NAME

Mail - send and receive mail

SYNOPSIS

Mail [**-f** [name]] [people ...]

INTRODUCTION

Mail is a intelligent mail processing system, which has a command syntax reminiscent of ed with lines replaced by messages.

Sending mail. To send a message to one or more other people, Mail can be invoked with arguments which are the names of people to send to. You are then expected to type in your message, followed by an EOT (control-D) at the beginning of a line. The section below, labeled Replying to or originating mail, describes some features of Mail available to help you compose your letter.

Reading mail. In normal usage, Mail is given no arguments and checks your mail out of the post office, then printing out a one line header of each message there. The current message is initially the first message (numbered 1) and can be printed using the **print** command (which can be abbreviated **p**). You can move among the messages much as you move between lines in ed, with the commands `+' and `-' moving backwards and forwards, and simple numbers typing the addressed message.

Disposing of mail. After examining a message you can **delete** (**d**) the message or **reply** (**r**) to it. Deletion causes the Mail program to forget about the message. This is not irreversible, the message can be **undeleted** (**u**) by giving its number, or the Mail session can be aborted by giving the **exit** (**x**) command. Deleted messages will, however, usually disappear never to be seen again.

Specifying messages. Commands such as **print** and **delete** often can be given a list of message numbers as argument to apply to a number of messages at once. Thus ``delete 1 2'' deletes messages 1 and 2, while ``delete 1-5'' deletes messages 1 through 5. The special name ``*'' addresses all messages, and ``$'' addresses the last message; thus the command **top** which prints the first few lines of a message could be used in ``top *'' to print the first few lines of all messages.

Replying to or originating mail. You can use the **reply** command to set up a response to a message, sending it back to the person who it was from. Text you then type in, up to an end-of-file (or a line consisting only of a ``.'') defines the contents of the message. While you are composing a message, Mail treats lines beginning with the character `~' specially. For instance, typing ``~m'' (alone on a line) will place a copy of the current message into the response right shifting it by a tabstop. Other escapes will set up subject fields, add and delete recipients to the message and allow you to escape to an editor to revise the message

or to a shell to run some commands. (These options will be given in the summary below.)

Ending a mail processing session. You can end a Mail session with the **quit** (**q**) command. Messages which have been examined go to your mbox file unless they have been deleted in which case they are discarded. Unexamined messages go back to the post office. The **-f** option causes Mail to read in the contents of your mbox (or the specified file) for processing; when you **quit** Mail writes undeleted messages back to this file.

Personal and systemwide distribution lists. It is also possible to create a personal distribution lists so that, for instance, you can send mail to ``cohorts'' and have it go to a group of people. Such lists can be defined by placing a line like

alias cohorts bill ozalp sklower jkf mark cory:kridle

in the file .mailrc in your home directory. The current list of such aliases can be displayed by the **alias** (**a**) command in Mail. On systems running delivermail(8), system wide distribution lists can be created by editing /usr/lib/aliases, see aliases(5) and delivermail(8); these are kept in a slightly different syntax. In mail you send, personal aliases will be expanded in mail sent to others so that they will be able to **reply** to the recipients. System wide aliases are not expanded when the mail is sent, but any reply returned to the machine will have the system wide alias expanded as all mail goes through delivermail. If you edit /usr/lib/aliases, you must run the program newaliases(1).

Network mail (ARPA, UUCP, Berknet) Mail to sites on the ARPA network and sites within Bell laboratories can be sent using ``name@site'' for ARPA-net sites or ``machine!user'' for Bell labs sites, provided appropriate gateways are known to the system. (Be sure to escape the ! in Bell sites when giving it on a csh command line by preceding it with an \. Machines on an instance of the Berkeley network are addressed as ``machine:user'', e.g. ``csvax:bill''. When addressed from the arpa-net, ``csvax:bill'' is known as ``csvax.bill@berkeley''.

Mail has a number of options which can be **set** in the .mailrc file to alter its behavior; thus ``set askcc'' enables the ``askcc'' feature. (These options are summarized below.)

SUMMARY

(Adapted from the `Mail Reference Manual') Each command is typed on a line by itself, and may take arguments following the command word. The command need not be typed in its entirety - the first command which matches the typed prefix is used. For the commands which take message lists as arguments, if no message list is given, then the next message forward which satisfies the command's requirements is used. If there are no messages forward

of the current message, the search proceeds backwards, and if there are no good messages at all, Mail types ``No applicable messages'' and aborts the command.

- Goes to the previous message and prints it out. If given a numeric argument n , goes to the n th previous message and prints it.

? Prints a brief summary of commands.

! Executes the UNIX shell command which follows.

alias (a) With no arguments, prints out all currently-defined aliases. With one argument, prints out that alias. With more than one argument, adds the users named in the second and later arguments to the alias named in the first argument.

chdir (c) Changes the user's working directory to that specified, if given. If no directory is given, then changes to the user's login directory.

delete (d) Takes a list of messages as argument and marks them all as deleted. Deleted messages will not be saved in mbox , nor will they be available for most other commands.

dp (also dt) Deletes the current message and prints the next message. If there is no next message, Mail says ``at EOF.''

edit (e) Takes a list of messages and points the text editor at each one in turn. On return from the editor, the message is read back in.

exit (ex or x) Effects an immediate return to the Shell without modifying the user's system mailbox, his mbox file, or his edit file in -f .

from (f) Takes a list of messages and prints their message headers.

headers (h) Lists the current range of headers, which is an 18 message group. If a ``+'' argument is given, then the next 18 message group is printed, and if a ``-'' argument is given, the previous 18 message group is printed.

help A synonym for ?

hold (ho, also preserve) Takes a message list and marks each message therein to be saved in the user's system

mailbox instead of in mbox. Does not override the **delete** command.

