

NAME

vmail – read and manage mail

SYNOPSIS

vmail [<mailbox>] [-V]

DESCRIPTION

vmail is a screen-oriented version of *readmail* (PCS). This program is part of the Personal Communication Services (PCS) system. It is used for reading and managing collections of mail messages. It can be used to read, classify, delete, reply to, and forward mail. The user may create as many named mail files, called *mailboxes*, as desired. When *vmail* is invoked, the user is normally in the **new** or incoming mailbox. Messages can be moved into other mailboxes and can be retrieved later by changing into the appropriate mailbox. Invoking *vmail* with an argument will start it up in the specified mailbox.

vmail divides the screen into two windows: a message **summary** area, and a message **viewing** area. The first area displays one-line summaries of mail messages in the current mailbox, and the second screen area displays mail messages, help, and mailbox names. Mailboxes can contain one or more mail messages. There is no limit to the number of messages that can be stored in any given mailbox. The current message is indicated by an arrow at the left most end of the summary window area. The arrow will point to the summary line of the currently selected message.

The user types single character commands to change the current message or mailbox, or to perform operations on the current message. The commands are acted upon immediately, and do not have to be followed by a carriage return. Some commands require an argument, such as a new mailbox name. These command arguments are terminated by a carriage return.

Command Line Options

An optional mailbox name can be given as a positional argument to *vmail*. If no mailbox name is given, a default mailbox name (`${HOME}/mail/new`) is used if it exists. If it does not exist, the *vmail* will attempt to create it. If the default incoming mailbox file cannot be created, then the mailbox derived from processing the MBOX environment variable is used instead. If a mailbox name is given on the command line and it starts with a slash character ('/'), then it is taken as the name of a mailbox file instead. If a mailbox is given but does not start with a slash character, then it is taken as the name of a mailbox within the default mail folder directory.

The **V** command line option cause *vmail* to print its current version number and then finally exit. Other command line options may be processed for errors before existing.

Commands

Commands are initiated by the user by typing single characters. Case is significant. Some commands operate immediately without any further input and some commands will prompt for an argument when needed. Many of the commands can be preceded by an optional count. Counts are entered by entering decimal digits followed in the desired command. Commands which accept preceding optional counts are identified below. A brief description of some of the available commands follows.

<CR>

This command (a single carriage return character) has two possible actions depending on whether it is used alone or if it is preceded by a count. Normally this command simply displays the next page of the current message or the next page of help text. If this command is preceded by a count, then a different action is taken. The mailer will move to the message indicated by the count from the beginning of the mailbox. A count of 1 refers to the first message. Messages in mailboxes are numbered according to the position of the message within the mailbox. A count which is bigger than the number of messages in the current mailbox is interpreted to refer to the last message in the mailbox.

- + When entered without a preceding count, this command (a plus sign character) defaults to the same action as the *carriage return* command above. If this command is preceded by a count, then the mailer will jump ahead to the *count* numbered page forward in the current message. If the user is on the last page of a message, then this command will cause the first page of a message to be displayed

again.

- This command (a minus sign character) is used to go back to a previous page in the current message. If the command is preceded by a count, then the mailer program will go back *count* number of pages in the message. If the user is at the first page of a message, then the mailer will go in the latest page in the message that has already been **previously** read. If the user has not read all of the pages in the current message and is currently reading the first page, then this command will cause the mailer to go to the highest numbered page in the message that has already been read.
- b** The *back* command displays the previous (or first) page of the current message. If this command is preceded by a count, then the mailer will go back *count* messages in the current mailbox. A large count value will cause the mailer to go back to the first message in the mailbox.
- n** The *next* command makes the next message in the current mailbox to be the current message. An optional count can precede this command and will cause the mailer to go ahead *count* number of messages forward in the mailbox.
- N** The *Next* command makes the tenth next message be the current message. An optional count value will cause the mailer to go ahead *count* multiples of 10 messages at a time.
- p** The *previous* command makes the previous message be the current message. An optional count can precede this command.
- P** The *Previous* command makes the tenth previous message in the current message. An optional count can precede this command and will cause the mailer to go back *count* number of messages in the mailbox.
- F** The *First* command makes the first message be the current message.
- L** The *Last* command makes the last message be the current message.
- c** The *change* command is used to change to a new mail file.
- l** The *list* command is used to list the names of all existing mail files.
- d** The *delete* command marks the current message for deletion. It will actually be deleted when the user changes to another mailbox or when the user exit the mail reader program. An option controls whether the user is prompted for confirmation before messages are deleted.
- u** The *undelete* command removes the deletion mark from a message.
- m** The *move* command moves a message to another mail file. It prompts the user for the name of the file to move to. If the file is a new one, the user must confirm the command. If no mail file is given, the message is moved to the mailbox **old**. If the message is successfully moved, the message in the current mail file is marked for deletion. It can still be undeleted by the user if desired before leaving the current mailbox and before leaving the mailer program.
- r** The *reply* command is used to generate a reply to the current message. A message to the sender of the current message is generated, and *smail* (PCS) is invoked to send the mail.
- R** The *Reply* command is used to generate a reply to the current message. A message to the sender of the current message, and to every one of its recipients is generated, and *smail* (PCS) is invoked. The command is referred to as a *conference* reply.
- f** The *forward* command is used to forward the current message to someone else. The *smail* program is invoked, and then the current message is appended before the mail is actually sent.
- e** The *editforward* is the same as the forward command except that the forwarded message can be edited to add the forwarder's own comments.
- s** The *send* command is used to invoke **smail** to send a message.
- a** The *append* command is used to append the current message to a file.

