

NAME

mail, rmail — send mail to users or read mail

SYNOPSIS

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mail [ -rpq ] [ -f file ]
mail [ -g group ] persons
rmail persons
```

DESCRIPTION

Mail without arguments prints a user's mail, message-by-message, in last-in, first-out order. For each message, the user is prompted with a `?`, and a line is read from the standard input to determine the disposition of the message:

<code><new-line></code>	Go on to next message.
<code>+</code>	Same as <code><new-line></code> .
<code>d</code>	Delete message and go on to next message.
<code>p</code>	Print message again.
<code>-</code>	Go back to previous message.
<code>s [files]</code>	Save message in the named <i>files</i> (<code>\$HOME/mbox</code> is default).
<code>a</code>	Answer a message and delete the current letter.
<code>as [files]</code>	Answer a message, delete the current letter, and save the letter and answer in <i>files</i> (<code>\$HOME/mbox</code> default).
<code>w [files]</code>	Save message, without a header, in the named <i>files</i> (<code>\$HOME/mbox</code> is default).
<code>m [-g groups] [persons]</code>	Mail the message to the named <i>persons</i> (yourself is default). A "Forwarded by ..." message is inserted after the header.
<code>q</code>	Put undeleted mail back in the <i>mailfile</i> and stop.
EOT (control-d)	Same as <code>q</code> .
<code>x</code>	Put all mail back in the <i>mailfile</i> unchanged and stop.
<code>!command</code>	Escape to the shell to do <i>command</i> .
<code>*</code>	Print a command summary.

The optional arguments alter the printing of the mail.

- `-r` causes messages to be printed in first-in, first-out order.
- `-p` causes all mail to be printed without prompting for disposition.
- `-q` causes *mail* to terminate after interrupts. Normally an interrupt only causes the termination of the message being printed.
- `-f file` causes *mail* to use *file* (e.g., `mbox`) instead of the default *mailfile*.
- `-g group` causes mail to be sent to members of *group* that are designated in the file `/etc/group`.

When *persons* or *groups* are named, *mail* takes the standard input up to an end-of-file (or up to a line consisting of just a `.`) and adds it to each *person's* or member's of the named *group mailfile*. The message is preceded by the sender's name and a postmark. Lines that look like postmarks in the message, (i.e., "From ...") are prepended with `>`. A *person* is usually a user name recognized by `login(1)`. If a *person* being sent mail is not recognized, or if *mail* is interrupted during input, the *dead.letter* will be saved to allow editing and resending.

To denote a recipient on a remote system, prefix *person* by the system name and exclamation mark (see *uucp(1C)*). Everything after the first exclamation mark in *persons* is interpreted by the remote system. In particular, if *persons* contains additional exclamation marks, it can denote a sequence of machines through which the message is to be sent on the way to its ultimate destination. For example, specifying *a!b!cde* as a recipient's name causes the message to be sent to user *b!cde* on system *a*. System *a* will interpret that destination as a request to send the message to user *cde* on system *b*. This might be useful, for instance, if the sending system can access system *a* but not system *b*, and system *a* has access to system *b*.

The *mailfile* may be manipulated in two ways to alter the function of *mail*. The *other* permissions of the file may be read-write, read-only, or neither read nor write to allow different levels of privacy. If changed to other than the default, the file will be preserved even when empty to perpetuate the desired permissions. The file may also contain the first line:

Forward to *person*

which will cause all mail sent to the owner of the *mailfile* to be forwarded to *person*. This is especially useful to forward all of a person's mail to one machine in a multiple machine environment.

Rmail only permits the sending of mail. *Uucp(1C)* uses *rmail* as a security precaution.

When a user logs in he is informed of the presence of mail, if any.

FILES

<i>/etc/passwd</i>	to identify sender and locate persons
<i>/etc/group</i>	to identify members of groups
<i>/usr/mail/*</i>	incoming mail for user *
<i>\$HOME/mbox</i>	saved mail
<i>\$MAIL</i>	<i>mailfile</i>
<i>/tmp/ma*</i>	temp file
<i>/usr/mail/*.lock</i>	lock for mail directory
<i>dead.letter</i>	unmailable text

SEE ALSO

login(1), *uucp(1C)*, *write(1)*.

BUGS

Race conditions sometimes result in a failure to remove a lock file.

After an interrupt, the next message may not be printed, printing may be forced by responding **p**.

Mail does not handle mail items greater than 65535 characters long. The *mailfile* has a tendency to go berserk.