

Lafite is a display-based, interactive program that manipulates a particular class of files called *mail files*. In essence, a mail file is just a set of messages, each of which is a piece of text formatted according to certain conventions. The details of these conventions are not of major interest to most users. Suffice it to say that messages have a *header* and a *body*. The header identifies the *sender* and *recipients* of the message as well as the *time* it was sent, a *subject*, and perhaps other information not directly related to the message's content. The body contains the content of the message. For each mail file, Lafite constructs and maintains a *table of contents* that summarizes the messages residing in the file. Mail files can be stored either on a file server that allows random access or on your own workstation's disk.

Lafite is an interface program that gives you access to the facilities provided by the Xerox Network Systems (NS) Mail Service. This system provides you with *in-boxes*, *mail drops*, and a *name data base*. An in-box is a place where messages sent to you are stored until you retrieve them. Each in-box resides on a *mail server*, which is a machine used for storing and distributing electronic mail. A mail drop is a service to which messages addressed to any user(s) of the system may be sent. The mail transport system sorts out the recipients and delivers messages to their individual in-boxes. The name data base holds the names of *registered users* of the message system along with named lists of such users.

Lafite retrieves inbound mail from your in-boxes on one or more mail servers. The messages are retrieved into a *mail folder*, which is usually called Active.Mail (henceforth referred to as the Active Mail folder). You can then open a *browser* onto the mail folder, which allows its contents to be read, replied to, forwarded, deleted, moved into other folders, printed, and so forth.