunbear classical books extracts all of user sunbear's responses from Classical Music and Books.

Excluding User(s)

Use the -d switch to exclude users you specify.

```
extract -d userid(s)
```

extract -d sunbear bryan classical 175 extracts Classical Music conference topic 175, but excludes all responses by users sunbear and bryan.

Users Specified in a File

Use the -u switch to extract responses by users whose names you have placed in a file, or the -d switch to exclude responses by users whose names are in a file.

```
extract -u @filename
```

```
extract -d @filename
```

extract -u @filename books extracts responses from the Books conference by made users whose names you have placed in

the file *filename*, while `extract -d @filename books` extracts all responses from the Books conference except by those users whose userids are in the file *filename*.

By Text String...

Use the `-f`, `-a`, `-e` and `-w` switches to extract responses that contain text you specify. Use `-T` to extract a topic title containing text you specify.

`extract -f textstring` extracts any responses containing a one-word *textstring*. Specify one or more conferences after the string. The `-f` switch is not case-sensitive; `extract -f FOOBaR books` returns the same result as `extract -f foobar books`.

Case-Sensitive Result

If you need a case-sensitive result, use `-e` as well as `-f`. Place it before or after `-f` and the desired text string, for example, `extract -e -f FOOBaR` or `extract -f foobar -e`.

You must use `-w` to extract the entire response; `-f` normally extracts only the line in a response that contains the specified text.

Multiple Text Strings

Use up to 32 repetitions of `-f`; the command returns responses containing *any* of the specified text strings.

`extract -f Maturin -f Aubrey books` extracts any Books conference responses containing either "Maturin" or "Aubrey."

If you have two or more text strings used as `-f` arguments, use the `-a` and `-w` switches to extract responses containing *all* of the specified text strings.

`extract -a -w -f Maturin -f Aubrey -f Villiers books` extracts responses containing "Maturin" and "Aubrey" and "Villiers." Without `-w`, only responses with "Maturin" and "Aubrey" and "Villiers" on the same line will be extracted.

Special Cases

If your string:

- ◆ contains more than one word
- ◆ contains tabs
- ◆ contains asterisks or a question mark

You must:

enclose the phrase in single quotation marks, and use a bang (exclamation point) in front of the extract command.

!extract -f 'Jack Aubrey' books extracts any responses in the Books conference containing the string "Jack Aubrey."

If your string contains a single quote - an apostrophe, or in a possessive - enclose your string in double quotation marks, as in *!extract -f "Jack's command" books 393*.

By Date & Time...

Use the `-b` (before) and `-s` (since) switches, along with date criteria, to extract responses posted before or after a particular date or time. Combine the switches with the following date and time formats.

Note: all time specifications are in 24-hour format, for example, 18:00 for 6 p.m.

Format	Meaning	Example
1. mm/dd/yy	Date	3/18/96
2. mm/dd	Date this year	3/18
3. -d or d	Days prior to now	-3
4. hh:mm	Time today (hours, minutes)	16:25
5. hh:mm:sc	Time today (with seconds)	16:25:42
6. -hh:mm	Hours and minutes prior to now	-2:30
7. -hh:mm:ss	Hours, minutes and seconds prior to now	-2:30:42
8. Unix style	Mon April 15 17:42:36 PST 1996	

extract -s 6/12/95 classic extracts all responses in the Classical Music conference since midnight (00:00 a.m.) on June 12, 1995. If you substituted *-b* for *-s*, you would extract response made *before* midnight, June 12, 1995.

extract -s 3/12 classic extracts all responses since March 12 of the current year, provided it is past March 12. If you specify 3/12 any time before 3/13, your command won't work.

extract -s -3 classic extracts all responses in the Classical Music conference made in the last three days.

Extract's time formats work analogously to the date formats.

By Response Type...

PicoSpan, the Well's conferencing software, lets Well users hide (conceal) and scribble (erase) responses. Extract takes response type as a selection criterion.

Hidden Responses

Well users or hosts often hide long responses, and sometimes responses containing offensive material. Hidden responses are concealed, but the text has not been deleted. Extract's default is to leave hidden responses hidden, but if you use *-h* or *-H* you can use extract to read hidden responses.

extract -h classical 120 extracts all text from classical Music topic 120, including text in hidden responses.

extract -H classical 120 extracts only hidden responses from Classical Music topic 120.

Scribbled Responses

Well users and hosts sometimes use the scribble command to erase responses that are offensive or outside a conference's guidelines or subject matter, or that a user regrets having posted. You cannot read the former contents of a scribbled response, but you can use the extract command with the *-x* switch to find out when a response was scribbled, and by whom.

For example, *extract -X classical 120* extracts scribbled responses from Classical Musical topic 120.

By Topic Type...

All examples so far have dealt with *active* Well topics. Well topics can be *retired*, so that they are invisible to PicoSpan commands unless referred to by topic number; topics can be *frozen* so that Well users can no longer post to them; topics can be *forgotten* by individual users who do not wish to read them; topics can be *linked* so that they are active in more than one conference. Extract has switches for including these special topic types in the scope of your commands.

Combine `-t` with any of these commands to extract only the titles of the particular topic type.

Retired Topics

PicoSpan permits hosts and topic starters to retire topics, which do not appear when you browse topics. The *see new* command does not show you new responses in retired topics. They are still active, and it is possible to post to them. Use the `-r` and `-R` switches to extract retired topics.

extract -r classical extracts the entire classical music conference, including retired topics, while *extract -R classical* only extracts retired topics.

