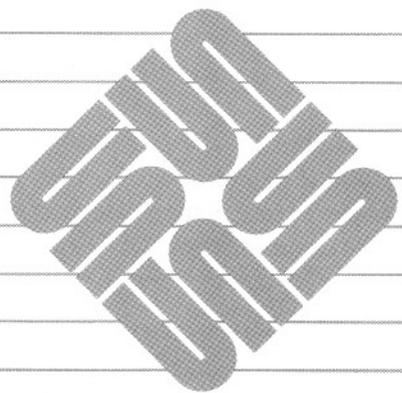




Mail *and* Messages: Beginner's Guide



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Reading Mail

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Reading Mail

mail is an interactive program that permits you to:

- Look at a numbered list of mail messages
- Read mail messages
- Save mail messages selectively to files
- Sort mail messages into folders
- Delete mail messages

This chapter describes all these operations and explains how to read mail messages you have saved in files and folders.⁷

3.1. Starting mail

To start mail so that you can read your mail messages, type `mail`, without any arguments, to the command prompt.

Figure 3-1 Starting mail To Read Messages

```
venus% mail
Mail version SMI 3.0 Mon Feb 17 00:20:58 PDT 1986 Type ? for help.
"/usr/spool/mail/medici": 2 messages 2 new
>N 1 medici Thu Oct 31 23:59 12/323 Mail To Myself
N 2 MAILER_DAEMON Fri Nov 1 00:02 26/725 Returned Mail: User un
&
```

mail displays the program name, program version number, and version date, then informs you that you can type a question mark (?) to get help information.

On the second line, mail specifies which file it picks up your mail from, in other words your *mailbox*, tells you how many messages you have, and whether they are *new* or *unread*. In the example above, the mailbox directory is `/usr/spool/mail/medici`, with two new messages.

⁷ When you are using SunView, the window system and text facility, you may prefer the `mailtool` window and mouse interface to the mail facility.

Starting on the third line, `mail` displays a numbered list of the messages in your mailbox. Each of these lines specifies:

Note: All messages that are neither new (N) nor unread (U) are old messages that you have read (no status indicator). `mail` marks messages you've saved to a file or folder with an asterisk character (*).

<i>message status</i>	New (N), unread (U), or old (no message status listed)
<i>message number</i>	Number you can use to specify that message
<i>originator</i>	Name of user (sometimes machine) message came from
<i>time sent</i>	Date and time originator sent the message
<i>size</i>	Number of lines, number of characters, in message

The line beginning with a greater-than symbol (>) is the *current message*.

Note: The *current message* is the message that you last read, or the first message you read by default when obtaining new mail. Within the numbered list of messages, a greater-than symbol (>) prefaces the current message listing.

In the example, the N means the message is new; 1 is the message number; `medici` is the originator; `Thu Oct 31 23:59` is the date and time `medici` sent the message, and `12/323` means there are 12 lines and 323 characters in the message.

Finally, `mail` displays an ampersand prompt (&) to let you know you can type `mail` commands.

If you start `mail` when you don't have any messages waiting for you in your mailbox, you will see something like this:

Figure 3-2 Starting `mail` with an Empty Mailbox

```
venus% mail
No mail for medici
venus%
```

Each time you log in, your machine informs you if you have mail in your system mailbox by displaying

You have mail.

on a line by itself just after your regular login messages.

3.2. How To Read Mail Messages

Once you have entered `mail` and examined the numbered list of mail messages, you can read a given message by typing its *message number* to the `mail` prompt.

For the initial example above, there are two messages, with message numbers one and two. Type `1` to the `mail` prompt, and `mail` displays the first message.

Starting on the third line, `mail` displays a numbered list of the messages in your mailbox. Each of these lines specifies:

Note: All messages that are neither new (N) nor unread (U) are old messages that you have read (no status indicator). `mail` marks messages you've saved to a file or folder with an asterisk character (*).

<i>message status</i>	New (N), unread (U), or old (no message status listed)
<i>message number</i>	Number you can use to specify that message
<i>originator</i>	Name of user (sometimes machine) message came from
<i>time sent</i>	Date and time originator sent the message
<i>size</i>	Number of lines, number of characters, in message

The line beginning with a greater-than symbol (>) is the *current message*.

Note: The *current message* is the message that you last read, or the first message you read by default when obtaining new mail. Within the numbered list of messages, a greater-than symbol (>) prefaces the current message listing.

In the example, the N means the message is new; 1 is the message number; `medici` is the originator; `Thu Oct 31 23:59` is the date and time `medici` sent the message, and `12/323` means there are 12 lines and 323 characters in the message.

Finally, `mail` displays an ampersand prompt (&) to let you know you can type `mail` commands.