mail (m) Takes as argument login names and distribution group names and sends mail to those people.

next (n like + or CR) Goes to the next message in sequence and types it. With an argument list, types the next matching message.

preserve A synonym for **hold**.

print (p) Takes a message list and types out each message on the user's terminal.

quit (q) Terminates the session, saving all undeleted, unsaved messages in the user's mbox file in his login directory, preserving all messages marked with **hold** or **preserve** or never referenced in his system mailbox, and removing all other messages from his system mailbox. If new mail has arrived during the session, the message ``You have new mail'' is given. If given while editing a mailbox file with the **-f** flag, then the edit file is rewritten. A return to the Shell is effected, unless the rewrite of edit file fails, in which case the user can escape with the **exit** command.

reply (r) Takes a message list and sends mail to each message author and recipient just like the **mail** command. The default message must not be deleted.

Reply (R) Just like **reply** except it only replies to the sender, not to any of the people who also received the message.

respond A synonym for **reply** .

save (s) Takes a message list and a filename and appends each message in turn to the end of the file. The filename in quotes, followed by the line count and character count is echoed on the user's terminal.

set (se) With no arguments, prints all variable values. Otherwise, sets option. Arguments are of the form ``option=value'' or ``option.''

shell (sh) Invokes an interactive version of the shell.

size Takes a message list and prints out the size in characters of each message.

top Takes a message list and prints the top few lines of

each.
The number of lines printed is controlled by the variable **toplines** and defaults to five.

type (t) A synonym for **print** .

unalias Takes a list of names defined by **alias** commands and discards the remembered groups of users. The group names no longer have any significance.

undelete (u) Takes a message list and marks each one as not being deleted.

unset Takes a list of option names and discards their remembered values; the inverse of **set** .

visual (v) Takes a message list and invokes the display editor on each message.

write (w) A synonym for **save** .

xit (x) A synonym for **exit** .

Here is a summary of the tilde escapes, which are used when composing messages to perform special functions. Tilde escapes are only recognized at the beginning of lines. The name ``tilde escape'' is somewhat of a misnomer since the actual escape character can be set by the option **escape**.

~!command Execute the indicated shell command, then return to the message.

~b name ... Add the given names to the list of blind carbon copy recipients.

~c name ... Add the given names to the list of carbon copy recipients.

~d Read the file ``dead.letter'' from your home directory into the message.

~e Invoke the text editor on the message collected so far. After the editing session is finished, you may continue appending text to the message.

~f messages Just like **~m** except that the messages are not shifted to the right. This is well suited to forwarding mail to someone else.

~h Edit the message header fields by typing each one in turn and allowing the user to append text to the end or modify the field by using the current terminal

erase and kill characters.

~m messages Read the named messages into the message being sent, shifted right one tab. If no messages are specified, read the current message.

~p Print out the message collected so far, prefaced by the message header fields.

~q Abort the message being sent, copying the message to ``dead.letter'' in your home directory if **save** is set.

~r filename Read the named file into the message.

~s string Cause the named string to become the current subject field.

~t name ... Add the given names to the direct recipient list.

~v Invoke an alternate editor (defined by the VISUAL option) on the message collected so far. Usually, the alternate editor will be a screen editor. After you quit the editor, you may resume appending text to the end of your message.

~w filename Write the message onto the named file.

~!command Pipe the message through the command as a filter. If the command gives no output or terminates abnormally, retain the original text of the message. The command fmt(1) is often used as command to rejustify the message.

~~string Insert the string of text in the message prefaced by a single ~. If you have changed the escape character, then you should double that character in order to send it.

Options are controlled via the **set** and **unset** commands. Options may be either binary, in which case it is only significant to see whether they are set or not, or string, in which case the actual value is of interest. The binary options include the following:

append Causes messages saved in mbox to be appended to the end rather than prepended. (This is set in /usr/lib/Mail.rc on version 7 systems.)

ask Causes Mail to prompt you for the subject of each message you send. If you respond with simply a newline, no subject field will be sent.

askcc Causes you to be prompted for additional carbon copy recipients at the end of each message. Responding with a newline indicates your satisfaction with the current list.

autoprint Causes the **delete** command to behave like **dp** – thus, after deleting a message, the next one will be typed automatically.

ignore Causes interrupt signals from your terminal to be ignored and echoed as @'s.

metoo Usually, when a group is expanded that contains the sender, the sender is removed from the expansion. Setting this option causes the sender to be included in the group.

quiet Suppresses the printing of the version when first invoked.

save Causes the message collected prior to a interrupt to be saved on the file ``dead.letter'' in your home directory on receipt of two interrupts (or after a **^q**.)

The following options have string values:

EDITOR Pathname of the text editor to use in the **edit** command and ~e escape. If not defined, then a default editor is used.

SHELL Pathname of the shell to use in the ! command and the ~! escape. A default shell is used if this option is not defined.

VISUAL Pathname of the text editor to use in the **visual** command and ~v escape.

escape If defined, the first character of this option gives the character to use in the place of ~ to denote escapes.

record If defined, gives the pathname of the file used to record all outgoing mail. If not defined, then outgoing mail is not so saved.

toplines If defined, gives the number of lines of a message to be printed out with the **top** command; normally, the first five lines are printed.

FILES

/usr/spool/mail/* post office

~/mbox	your old mail
~/.mailrc	file giving initial mail commands
/tmp/R#	temporary for editor escape
/usr/lib/Mail.help*	help files
/usr/lib/Mail.rc	system initialization file
/bin/mail	to do actual mailing
/etc/delivermail	postman

SEE ALSO

binmail(1), fmt(1), newaliases(1), aliases(5), delivermail(8)
'The Mail Reference Manual'

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BUGS