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Sample MIME Message

Multipurpose Internet Mail Extensions (MIME) uses headers and separators that tell a user agent (UA) how to re-create the message. The MIME message in the following example includes a text message and an attached text file. Both are body parts of the message, which does not contain encoded body parts.

```
From: Some One <someone@example.com>
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: multipart/mixed;
    boundary="XXXXboundary text"

This is a multipart message in MIME format.

--XXXXboundary text
Content-Type: text/plain

this is the body text

--XXXXboundary text
Content-Type: text/plain;
Content-Disposition: attachment;
    filename="test.txt"

this is the attachment text

--XXXXboundary text--
```

The "**MIME-Version:**" header tells the receiving UA to treat this as a MIME message.

The "**Content-Type:**" header specifies "multipart/mixed". This tells the receiving UA that this message has parts separated by the string argument defined in "**boundary=**". A MIME-compliant UA will only display or otherwise process content following the specified "**boundary=**" text strings. The actual boundaries are constructed using the "**boundary=**" string, prepended by "--". The final body part is followed by the "**boundary=**" string with the "--" both prepended and appended.

In the preceding example, the courtesy message "**This is a multipart message in MIME format.**" will not be displayed or otherwise processed by the MIME UA because it does

not follow a "**boundary=**" string. A UA that does not support MIME will display it, and at least this part of the message will be readable no matter what features the UA supports. If the example had encoded parts, they would make no sense to the human reader using a non-MIME-compliant UA, but at least the courtesy message would give the user a hint as to why not.

There are two message body parts in the preceding example. Each body part has headers of its own, in addition to the overall message headers. Each body part begins with the boundary string. If there were no headers in the body parts, then the blank line that must follow headers in RFC 822 messages would follow the boundary string. The first body part is a plain text message, the message the sender might have typed into a UA. Its single "Content-Type:" header identifies it as "text/plain", meaning US-ASCII characters are used exclusively and any UA should be able to display this body part. Text/plain is the default content type.

The second body part in this example contains the file attachment. Because the file attachment is an ASCII text file, it is sent with no encoding and its content-type is given as text/plain. The "Content-Disposition: attachment" header has a parameter, "filename=", which specifies a suggested name for the file. This header specifies that this body part is to be treated as a file and saved on local storage under the suggested file name (instead of being displayed to the user).