

Chapter 7

Practical assignment 7

7.1 Background

POP3 (*Post Office Protocol 3*, RFC 1939) is used to download e-mail waiting at a server for a specific user.

You can (amongst others) use POP3 to download your e-mail waiting on your Gmail account (if you have one and POP3 is enabled for it). Just search the web for the appropriate port to use. (Again, encryption for POP3 is a *very* good idea, but being forced to implement it complicates, this assignment beyond what we expect you to do to complete this assignment. Hence, using your own POP3 server, where you do not enforce encryption may be your best option. Refer to Chapter B.

7.2 Your assignment

In some cases an email sender sends a blind copy to some party whom they want to share the information with, but they do not want to let the indicated recipients know that this party was included as a sender. If you receive such a blind copy, you may accidentally reply to all — and suddenly the other recipients of the email would know that you were included as a recipient of the original email. This may cause embarrassment (or worse) for the original sender who included you as a BCC recipient.

Hence a program that ‘warns’ you when you received an email as a blind copy would be useful. Let’s think about how such a tool may work. Suppose your tool monitors your email inbox using POP3. It downloads every email (or, if possible, enough lines from the top of the email). It then searches for the first `BCC :` header (with some caveats). If the BCC header is found, only your address would be

expected next to it. If your program finds an email with a `BCC :` header it sends a warning email to your email account, using a header such as

```
[BCC Warning] <original header>
```

Hopefully, when you open your inbox there will be a warning waiting for you above the email that you received as a blind carbon copied recipient — and you can avoid embarrassment.

Think about the logical point up to which you should search for a `BCC :` header. If any email includes the text `BCC :` it may cause a false alarm.

How would automatic forwarding of an `BCC` email present? What would happen when a mailing list is the `BCC` recipient of a message?

7.3 Assessment

A working program will be awarded 8 out of 10. To earn a higher mark your program has to do more than just the basics — in particular should it demonstrate that you understand something of the RFC.