

a new MAIL FROM: `crepes.fr`, designates the end of message with an isolated period, and issues QUIT only after all messages have been sent.

It is highly recommended that you use Telnet to carry out a direct dialogue with an SMTP server. To do this, issue

```
telnet serverName 25
```

where `serverName` is the name of a local mail server. When you do this, you are simply establishing a TCP connection between your local host and the mail server. After typing this line, you should immediately receive the 220 reply from the server. Then issue the SMTP commands HELO, MAIL FROM, RCPT TO, DATA, CRLF.CRLF, and QUIT at the appropriate times. It is also highly recommended that you do Programming Assignment 3 at the end of this chapter. In that assignment, you'll build a simple user agent that implements the client side of SMTP. It will allow you to send an e-mail message to an arbitrary recipient via a local mail server.

### 2.4.2 Comparison with HTTP

Let's now briefly compare SMTP with HTTP. Both protocols are used to transfer files from one host to another: HTTP transfers files (also called objects) from a Web server to a Web client (typically a browser); SMTP transfers files (that is, e-mail messages) from one mail server to another mail server. When transferring the files, both persistent HTTP and SMTP use persistent connections. Thus, the two protocols have common characteristics. However, there are important differences. First, HTTP is mainly a **pull protocol**—someone loads information on a Web server and users use HTTP to pull the information from the server at their convenience. In particular, the TCP connection is initiated by the machine that wants to receive the file. On the other hand, SMTP is primarily a **push protocol**—the sending mail server pushes the file to the receiving mail server. In particular, the TCP connection is initiated by the machine that wants to send the file.

A second difference, which we alluded to earlier, is that SMTP requires each message, including the body of each message, to be in 7-bit ASCII format. If the message contains characters that are not 7-bit ASCII (for example, French characters with accents) or contains binary data (such as an image file), then the message has to be encoded into 7-bit ASCII. HTTP data does not impose this restriction.

A third important difference concerns how a document consisting of text and images (along with possibly other media types) is handled. As we learned in Section 2.2, HTTP encapsulates each object in its own HTTP response message. Internet mail places all of the message's objects into one message.