

Minimizing the Size of Your Email Inbox Using Pine

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This document describes the creation and use of folders with the Pine mail interface.

1 Background

In any mail system, you will have an "inbox". This is a place where incoming messages are put. You can view this file and make changes to it through Pine. It is important to keep your inbox as small as possible because the dual interaction of mail being put there by the mail server at the same time you are making changes to it with Pine can be problematic and could cause you to lose the messages there. The chances of this happening go up with the size of the inbox. This document describes ways to to minimize the size of your inbox and thus minimize both probablility and liability of a loss of important email.

2 Folders

The best way to preserve important messages is to store them in folders. Instructions on how to create folders an move messeges into them using Pine are given below. Folders are much safer than your inbox for storing messages for three reasons:

- folders reside in your home directory
- folders are smaller
- folders are less dynamic

Your home directory is on a RAID (immune to single disk failures) which is backed up incrementally three times a day and backed up to tape three times a week. The mail spool (where your inbox resides) is on the mail server and must be copied to the RAID on a nightly basis so that it is finally backed up

to tape. As this process is more complicated, it is more prone to error. Also, as folders tend to be smaller, and are changed much less frequently than your inbox, they are much less vulnerable to errors in updating. In summary, folders are less likely to get corrupted and if they do, they it is much more likely they can be restored.

3 SPAM control

The influx of SPAM is ever increasing. We are currently taking measures to minimize it being delivered to you, but in the meantime there are ways for you to get rid of a lot of it automatically. One way is to set up a mail filter called "procmail" to put tagged SPAM in a folder called "Junk". If you are not currently forwarding your email somewhere else, you can easily set this up by logging into any department UNIX machine and running a script

```
% /math/common/scripts/nospam
```

If you are forwarding your email, you can still filter the tagged SPAM that would come to your department email. Please contact us if you wish to do so. After that, all your tagged SPAM will go into a "Junk" folder. You probably should check this folder from time to time to make sure no valid messages got tagged. After that, if you would just like to empty the Junk folder, the easiest way is to run the command

```
% cp /dev/null /mail/Junk
```

This will truncate the file. It may take a little while for Pine to recognise that the folder has been emptied.

4 Pine Folders

When you first bring up Pine, the following line will be highlighted:

```
L      FOLDER LIST      -  Select a folder to view
```

If you press "Enter" (or "L") you will see a list of all your folders. The first one should be highlighted and named "INBOX". This is your incoming messages and is from where you want to move messages into folders. You will see available commands at the bottom of the screen, and "O" shows you yet more commands. Press "A" and get:

```
Folder name to add :
```

At this prompt, type the name of the folder you want to create. You will see the name you entered appear in the list of folders. Use the arrow keys to move the highlighting to the "INBOX". Press "Enter". Use the arrow keys to move the highlighting to a message you want to store in your newly created folder. If you forgot what you named your folder, press the "j" key, and then to return to your message list, press the "i" key. With the highlighting on the message you want, press the "S" key. You will see:

```
SAVE Msg #1 to folder [saved-messages] :
```

Actually Msg #1 will be replaced with whatever message number the message of interest had. Now type the name of the folder, and press "Enter". You should see:

```
[Message 1 copied to folder "myfolder" and deleted]
```

where "myfolder" is the name you used for your folder. If you want to make sure the message went into your folder press "j" and move the highlighting with the arrow keys to the folder you created. Press "Enter". You will see a list of all the messages in the folder. Yours should be there.

If you repeat this for all your important messages, and delete the unimportant messages, you will have a safer and better organized filing of all your email messages.

5 Questions?

If you have any questions about or problems with any of the procedures in this document, please send email to

help@math.unm.edu