

Unix System Administration

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Anatomy of an Email Message

- Three main parts to an email message
 - envelope, headers, body
- Envelope
 - You never see this, it's used internally by the MTA
 - (Usually) corresponds to the 'From' and 'To' headers
 - But not always!
- Body
 - Actual content of the message
 - MUST be in plain text, all binary data is converted to base64
 - The body is separated from headers by a blank line

Anatomy of an Email Message (cont)

- Headers
 - These are Key: Value pairs that conform to RFC822 standards
 - Some are mandatory: From, To, and others
 - If omitted, usually considered spam
 - Others are optional: Subject, Cc, Reply-To
 - Still others are ignored by the mail system
 - All headers are propagated, whether read or not
 - Headers that start with 'X-' are application specific
 - But again, are still sent even if unused