- w** The *write* command is used to write the current message to a file. The message replaces the previous contents of the file, whereas in the *append* command the message is added after the previous contents.
- >** This is the same as the *write* commands described above.
- |** The **|** (*pipe*) command is used to pipe the current message to a command. The given command will be given to a shell, with the current message piped in as the standard input. A nice program to print mail messages is either `mailPR` or `prt- pcsmail`. Each of these programs produces a different "nice" printout of the current message. See the `man` pages for these commands for further information (or just try them out). Other popular programs for printing are **prt**, **lp**, or **lpr**, but these will not produce a fancy formatted printout like the above programs.
- ?** The **?** (*help*) command is used to request a summary of the commands. The user may page through the help summary by typing successive carriage returns.
- h** The *help* command is used to request help on a specific command. It prompts for the command character, and displays a short help message.

Managing Mailboxes

Messages in mailboxes are usually ordered in FIFO (first- in first- out) order. However, the **new** mailbox may be ordered by giving a sequence of logical expressions (one per line) in the file `.priority` in directory `${HOME}/mail`. Messages matching are then sorted in priority order followed by non- matching messages in FIFO order. Alternatively, new messages may be sorted in LIFO (last in first out; reverse chronological) order by specifying the option "nofifo" (see below); this may not be combined with priority sorting. The option "sort_all" causes mailboxes other than the new one to also be priority sorted.

Logical expressions are composed of header:value pairs such as `FROM:schatz` or `SUBJECT:mail`. The valid headers are those from a normal sendmail message, namely: `FROM`, `TO`, `SUBJECT`, `DATE`, `KEYWORDS`. The pairs may be composed with the operators and (`&`) and or (`|`).

Program Options

Profile options may be set or updated by the PCS profiler, because *vmail* uses the same options as *readmail*. The options that are effective are:

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| <code>scan_long</code> | use long (80 columns) scanline rather than short (50 columns) |
| <code>fifo</code> | order messages in first- in first- out sequence |
| <code>sort_all</code> | priority sort messages in every mailbox |
| <code>confirm</code> | require confirmation before deleting messages at exit |

The defaults set by the PCS *profiler* are: `scan_long`, `fifo`, `confirm`.

ENVIRONMENT VARIABLES

- PCS** This should be set to the root of the system PCS directory tree. If it is left unset (not untypical) an internal default, which is usually correct, is used instead.
- MAIL** This environment variable is set to the user's spool area mailbox where new mail arriving into the computer system is initially placed. If this variable is not set, then a default is used which is normally either `/usr/mail/userid` or `/var/spool/mail/userid`. These are the default locations for new mail on AT&T System V based UNIX and BSD based UNIX systems respectively.
- folder** This environment variable, when set, contains a directory path name of where the user's mailbox files are stored. If the path begins with a slash character then the path is used directly. If the path does not begin with a slash character then the user's HOME directory is prepended to the given path. If this variable is not set (typical), then it defaults to `mail`, which would be the folder directory in the user's HOME directory tree.

FILES

| | |
|---|--|
| <code>\${PCS}/bin/vmail</code> | executable program |
| <code>\${PCS}/lib/vmail/rhelp</code> | the help messages |
| <code>\${HOME}/mail</code> | default directory containing mailbox files |
| <code>\${HOME}/mail/.priority</code> | optional new box presorting |
| <code>/usr/mail/\${USERNAME}</code> | a typical system mail spool area (on UNIX System V) where incoming mail is delivered |
| <code>/var/spool/mail/\${USERNAME}</code> | a typical system mail spool area (on a BSD UNIX variant like SunOS 4.x) where incoming mail is delivered |

SEE ALSO

profiler(PCS), readmail(PCS), smail(PCS), prt- pcsmail(PCS), pcsv(PCS)

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