If you start `mail` when you don't have any messages waiting for you in your mailbox, you will see something like this:

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```
venus% mail
No mail for medici
venus%
```

Each time you log in, your machine informs you if you have mail in your system mailbox by displaying

You have mail.

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3.2. How To Read Mail Messages

Once you have entered `mail` and examined the numbered list of mail messages, you can read a given message by typing its *message number* to the `mail` prompt.

For the initial example above, there are two messages, with message numbers one and two. Type `1` to the `mail` prompt, and `mail` displays the first message.

Figure 3-3 *Reading a Mail Message*

```

venus% mail
Mail version SMI 3.0 Mon Feb 17 00:20:58 PDT 1986 Type ? for help.
"/usr/spool/mail/medici": 2 messages 2 new
>N 1 medici Thu Oct 31 23:59 12/323 Mail To Myself
N 2 MAILER_DAEMON Fri Nov 1 00:02 26/725 Returned Mail: User un
& 1
Message 1:
From medici Thu Oct 31 23:58:59 1985
Return-Path: <medici>
Received: by venus.sun.uucp (3.0/SMI-3.0)
        id AA12623; Thu, 31 Oct 85 23:59:59 PDT
Date: Thu, 31 Oct 85 23:59:59 PDT
From: medici (Cosimo de' Medici)
Message-Id: <8510232235.AA12623@venus.sun.uucp>
To: medici
Status: R

Introspection is a narcissistic pursuit.

&

```

3.3. Looking at the Numbered Mail Message List

Now that you have read the first message in your mailbox, when you next look at the numbered mail message list, the `N` status of that message no longer appears.

To look at the numbered mail message list, type `headers`, or just `h`, to the mail prompt.

Figure 3-4 *Looking at the Numbered Mail Message List*

```

...
& h
> 1 medici Thu Oct 31 23:59 12/323 Mail To Myself
N 2 MAILER_DAEMON Fri Nov 1 00:02 26/725 Returned Mail: User un
&

```

The `N`, for new message, no longer appears just after the greater-than sign; you changed the status of the message when you read it.

3.4. Reading the Current Mail Message

Instead of specifying the message number, you could type `print` to the mail prompt to read the *current message* in your mailbox. `p` works as an abbreviation for `print`.

Figure 3-5 *Reading the Current Mail Message*

```

...

& p
Message 1:
From medici Thu Oct 31 23:58:59 1985
Return-Path: <medici>
Received: by venus.sun.uucp (3.0/SMI-3.0)
        id AA12623; Thu, 31 Oct 85 23:59:59 PDT
Date: Thu, 31 Oct 85 23:59:59 PDT
From: medici (Cosimo de' Medici)
Message-Id: <8510232235.AA12623@venus.sun.uucp>
To: medici
Status: R

Introspection is a narcissistic pursuit.

&

```

As another alternative, when you want to read the next mail message in the list, simply type `RETURN`.

3.5. Mail Message Format

What is all that stuff in the mail message?

A mail message has two parts: the *header* and the *body*. When you send a mail message the quick way you learned in Chapter 2, you don't see the header, except for the `Subject:` field. When you compose a message in Chapter 4, you'll see more of the header. But mostly, you see the header when reading your mail.

The header comprises a number of *fields*. Fields describe attributes of the mail message, such as:

<code>Return-Path:</code>	Address used to return mail that is undeliverable
<code>Received:</code>	Machine, message identification information, and arrival time for each machine along the message's <i>network path</i> .
<code>Date:</code>	Time sent, including date
<code>From:</code>	Username (sometimes machine name) of message originator
<code>Message-Id:</code>	Message identification information
<code>To:</code>	Username (sometimes machine name) of message recipient
<code>Subject:</code>	Subject of message

You can set up `mail` so that you don't see certain mail message header fields. See the Man Page, online or in the *Commands Reference Manual*, for more information.

The text of your message that appears *below* the message header is called the message *body*.

3.6. Saving Mail Messages in Files

To save a mail message into a file, type `save`, or the abbreviation `s`, followed by the *message number* and the *filename* of the file you want to contain the message. `mail` responds by displaying the filename, followed by the status of the file, and the size of the file.

For example, to save the first mail message in the example user's mailbox into the file `first.mail`:

Figure 3-6 Saving a Mail Message into a File

Note: When you save a message to a file, but you don't specify which message number, `mail` assumes that you want to save the current message into the filename you specify.

