Perl Mail Box Manipulation

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January 30, 2004

1 Introduction

Perl provides a number of interfaces to mailbox folders of which Mail::Box is but one. This article will cover the basic use of it and show how to open a mailbox folder, be it a flat file or over POP or IMAP, and how to manipulate the messages inside.

2 Modules

First you need to import the required modules - in most cases this will be sufficient:

```
use Mail::Box::Manager;
```

3 Opening Mailboxes

This section will cover how to open mailboxes of 3 different formats - mbox, POP and IMAP.

3.1 Mbox Format

To open a mbox folder, simply do the following:

```
my $mailspool = "/var/spool/mail/username";
my $mgr    = Mail::Box::Manager->new;
my $folder = $mgr->open(folder => $mailspool);
```

3.2 POP3

There are two ways to open a POP folder, as follows:

```
my $url = 'pop3://user:password@pop.example.com'
my $pop = Mail::Box::POP3->new($url);
my $mgr    = Mail::Box::Manager->new;
my $pop = $mgr->open(type => 'pop3',
            username => 'myname',
            password => 'mypassword',
            server_name => 'pop.example.com');
```

3.3 IMAP4

IMAP folders are opened similarly to POP, as follows:

```
my $imap   = Mail::Box::IMAP4->new(username => 'myname',
                     password => 'mypassword',
                     server_name => 'imap.example.com');

my $url    = 'imap4://user:password@imap.example.com');
my $mgr    = Mail::Box::Manager->new;
my $imap   = $mgr->open($url);
```

4 Manipulating Folders

To find out the name of the folder you're accessing, simple do the following:

```
$name = $folder->name;
```

To check the number of messages in the folder, just:

```
my $emails = $folder->messages;
```

To loop over each message simply call the messages subroutine in array context, like so:

```
foreach $msg ($folder->messages) { # all messages
    # Do something with $msg
}
```

To extract basic information from a message, such as subject, to, from and the body, simply use the following:

```
my $subject = $msg->subject;
my @to = $msg->to;
my $from = $msg->sender->address;
my $body = $msg->decoded;
```

The array returned from the to subroutine consists of Mail::Address objects. To pull the actual address out of it, something like the similar will do:

```
foreach $to (@to) {
    print "to = ".$to->format."\n";
}
```

5 Conclusion

As you can see, Mail::Box provides a very simple interface for pulling out basic information from a mailbox. You can do much more than is shown here, for more information see the perldoc for Mail::Box, Mail::Box-Overview and Mail::Box-Cookbook.