Frozen Topics

PicoSpan permits hosts and topic starters to freeze topics, which inactivates them. They appear when you browse topics, but it is not possible to post to them. Use `-F` to extract frozen topics.

extract -F classical extracts only frozen topics from the Classical Music conference.

Note: there is no way to include frozen topics while extracting an entire conference.

Forgotten Topics

Well users can forget any Well topics they do not wish to read. Use `extract's -g` and `-G` switches to extract forgotten topics.

extract -g classical includes forgotten topics when you extract the whole Classical Music conference, while *extract -G classical* extracts only forgotten topics.

Linked Topics

Linked topics appear in more than one conference; users can read and post to linked topics from any conference in which a topic appears. Use the `-L` switch to extract linked topics.

`extract -L classical` extracts only linked topics from the Classical Music conference.

Extracting Conference Statistics...

The `extract` command lets you see statistics about responses in public conferences and any private conferences you belong to.

`extract -i -s 01/01/96 classical` tells you how many topics in the Classical Music conference have had responses since January 1, 1996, the number of new and linked topics, the total number of responses in those topics and the number of respondents, as well as the number of bytes and lines of text posted.

`extract -i -s 01/01/96 -U classical` shows you all of the above, plus an inventory of responses by userid.

Directing Extract's Output...

You can direct `extract`'s results to a file or to a response, instead of to your screen. If you direct `extract`'s results to a file or to a response, you must preface the command with an exclamation point (!), also known as a bang.

To a File

`!extract classical 120 > filename` directs Classical Music topic 120 to a file `filename`.

If you read your mail by typing `m` or `mail` at an OK or response prompt, you use the Well's default mailer. To use the `extract` command from within the mailer:

1. Type `mail userid`, where `userid` is the addressee of your mail.
2. On a new line, after hitting enter or carriage return, type a colon (:), followed by the `extract` command.

`!:extract classical 120 > filename`

The colon is acting as a *colon escape*, so that text typed after the colon, but before the next carriage return, will be processed by PicoSpan rather than by the mailer.

3. On a new line, type:

```
:r filename
```

This puts the contents of the file *filename* into the mail you are sending.

To a Response

If you use *red*, the response editor, you can extract a response, such as the one to which you are responding, and repost it as part of your own response.

```
:>extract conference topic# response#
```

:>extract classical 120 3 places Classical Music topic 120, response 3, in your response.

Use two chevrons (>>) after the colon to put a single chevron as the first character of each extracted line that is quoted in your response.

Other Features...

New Responses

The *-n* switch is equivalent to the PicoSpan's *n* (new) switch. When you read conferences, *s n* (see new) shows all new responses (those you haven't already read). *extract -n conference(s)* extracts all new responses in any conferences you list in the command. You cannot respond to any topics when you extract in this fashion. This command is useful for saving new responses to a file, which can be read off-line, as in *!extract - @.cflist > filename*.

Note: When you use -n, all topics are marked seen unless you also use the -P switch in your command.

Extract Response
Headers Only

To see response headers only, without any response text, use the `-o` switch.

extract -o conference topic#s response#s

Compare to File
Modification Time

Use the `-s` switch to extract responses made since the modification time of a specified file. *extract -s cello classical* extracts all responses in the Classical Music conference since the file *cello* was created or modified.

Quick Reference Guide

Note: The **Arguments** column specifies arguments taken by each switch. You must specify one or more conferences with each extract command.

<u>Switch</u>	<u>Effect</u>	<u>Argument</u>
-a	Use with multiple -f switches to require all strings for a match. none When -w is used, all strings must be in the same response. Without -w, all strings must be on the same line.	
-b	Extract responses made before date specified.	date
-B	Extract responses made before the specified file's modification time.	filename
-d	Exclude responses made by the specified user(s) Can be used with @filename, where filename contains a list of up to 64 users.	userid(s)
-e	Use with -f to require a case-sensitive match.	none
-E	Exclude private conferences of which you are a member	none
-f	Extract responses with a given text string. Use up to 32 -f switches.	textstring
-F	Extract frozen topics only.	none
-g	Use with -p or -P to include forgotten topics, which will otherwise be excluded.	none
-G	Extract from forgotten topics only.	none
-h	Include the text of hidden responses when extracting one or more topics.	none
-H	Extract hidden responses only.	none
-i	Use to produce a statistical inventory of topic numbers, lines, words, bytes and user of responses specified elsewhere in your command.	none
-L	Extract linked topics only.	none
-m	Invokes the <i>more</i> pager.	none
-n	Extracts new responses only.	none
-o	Extracts response headers only, without body of response.	none

<u>Switch</u>	<u>Effect</u>	<u>Argument</u>
-p	Use with -n; updates participation file as if topics have been read.	none
-P	Use with -n; does not update participation file.	none
-r	Include retired topics if a whole conference is extracted	done
-R	Extract retired topics only.	none
-s	Extract response since a specified date.	date
-S	Extract responses since a specified file's modification date.	filename
-t	Extract topic titles only.	none
-T	Extract topic titles containing a specified textstring.	textstring
-u	Extract responses by a particular user or users.	userid(s)
-U	Extract a list of the users posting responses specified elsewhere in the extract command.	userid(s)
-w	Used with -f; extracts the entire response when a text match is found. When -a is also used, looks for text matches in an entire response, rather than a particular line of a response.	none
-X	Extract scribbled response only.	none

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