```
...
& h
> 1 medici Thu Oct 31 23:59 12/323 Mail To Myself
N 2 MAILER_DAEMON Fri Nov 1 00:02 26/725 Returned Mail: User un
& s 1 first.mail
"first.mail" [New file] 12/333
&
```

Now, the file `first.mail` contains the header and body of mail message number one.

3.7. Saving Mail Messages in Folders

A *folder* is a special kind of file that you can use to store and organize your mail messages. Saving a mail message in a folder is like saving a mail message in a file. You can often distinguish a folder from a file because folders generally begin with a plus sign (+).

Before using folders, you must choose a directory with name *directory-name*, for example `storage`, into which `mail` will locate all folders with names that have an initial plus sign. Indicate that folder name to the mail facility by putting

```
set folder=directory-name
```

Note: The initial plus sign on a folder name is an abbreviation for the directory you specify with the folder variable in your `.mailrc` file.

on a line by itself in your `.mailrc` file.

To save a mail message in a folder, type

```
save message-number +foldername
```

to the `mail` prompt.

To save example message number one into a folder called `testmail`:

Figure 3-7 *Saving a Mail Message into a Folder*

Note: The asterisk (*) in the numbered message list indicates that you have saved that message into a file or folder. The asterisk replaces any new (N) or unread (U) message status indicator when you save a message.

```

...

& h
>* 1 medici Thu Oct 31 23:59 12/323 Mail To Myself
N 2 MAILER_DAEMON Fri Nov 1 00:02 26/725 Returned Mail: User un
& save 1 +testmail
"+testmail" [New file] 12/333
&

```

3.8. Quitting mail

To quit mail, type `quit`, or the abbreviation `q`, to the mail prompt.

The `quit` command moves any messages you haven't saved in a file or folder from your mailbox into a file called `mbox` in your home directory. For example, when you have two messages which you read, but didn't save in a file or folder, mail displays the notification:

```

Saved 2 messages in mbox

```

When you quit mail without reading a mail message that appeared in the numbered mail message list, mail will hold the unread message in your mailbox. Then, when you start mail again, the unread mail message will reappear in the numbered mail message list with a message status *unread* (U).

Figure 3-8 *Quitting mail*

```

...

& q
Held 1 message in /usr/spool/mail/medici
venus%

```

3.9. Reading Messages in a File

You can use an editor to look at mail messages that you've saved in a file, or you can read the messages with the `mail` program. To use `mail`, type `mail` followed by the option `-f filename`. For instance, to read the example message saved in the file `first.mail`:

Figure 3-9 *Reading a Mail Message Saved in a File*

```

venus% mail -f first.mail
Mail version SMI 3.0 Mon Feb 17 00:20:58 PDT 1986 Type ? for help.
"first.mail": 1 message 1 new
> 1 medici Thu Oct 31 23:59 12/323 Mail To Myself
& p
Message 1:
From: medici Thu Oct 31 23:58:59 1985
Return-Path: <medici>
Received: by venus.sun.uucp (3.0/SMI-3.0)
        id AA12623; Thu, 31 Oct 85 23:59:59 PDT
Date: Thu, 31 Oct 85 23:59:59 PDT
From: medici (Cosimo de' Medici)
Message-Id: <8510232235.AA12623@venus.sun.uucp>
To: medici
Status: R

Introspection is a narcissistic pursuit.

& q
"first.mail" complete
venus%

```

When you save a message in a file, `mail` won't move it automatically into the `mbox` file. However, `mail` notifies you that the mail message is still in the file by displaying `"filename" complete`, or in the case of this example `"first.mail" complete`.

3.10. Reading Messages in a Folder

Reading a message saved in a folder is similar to reading a message saved in a file — type `mail` followed by the option `-f +foldername`. For instance, to read the example message saved in the folder `+testmail`:

Figure 3-10 *Reading a Mail Message Saved in a Folder*

```
venus% mail -f +testmail
Mail version SMI 3.0 Mon Feb 17 00:20:58 PDT 1986  Type ? for help.
"+testmail": 1 message 1 new
> 1 medici Thu Oct 31 23:59 12/323 Mail To Myself
& p
Message 1:
From medici Thu Oct 31 23:58:59 1985
Return-Path: <medici>
Received: by venus.sun.uucp (3.0/SMI-3.0)
        id AA12623; Thu, 31 Oct 85 23:59:59 PDT
Date: Thu, 31 Oct 85 23:59:59 PDT
From: medici (Cosimo de' Medici)
Message-Id: <8510232235.AA12623@venus.sun.uucp>
To: medici
Status: R

Introspection is a narcissistic pursuit.

