Configuration Hints for Common Mail User Agents

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ABSTRACT

This informational document describes how certain common Mail User Agents can be configured for conformance with the IETF Mailing List Guidelines. Subject to normal processes and procedures, this draft might some day be published as an Informational RFC.

[NOTE: Any comments should be sent to the document editor as email, strongly preferably with a clear Subject: line indicating this draft is the topic. Comments with specific proposed edits are much more helpful than broad general comments.]
1. Introduction

The IETF uses mailing lists as its primary method for accomplishing work. In normal practice, each IETF Working Group has at least one mailing list that is used principally for discussions within that Working Group's charter.

The IETF has developed a set of Mailing List Guidelines. While these guidelines are optimised for interoperability, some Mail User Agent implementers have optimised for other objectives. This document provides information on how to configure certain common Mail User Agents to send mail in a format more nearly consistent with the IETF Mailing List Guidelines.

2. America Online (AOL) Mail Client

By default, the AOL Mail Client sends all email in HTML format. This default setting can be changed so that email is sent in text/plain format instead. [AOL]

To cause AOL to always send mail in plain-text so that everyone is able to read it, please undertake these steps. Go to "Keyword:Preferences". Click on "Font, Text, & Graphics Preferences". Click on the RESET button at the bottom of the resulting window. Do not make any changes after hitting RESET. Then click on the SAVE button.

To cause AOL to not send "vacation" or "Out of Office" messages to IETF mailing lists, undertake the following steps. [TBD. Help solicited]

3. Microsoft Outlook Mail Client family

By default, many versions of Microsoft Outlook send all email in HTML or some other "enhanced" (sic) text format. This setting can be changed in most or all versions of Outlook. This informational appendix provides configuration hints for certain widely deployed versions of Microsoft Outlook for the benefit of IETF participants.

For Microsoft Outlook 2000 or Microsoft Outlook Express 5, one should select the TOOLS pull-down menu, then select OPTIONS. In this dialogue, click on the MAIL FORMAT tab. Now, set the output format to be "Plain Text", instead of either "Rich Text" or "HTML".

Also, Microsoft Outlook 2000 also permits both text format and charset to be set on a per-message basis. From the top window of the mail message, select FORMAT then PLAIN TEXT and also select FORMAT then ENCODING then US-ASCII. Now, right click on each
addressee in turn, select SEND OPTIONS, then check the "I want to specify the format of messages sent to this recipient" option, then check the PLAIN TEXT radio button, then uncheck the BINHEX box as the attachment type. Note that the "right click on addressee step" and the other steps need to be done for EACH recipient on EACH message.

To cause Microsoft Outlook, Outlook Express, or Exchange to NOT send "vacation" or "Out of Office" messages to IETF mailing lists, one should undertake these steps. [TBD. Accurate text solicited.]

4. Qualcomm Eudora Mail Client

Many versions of Qualcomm Eudora have the capability of sending mail in one or another "enhanced" (sic) text format. This setting can be changed in most or all versions of Eudora. This informational appendix provides configuration hints for certain widely deployed versions of Qualcomm Eudora.

To disable the sending of HTML or fancy text formats in email originated by Eudora, one uses the TOOLS menu to select OPTIONS. Then one scrolls to STYLED TEXT. On the STYLED TEXT menu, one ensures that the radio button marked "Send plain text only" is selected and that the box marked "Send the signature with styles" is NOT selected. Eudora does not send "Out of Office" or "vacation" messages, so no special configuration instructions are needed for that.

5. Security Considerations

This document raises no new security issues because it merely provides information about configuration of certain deployed MUAs.

Email is generally insecure. Folks concerned about email security should consider employing IETF standards-track protocols to protect their email.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to thank (in alphabetical order) William Dixon and Paul Hoffman for assistance in obtaining the information contained within this document and for early reviews of this document. The AOL information is taken directly from the online AOL FAQ at: "http://members.aol.com/adamkb/aol/mailfaq/#aol6html"

Any grammatical or typographical errors here are the sole
responsibility of the author. Kindly note that this draft is written in the English, not American, language.

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