

Re: mail server setup questions

Source: <http://unix.derkeiler.com/Mailing-Lists/FreeBSD/questions/2007-09/msg00425.html>

- *From:* "Bob Johnson" <fbsdlists@xxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Thu, 6 Sep 2007 11:40:05 -0400
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On 9/5/07, Chad Perrin <perrin@xxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

On Thu, Sep 06, 2007 at 11:37:11AM +1000, Norberto Meijome wrote:

On Wed, 5 Sep 2007 16:52:56 -0400
"Bob Johnson" <fbsdlists@xxxxxxxx> wrote:

In case I haven't made myself clear, I despise Qmail with a passion.

[...]

I just realised that qmail appears over and over in Linux distros, or at

least

on linux servers i've had to suffer... not sure the relationship there (in design / philosophy...)... and I am really NOT wanting to start a flame

war.

Just a thought that crossed my mind as I was reading this thread.

About five or seven years ago when sendmail was having a lot of security problems and people were looking for alternatives, qmail was reasonably well established and was widely recommended. So a lot of people switched to it (including the place where I now work), including several Linux distros. We were never very happy with it here, and I suspect that the reason it has such a following in the Linux world is either that they have never used an alternative (same reason Windows has so many fans), or to abandon it and move to something else would cause a sort of cognitive dissonance that prevents it from happening.

Re: mail server setup questions

I haven't seen enough production FreeBSD systems set up by others to have any impressions about whether Linux admins are more likely to use Qmail than FreeBSD admins. I do get the impression, however, that the Linux admins who choose Qmail tend to do so for much the same reason that MS Windows admins choose Exchange: they think it's easier, that setting it up is just a plug-and-play, point-and-click sort of exercise. The fact that it's sending and receiving emails within a couple hours (starting from a clean box) seems to be the sum total of their metric for ease of setup, and all the hassle and annoyance that follows doesn't even enter into it.

For those people I recommend Courier. It was designed to be a drop-in replacement for Qmail, but without most of the flaws. The configuration files, for instance, are mostly the same. The biggest problem I've had when configuring Courier is that it tends to be overly determined to enforce RFC compliance and thus will not be friendly toward a lot of mail from various MS products. Find the configuration flag that turns off that behavior or users will complain about the results. The author makes a reasonable case for the default behavior (to do otherwise forces Courier to be non-compliant itself), but in the real world you have to be able to accept mail from MS products.

I have used Courier at my previous job (about 200 users) and at home and I have no significant complaints. If you just need a basic server that will handle your personal email without requiring you to learn what amounts to a new programming language (as with Exim and a few others), it's a good choice. The full distribution includes a POP/IMAP server and a webmail system. Just be sure not to skip the README file, and follow the instructions for testing your installation step-by-step. I have NOT tried to set up intensive anti-spam measures on Courier, so I don't know what problems may be in store there, but I'm sure there is info at <http://www.courier-mta.org>

I'm not really as evangelistic for Courier as I sound. As long as you stay away from Qmail you will probably be happy with whatever you use. I do recommend that you use something that supports Maildir style mailboxes, though.

– Bob

freebsd-questions@xxxxxxxxxxx mailing list

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