

MailFLOW - An International Mail Coordination Service

The MHS coordination service provides X.400 managers and X.400 network administrators with a central coordination and support service. The users of the MHS coordination service are networks that provide electronic mail services based on X.400 standards or which provide gatewaying between X.400 and RFC 822 based networks.

The objectives of the MailFLOW service are:

- To support mail routing between X.400 networks and to provide seamless interconnection with RFC 822 based networks.
- To provide MHS managers with necessary technical information to support international co-operation.
- To trace and coordinate the solution of international problems.
- Assist new networks joining the MHS community.
- Liaise between the MHS community and external network organisations.

To meet these objectives the following tasks are carried out by the MailFLOW team:

Co-ordination

- Collecting and distributing information to enable participating networks to exchange X.400 messages.
- Collecting and distributing information to enable gateways between X.400 and RFC 822 communities to work in an harmonised way all around the participating networks.
- Verifying the correctness of routing and mapping information.
- Analysing traffic statistics provided by participating networks.

Support

- Tracing international problems and keeping a log of these is done by a help desk. It will assist on problem solving and communication between involved parties when this is needed.
- Providing an information server containing necessary technical data to support MHS managers. This data includes mapping and routing documents, operational procedures, various reports and tools.
- Helping networks that join the coordination service on setting up the initial connections and on writing the initial set of documents. Before a network joins the service it is tested to minimise any disturbances to the existing service.

Organising Communication

- Organising meetings where X.400 managers can solve international problems, discuss future

activities and exchange ideas.

- Running a mailing list for MHS managers.

The future of MailFLOW

Enough customers want the service to continue in 1996. But...they want a lightweight service at lower cost.

MailFLOW basics that are here to stay:

- Mapping tables
- Routing tables (access control?)
- Tools maintenance

Features that will get a lower profile:

- Information services (ftp etc)
- Mailing lists
- Manager meetings
- Reports

Features that will be phased out:

- Service monitoring
- Problem solving
- Newcomer support
- Travel budget

Long term future plans: 1997 and onwards?

An early review is planned in March 1996

Continuation possible by:

- using static tables
- using DNS
- using X.500