

USE OF THE "net_mail" COMMAND

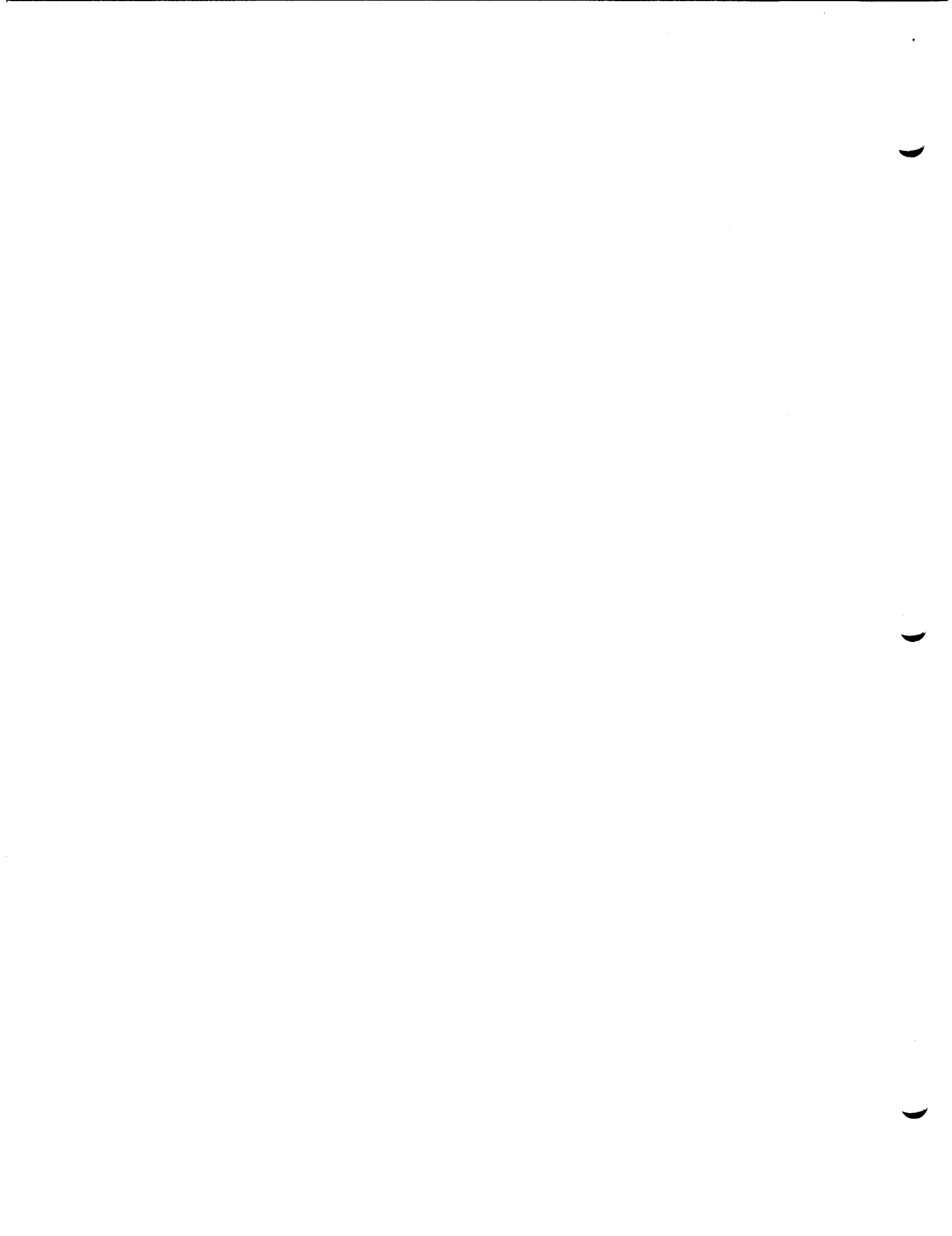
by Kenneth T. Pogran

Many members of CSR have expressed an interest in, and have become users of, the "net_mail" command for sending mail to users at other host computer systems on the ARPA Network. Because of this widespread interest, I have decided to distribute the latest version of the net_mail write-up as an RFC.

