

NAME

spawn – Postfix external command spawner

SYNOPSIS

spawn [generic Postfix daemon options] *command_attributes...*

DESCRIPTION

The **spawn**(8) daemon provides the Postfix equivalent of **inetd**. It listens on a port as specified in the Postfix **master.cf** file and spawns an external command whenever a connection is established. The connection can be made over local IPC (such as UNIX-domain sockets) or over non-local IPC (such as TCP sockets). The command's standard input, output and error streams are connected directly to the communication endpoint.

This daemon expects to be run from the **master**(8) process manager.

COMMAND ATTRIBUTE SYNTAX

The external command attributes are given in the **master.cf** file at the end of a service definition. The syntax is as follows:

user=*username* (required)

user=*username:groupname*

The external command is executed with the rights of the specified *username*. The software refuses to execute commands with root privileges, or with the privileges of the mail system owner. If *groupname* is specified, the corresponding group ID is used instead of the group ID of *username*.

argv=*command...* (required)

The command to be executed. This must be specified as the last command attribute. The command is executed directly, i.e. without interpretation of shell meta characters by a shell command interpreter.

BUGS

In order to enforce standard Postfix process resource controls, the **spawn**(8) daemon runs only one external command at a time. As such, it presents a noticeable overhead by wasting precious process resources. The **spawn**(8) daemon is expected to be replaced by a more structural solution.

DIAGNOSTICS

The **spawn**(8) daemon reports abnormal child exits. Problems are logged to **syslogd**(8).

SECURITY

This program needs root privilege in order to execute external commands as the specified user. It is therefore security sensitive. However the **spawn**(8) daemon does not talk to the external command and thus is not vulnerable to data-driven attacks.

CONFIGURATION PARAMETERS

Changes to **main.cf** are picked up automatically as **spawn**(8) processes run for only a limited amount of time. Use the command "**postfix reload**" to speed up a change.

The text below provides only a parameter summary. See **postconf**(5) for more details including examples.

In the text below, *transport* is the first field of the entry in the **master.cf** file.

RESOURCE AND RATE CONTROL

transport_time_limit (\$*command_time_limit*)

The amount of time the command is allowed to run before it is terminated.

Postfix 2.4 and later support a suffix that specifies the time unit: s (seconds), m (minutes), h (hours), d (days), w (weeks). The default time unit is seconds.

MISCELLANEOUS

config_directory (see 'postconf -d' output)

The default location of the Postfix main.cf and master.cf configuration files.

daemon_timeout (18000s)

How much time a Postfix daemon process may take to handle a request before it is terminated by a built-in watchdog timer.

export_environment (see 'postconf -d' output)

The list of environment variables that a Postfix process will export to non-Postfix processes.

ipc_timeout (3600s)

The time limit for sending or receiving information over an internal communication channel.

mail_owner (postfix)

The UNIX system account that owns the Postfix queue and most Postfix daemon processes.

max_idle (100s)

The maximum amount of time that an idle Postfix daemon process waits for an incoming connection before terminating voluntarily.

max_use (100)

The maximal number of incoming connections that a Postfix daemon process will service before terminating voluntarily.

process_id (read-only)

The process ID of a Postfix command or daemon process.

process_name (read-only)

The process name of a Postfix command or daemon process.

queue_directory (see 'postconf -d' output)

The location of the Postfix top-level queue directory.

syslog_facility (mail)

The syslog facility of Postfix logging.

syslog_name (see 'postconf -d' output)

The mail system name that is prepended to the process name in syslog records, so that "smtpd" becomes, for example, "postfix/smtpd".

SEE ALSO

postconf(5), configuration parameters
master(8), process manager
syslogd(8), system logging

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