

SIFT-MAIL(1)

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NAME

`sift-mail` - Create Sift-Tcl configuration file for `sift-tcl`

SYNOPSIS

`sift-mail [sift-tcl-file] [-tk tk-file]`

DESCRIPTION

Sift-mail is an X-Windows application for creating and editing *Sift-Tcl* files that are run by `sift-tcl` to sort, search, route and filter e-mail. When invoked with no arguments it creates a configuration file for `sift-tcl`. When it starts it shows a browser with a list of “sifters”. New sifters can be created and old ones modified. The log of sifting activity can be viewed, a summary report of sifting activity can be generated and automatic reporting options can be set.

By default the file created is `.sift-tcl` in the user’s home directory. A different file may be created or edited by giving its name as an argument. *Sift-mail* always maintains back ups of files it edits with the suffixes “-1”, “-2”... “-8”. They are rotated automatically, never more than 8 are kept, and number 8 is the oldest one.

In general the user need not be concerned with the actual Sift-Tcl code that generated. It will be executed appropriately by the `sift-tcl` program as each new message arrives. (See the `sift-tcl` man page for details on how `sift-tcl` should be installed for this to happen). For those interested, the last sections describe the details of this file.

SIFTER TYPES

Each “sifter” that is created has a type and performs some sifting task. Each sifter can be activated or deactivated from the sifter sub-menu. The current list of types is:

File mail by mailing list of origin

This sifter allows the user to enter a mailing list address and folder name in which to save messages to that mailing list. The sifter automatically avoids filtering any messages that have the user’s personal address in the “To:” or “Cc:” headers. This is to make sure the user sees any messages sent to him and to the mailing list.

A set of extra options allow the user to pick the set of headers to match on. The type of pattern matching can also be selected and includes exact, sub string, wild cards, and regular expressions.

Send out-of-town notification

This sifter allows the user to enter the subject and text of a message to be sent in response to incoming messages.

The incoming messages which it responds to are carefully picked to avoid sending messages to mailing lists, and mailer daemons, and to avoid mail loops. Specifically the message must be addressed directly to the user, must not match the characteristics for a message from a mailing list or a mailer daemon. It will also not respond to messages originated by `sift-mail/sift-tcl`, and will only send one copy to any given address. The last two checks are to avoid mail loops.

Under the extra options, the user can specify the dates to start and stop the out of town notification. The notification starts after midnight on the start date and stops after midnight on the stop date.

Program a sifter directly in Sift-Tcl

This allows the user to program a sifter directly in Sift-Tcl. The user should be familiar with the Tcl language. The man page for `sift-tcl` describes all the mail processing functions that are avail-

able. The code that is entered here is put in a procedure which is passed two parameters, the open folder handle (`$folder`) for the message to process and its message number (`$num`). If it returns `Delete`, the message will not be filed in the user's inbox. Otherwise it will be filed in the user's inbox.

REPORTING OPTIONS

There are three reporting options. First, it is possible to view the plain sifting log file. It contains an entry for each message processed.

Second, it is possible to view a summary report of the sifting log. The report shows the number of messages filed into each folder, the number of out-of-town replies sent, and the number of messages left in the inbox. The number of days to include in the report may be specified.

The report also shows the five most common subjects of the messages filed into each folder. This makes it possible to monitor the activity on several mailing list just from examining the report.

Last, there is an option to have the report generated and sent as a mail message. The number of days to include in the report, and the frequency of the report may be specified.

FILE STRUCTURE IMPOSED BY SIFT-MAIL

This section describes the file structure imposed by `sift-mail` for Sift-Tcl programs. The structure is all embedded in the Tcl program comments in a similar way that page layout information is embedded in Postscript files with EPS. These comments contain lines that separate major sections, and the values of the parameters set by `sift-mail`. A description of the exact syntax is not included here. It is simple and can be inferred from looking at a generated file or the comments in the source code.

The four major sections include the preamble, which contains a warning and instructions to would-be direct editors of the file. The second section is the header and contains some initialization code. The third section contains a sub section for each sifter. The last section contains the main program that is executed when `sift-tcl` starts.

By default a standard main program is created. It goes through the list of sifters that was defined in the header and calls each one that is active. It passes the folder handle and the message number of the message to each sifter and then examines their return codes. If any one returns `Delete` the message code to file the message in the inbox is not executed. All sifters are always executed. The default sifter reads only one message from the standard input and filters that.

This main program can be substituted with one that does many other things. There are essentially no constraints at all. It might not call any of the defined sifters at all, though in that case the `sift-mail` configuration program and file meta-syntax are probably of little use and the Sift-Tcl code should just be composed manually with a text editor.

CAVEATS

The GUI interface is not highly polished, and is likely to have some bugs. It is probably best considered a working prototype. There is also no on-line help text in this version.

FILES

- `$HOME/.sift-tcl` The default file for the Sift-Tcl configuration that is generated.
- `$HOME/.siftlog` The log file that can be viewed and from which the reports are generated.

SEE ALSO

`sift-tcl` (1)

AUTHOR

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