

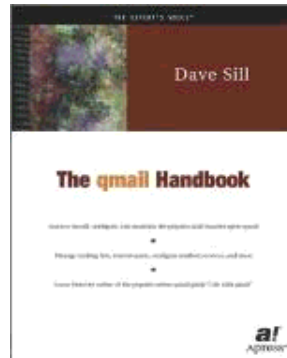


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About the author:

Bruno is a student of computer engineering in Leiria at night, Portugal. By the day he works as a programmer of the La Redoute S.A. IT Department. He found Linux a few years ago and he sees Linux as the fulfillment of a dream! The possibility of participating in the development of an operating System. His free time is dedicated to Linux, LinuxFocus (since he is an editor/translator), to his girlfriend and to his studies...

Bookreview: The qmail Handbook



Abstract:

"qmail Handbook" is a book written by Dave Sill, the author is well known for the "Life With Qmail". The book was published by Apress. The price is something about 45 Euro, not too expensive and I think it is worthwhile the money.

Introduction

What's qmail ?
What's a MTA ?
What's a MUA ?
qmail was written by Whom ?

Can you answer all the questions above? If you can I believe you are an experienced user (probably an sysadmin or a consultant). If not don't get worry, because this book will explain these things and a lot more.

The book is suitable for both kind of users, the experienced qmail user and the newbie (like me). The

book focuses on readers who want to learn how to administrate a qmail system. The author mentions this in the introduction chapter (XXI)

The language used in the book is very accessible, and in my opinion does not confuse the reader with "difficult technical terms", they are well explained and the images support that explanation.

Another good thing, before I forget it: The author does not assume that you have a specific distribution like Slackware or SuSE, but e.g. in the installation he details the differences between different versions of Unix (Linux, FreeBSD).

The book's organization

Here I could detail all the chapters of the book and tell my opinion about them, but I won't do it for two reasons:

- My experience can't be compared against the Dave's experience (something like 2 years compared to 15 years).
- At the time of writing I could not talk about all the chapters since I haven't read them all. Forgive me for this!

I write about the chapters that I have read and describe them in my own words.

Chapter 1, "Introducing qmail"

This chapter will help you to find answer for the question above. If you know what qmail is and you are not sure if it is suitable for your needs, then the answer is in this chapter, since it presents the features of qmail.

Chapter 2, "Installing qmail"

As the name says it is a step-by-step configuration guide for the installation, the creation of users, directories, the assignment of the required permissions...

Chapter 3, "Configuring qmail: The Basics"

Here you find the steps needed to put the system into operation (communicating with other MTAs). It explains the qmail control files, the aliases, and other things, like the mechanism of the qmail-users.

Chapter 4, "Using qmail"

Covers how the users can send and receive messages and some utilities to control the mailboxes.

Chapter 5, "Managing qmail"

Gives an explanation about the management commands of qmail. How to manage a queue.

Chapter 6, "Troubleshooting qmail"

Helps you to understand the log files, and to manage them correctly. And talks about common problems.

Chapter 7, "Configuring qmail: Advanced Options"

This chapter might be interesting for those who have sendmail and decided to migrate to qmail...

Chapter 8, "Controlling Junk Mail"

This chapter is something interesting nowadays, the days of spam. This helps to deal with it.

Chapter 9, "Managing Mailing Lists"

As the name says it talks about the mailing lists and the more known programs to manage that, like Majordomo, ezmlm.

Chapter 10, "Serving Mailboxes"

If you need to provide remote access to the mailboxes then the questions can be answered here. It talks about POP3 and IMAP protocols.

Chapter 11, "Hosting Virtual Domains and Users"

If you need to implement virtual mail accounts then all the processes needed for that are here described using Vpopmail and/or VmailMgr.

Chapter 12, "Understanding Advanced Topics"

Some advanced Topics like the combination of qmail and SQL or LDAP. And if you have windows machines you can protect them with anti-virus software in the mail system.

Appendices

Here you find more detailed explanations, if after reading the book you have any doubts, or still open questions then read this chapter.

Conclusion

The book is what the title says, "qmail handbook". It really is the handbook of qmail. So if you are an administrator of the mail system and you use qmail then this is for you. No matter if you are an experienced user or not. The book can be on your desk all the time, if any problem occurs, search in the index. It's easy to use. Some blank pages are included for (who knows) any annotation.

Probably the reader, when sending an email to anyone, e.g. a person in Dallas sends an email to his French friend in Paris, may wonder what happens to the email? What route does it take? ...

Well, the book can help you answering these questions, since it gives a technical description of qmail but also, gives theoretical explanations about the processes that qmail handles, and so on...

You can find other peoples opinions if you search for the book at amazon.

The final decision is always up to you...

References

- The Official qmail site
 - The Unofficial qmail site
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