

Re: Received mail timestamp is off by 7 hours

Source: <http://unix.derkeiler.com/Mailing-Lists/FreeBSD/questions/2005-02/4012.html>

From: Anthony Atkielski (atkielski.anthony_at_wanadoo.fr)

Date: 02/27/05

Date: Sun, 27 Feb 2005 10:36:35 +0100

To: freebsd-questions@freebsd.org

Pat Maddox writes:

- > *I've included the headers of messages from both Gmail and Hotmail, to*
- > *show that it's not on Gmail's end. Also, here's the output from date:*
- > *%date*
- > *Sun Feb 27 02:42:21 CET 2005*

That can't be right. You sent your message in reply to a message I sent at 9:34 CET. The time on your local machine is incorrect by seven hours. It should be one hour ahead of UTC right now.

- > *They should show up in my inbox as being received at 1:40am or so, but*
- > *they show up as 6:40pm instead.*

And 1:40 is exactly seven hours later than 18:40.

The disparity is visible in the timestamps, too:

>>*From Gmail:*

>

> *Return-Path: <pergesu@gmail.com>*

> *X-Original-To: pergesu@javaspot.net*

> *Delivered-To: pergesu@javaspot.net*

> *Received: from wproxy.gmail.com (wproxy.gmail.com [64.233.184.198])*

> *by cantona.dnswatchdog.com (Postfix) with ESMTP id 3161733C1B*

> *for <pergesu@javaspot.net>; Sun, 27 Feb 2005 02:38:52 +0100 (CET)*

Notice that the timestamp on your local e-mail server corresponds to 1:38:52 UTC, but the timestamp on Gmail's server ...

> *Received: by wproxy.gmail.com with SMTP id 67so1650347wri*

> *for <pergesu@javaspot.net>; Sun, 27 Feb 2005 00:37:53 -0800 (PST)*

... corresponds to 8:37:53 UTC, which is correct. The other timestamps for intermediate servers are also correct, but the timestamp generated by your machine on the original message is not ...

freebsd-questions: Re: Received mail timestamp is off by 7 hours

> *Date: Sun, 27 Feb 2005 01:37:53 -0700*

-0700 corresponds to MST (Mountain Standard Time in the U.S.), not CET (Central European Time).

So the solution is to set the time and time `_zone_` correctly on your machine. For a UNIX machine, the CMOS real-time clock should be set to UTC (what many people still call GMT), and then your time zone should be set to whatever is appropriate for your location (CET would correspond to most of Europe outside of the UK--here in France we are on CET).

Are you by any chance running a dual-boot configuration? Windows expects the CMOS RTC to be set to local time. UNIX expects it to be set to UTC. If you are running only FreeBSD, you can just reset the CMOS to UTC and fix your time zone to match your location. If you are also running a boot of Windows or something like that, you'll have to leave the CMOS clock set to local time, and make appropriate adjustments.

Unfortunately, I'm not sure which variables to change in FreeBSD, as I've always just set the time at installation time (when I'm asked if the local clock is UTC and what time zone I'm in).

Maybe someone else can explain what needs to change in your FreeBSD configuration to set it to the correct time.

In general, setting the time incorrectly on a local client machine in the SMTP protocol will produce seemingly random errors in the time on received messages, depending on the path they follow on their way to you (this is true even for messages you send to yourself). The local machine is almost always the one with the time set incorrectly (incorrect time on mail servers tends to be noticed by users very quickly, especially if more than one time zone is involved).

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Anthony

freebsd-questions@freebsd.org mailing list

<http://lists.freebsd.org/mailman/listinfo/freebsd-questions>

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