NAME aliases, addresses, forward − addresses and aliases for sendmail

SYNOPSIS
/etc/mail/aliases
/etc/mail/aliases.dir
/etc/mail/aliases.pag
~/.forward

DESCRIPTION These files contain mail addresses or aliases, recognized by **sendmail**(1M) for the local host:

/etc/passwd Mail addresses (usernames) of local users.

/etc/aliases Aliases for the local host, in ASCII format. This file can be edited to add, update, or delete local mail aliases.

/etc/aliases. { dir , pag}
The aliasing information from **/etc/aliases**, in binary, **dbm** format for use by **sendmail**(1M). The program **newaliases**(1), which is invoked automatically by **sendmail**(1M), maintains these files.

~/.forward Addresses to which a user's mail is forwarded (see **Automatic Forwarding**, below).

In addition, the NIS name services aliases map *mail.aliases*, and the NIS+ *mail_aliases* table, both contain addresses and aliases available for use across the network.

Addresses As distributed, **sendmail**(1M) supports the following types of addresses:

Local Usernames
username

Each local *username* is listed in the local host's **/etc/passwd** file.

Local Filenames
pathname

Messages addressed to the absolute *pathname* of a file are appended to that file.

Commands
| *command*

If the first character of the address is a vertical bar, (**|**), **sendmail**(1M) pipes the message to the standard input of the *command* the bar precedes.

DARPA-standard Addresses
username@domain

If *domain* does not contain any '**.**' (dots), then it is interpreted as the name of a host in the current domain. Otherwise, the message is passed to a *mailhost* that determines how to get to the specified domain. Domains are divided into subdomains separated by dots, with the top-level domain on the right. Top-level domains include:

.COM	Commercial organizations.
.EDU	Educational organizations.
.GOV	Government organizations.
.MIL	Military organizations.

For example, the full address of John Smith could be:

js@jsmachine.Podunk-U.EDU

if he uses the machine named **jsmachine** at Podunk University.

uucp Addresses

. . . [*host***!**]*host***!***username*

These are sometimes mistakenly referred to as ''Usenet'' addresses. **uucp**(1C) provides links to numerous sites throughout the world for the remote copying of files.

Other site-specific forms of addressing can be added by customizing the **sendmail.cf** configuration file. See **sendmail**(1M) for details. Standard addresses are recommended.

Aliases

Local Aliases

/etc/aliases is formatted as a series of lines of the form

*aliasname***:***address*[**,** *address*]

aliasname is the name of the alias or alias group, and *address* is the address of a recipient in the group. Aliases can be nested. That is, an *address* can be the name of another alias group. Because of the way **sendmail**(1M) performs mapping from upper-case to lower-case, an *address* that is the name of another alias group must not contain any upper-case letters.

Lines beginning with white space are treated as continuation lines for the preceding alias. Lines beginning with **#** are comments.

Special Aliases

An alias of the form:

owner-aliasname : *address*

directs error-messages resulting from mail to *aliasname* to *address*, instead of back to the person who sent the message.

An alias of the form:

*aliasname***: :include:***pathname*

with colons as shown, adds the recipients listed in the file *pathname* to the *aliasname* alias. This allows a private list to be maintained separately from the aliases file.

NIS/NIS+ Domain Aliases

The aliases file on the master NIS server is used for the *mail.aliases* NIS map, which can be made available to every NIS client. The *mail_aliases* table serves the same purpose on a NIS+ server. Thus, the **/etc/mail/aliases*** files on the various hosts in a network will one day be obsolete. Domain-wide aliases should ultimately be resolved into usernames on specific hosts. For example, if the following were in the domain-wide alias file:

jsmith:js@jsmachine

then any NIS/NIS+ client could just mail to **jsmith** and not have to remember the machine and username for John Smith. If a NIS/NIS+ alias does not resolve to an address with a specific host, then the name of the NIS/NIS+ domain is used. There should be an alias of the domain name for a host in this case.

For example, the alias:

jsmith:root

sends mail on a NIS/NIS+ client to **root@podunk-u** if the name of the NIS/NIS+ domain is **podunk-u**.

Automatic Forwarding

When an alias (or address) is resolved to the name of a user on the local host, **sendmail**(1M) checks for a **~/.forward** file, owned by the intended recipient, in that user's home directory, and with universal read access. This file can contain one or more addresses or aliases as described above, each of which is sent a copy of the user's mail.

Care must be taken to avoid creating addressing loops in the **~/.forward** file. When forwarding mail between machines, be sure that the destination machine does not return the mail to the sender through the operation of any NIS aliases. Otherwise, copies of the message may ''bounce.'' Usually, the solution is to change the NIS alias to direct mail to the proper destination.

A backslash before a username inhibits further aliasing. For instance, to invoke the **vacation** program, user **js** creates a **~/.forward** file that contains the line:

\js, "|/usr/ucb/vacation js"

so that one copy of the message is sent to the user, and another is piped into the **vacation** program.

FILES

/etc/passwd	password file
/etc/nisswitch.conf	workstation server definition
/etc/mail/aliases	workstation aliases
/etc/mail/sendmail.cf	sendmail configuration file
~/.forward	forwarding information file

SEE ALSO

vacation(1), **newaliases**(1), **uucp**(1C), **sendmail**(1M), **dbm**(3B)

NOTES

Because of restrictions in **dbm**(3B), a single alias cannot contain more than about 1000 characters. Nested aliases can be used to circumvent this limit.