& q
"+testmail" complete
venus%
```

When you save a message in a folder, `mail` won't move it automatically into the `mbox` file. However, `mail` notifies you that the mail message is still in the folder by displaying "`foldername`" complete, or in the case of this example `"testmail"` complete.

3.11. Deleting Mail Messages

To delete a mail message, type `d`, for delete, followed by a space character, and the *message number* of the message.

Figure 3-11 *Deleting a Mail Message*

```
venus% mail
Mail version SMI 3.0 Mon Feb 17 00:20:58 PDT 1986  Type ? for help.
"/usr/spool/mail/medici": 2 messages 2 new
>* 1 medici Thu Oct 31 23:59 12/323 Mail To Myself
  N 2 MAILER_DAEMON Fri Nov 1 00:02 26/725 Returned Mail: User un
& d 2
& h
>* 1 medici Thu Oct 31 23:59 12/323 Mail To Myself
& q
venus%
```

3.12. Summary

In this chapter, you learned how to read mail messages, save them into files and folders, read the messages you saved in files and folders, and delete mail messages.

B

Command Summary

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Command Summary

This is a summary of all commands mentioned in this manual. Each command appears in alphabetical order by name, and includes a syntax diagram, and a brief paragraph describing its function.

The commands appear in one of four sections: `mail` commands, `mailtool` commands, message commands, other useful commands. Portions of commands that appear in **bold** are abbreviations for the command.

B.1. mail Commands

<code>mail</code>	<code>mail [username]</code> <code>mail -f filename / foldername</code> Start the <code>mail</code> program to read mail from the system mailbox or the specified file or folder name or, with <code>username</code> , send mail to that user (end message text with CTRL-D).
<code>headers</code>	<code>headers</code> Display numbered mail message list.
<code>message-number</code>	<code>message-number</code> Display mail message with that number.
<code>print</code>	<code>print [message-number]</code> Display current mail message, or message with specified number.
<code>quit</code>	<code>quit</code> Exit mail program.
<code>reply</code>	<code>reply [message-number]</code> Reply to current mail message, or specified mail message.
<code>save</code>	<code>save [message-number] filename / foldername</code> Save current mail message, or message with specified number, into specified filename or foldername.
<code>?</code>	<code>?</code> For help information.

To the Ampersand `mail`
Prompt

While Composing a Message

<code>~m</code>	<code>~m [message-number]</code> Insert a copy of the current mail message, or the specified message.
<code>~r</code>	<code>~r filename / foldername</code> Insert a copy of the specified file or folder.
<code>~v</code>	<code>~v</code> Enter vi text editor within mail.
<code>~?</code>	<code>~?</code> For help information.

B.2. mailtool Commands

mailtool Options

The `mailtool` command uses the standard options of window and mouse programs and:

<code>-i #</code>	check for new mail every # seconds (default 5 minutes)
<code>-x</code>	expert mode, don't ask for confirmation of commands

mailtool Buttons

mailtool command panel buttons are:

<code>abort</code>	Quit the tool without modifying your system mailbox
<code>cd</code>	Change to the directory specified in the <code>Directory:</code> text item
<code>cancel</code>	Abort the message you're composing in the composition subwindow
<code>commit</code>	Commit changes to your system mailbox
<code>compose</code>	Open the composition subwindow to compose, or forward, a message
<code>copy</code>	Copy the selected message to the file or folder specified in the <code>File:</code> text item
<code>deliver</code>	Send the message you're composing in the composition subwindow
<code>delete</code>	Delete the selected message
<code>done</code>	Commit changes and close the tool
<code>folder</code>	Commit changes and switch to the file or folder specified in the <code>File:</code> text item

new mail

Commit changes and reread the system mailbox to see new mail

next

Show the next message in the message subwindow

preserve

Hold the selected message in the system mailbox after the next commit

print

Print the selected message on a hardcopy printer

quit

Commit changes and quit the tool

reply

Open the composition subwindow to reply to the selected message

save

Save the selected message in the file or folder specified in the `File: text` item

show

Show the selected message in the message subwindow

undelete

Undelete the most recently deleted message(s) — can repeat use

.mailrc

Source your `~/ .mailrc` file to acquire the current option settings

In general, **SHIFT** reverses the direction of a button command; **CTRL** strengthens the effect of the button command.

B.3. Message Commands

`talk` `talk username [@machine name]`
 Start interactive message session with specified user on local network; if no yellow pages, specify machine name of user too.

`wall` `wall`
 Send broadcast message to everyone on machine. Type message text starting on next line; end with **CTRL-D** on a line by itself.

`write` `write username`
 Send message to specified user. Type message text starting on next line; end with **CTRL-D** on a line by itself.

B.4. Other Useful Commands

`from` `from`
 Display addresses of senders of mail messages waiting in your mailbox.

`prmail` `prmail`
 Display mail messages waiting in your mailbox.

rsh	<i>rsh machine-name command</i> Perform specified command on specified machine, for use in finding out information about who's logged in on other machines in your local network.
users	users Display usernames of terminals running on your machine.
w	w Display system information, including the current time, how long since last <i>reboot</i> of your machine, number of terminals running on the machine, and system load information. Then, display the username, the terminal name, the time of terminal login, other system information, and what program that process is running for each terminal running on your machine.
who	who Display usernames, terminal names, and creation dates and times of terminals running on your machine.