A few comments are in order:

- 1) net_mail is located in the CompNet project library; its pathname is
 >udd>CompNet>lib>net_mail
- 2) Permission is required to use the Network "outbound" from Multics; net_mail will inform you if you do not have permission. Currently all CompSys and CompNet users have permission; if you do not, but do have a need to use the Network, contact Mike Padlipsky.

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Command
>udd>CompNet>lib
09/20/73

Name: net_mail, nml

The net_mail command provides an interim facility for sending mail from Multics to users at other ARPA Network hosts. It utilizes the File Transfer Protocol MLFL (Mail File) and MAIL commands.

Usage

```
net_mail -options- user1a ... userna -at hosta ... userlx
          ... usernx -at hostx
```

1) -options- may be:

-file path If this control argument is specified, the contents of the segment path will be sent as mail.
-fi path

-subject SUBJECT

-sj SUBJECT The single argument following this control argument will be incorporated into the "Subject:" line of the message header. If this control argument is not used, the message header will not contain a "Subject:" line. SUBJECT must be a single argument; therefore, a subject containing blanks or punctuation should be enclosed in quotes (see example).

-timeout indicates that the argument following this control argument is a decimal integer specifying the time (in seconds) net_mail will wait for a response from the foreign Network host.

The following control arguments are intended for specific applications, and should not be generally used:

-no_header causes the mail to be sent without the usual message header. This control argument is intended for use in transmission of documents to the Network Information Center.
-nh

-mail indicates that the File Transfer Protocol MAIL command, rather than the MLFL command, is to be used to transmit the mail. This option should be used only when it is known that using the MAIL command will be very much more efficient than the MLFL command in
-ml

communicating with the foreign Network host.

- 2) `userij` is the name of a user at Network host `hostj` to whom mail is to be sent.
- 3) `hostj` is the standard host name, or Multics host abbreviation, of the Network host to which mail for users `userij` through `usernj` is to be sent.

Sending Mail

If the `-file` control argument is not supplied, `net_mail` will respond "Input" and accept lines from the keyboard until a line containing only a period (.) is typed; the typed lines will then be sent to the specified addressees.

`net_mail` attempts to connect to the File Transfer server at each addressee's host in turn; it will report to the sender the success or failure of each mail attempt. If the foreign File Transfer Server refuses to accept mail, its refusal message is printed for the benefit of the sender. Potential reasons for mail refusal include:

- 1) Host does not permit "free mail"
- 2) No such user at that host
- 3) User is not accepting mail

Unless the `-timeout` control argument is supplied, `net_mail` will wait thirty seconds for the initial response from a foreign host. A longer timeout interval may be useful when a destination host's File Transfer server is slow in responding to requests for connection. If there is no response from the destination host within the timeout interval, `net_mail` will print a message, and continue on to the next addressee.

Under certain conditions, it is possible for `net_mail` to wait for a response from the foreign File Transfer Server which will never arrive. If a mail attempt does not complete within a reasonable amount of time, the sender may QUIT, and then type "program_interrupt" ("pi"). This will cause `net_mail` to abort the current mail attempt (printing a message to that effect), and continue on to the next addressee.

If mail was not successfully sent to every addressee, and the mail was typed in at the sender's terminal, the mail will be saved in the segment "unsent_mail" in the sender's current working directory.

Example

```
net_mail -file my_message -subject "Use of net_mail" Brown  
        Jones -at alpha-tenex Smith.SysAdmin -at large-multics
```

will send the contents of the segment my_message to users Brown and Jones at Network host alpha-tenex, and to user Smith.SysAdmin at Network host large-multics. The text of the message will be preceded by a header of the form:

```
From: Person.Project at MIT-Multics  
Date: 09/20/73 1430-edt  
Subject: Use of net_mail
```

Notes

net_mail is intended to be an interim command, to be used until Network mail is integrated into a re-designed Multics mail facility. Its user interface is different from that of the current Multics mail command, in that file input is specified by a control option, and keyboard input is the default, rather than an option indicated by specifying a pathname of *.

The command generally provides complete, explanatory error messages. It is still under development, however: if a user receives a cryptic error message, or one which does not provide enough information to enable the user to determine what went wrong, he should report the problem to Ken Pogran, (617) 253-6019, or by sending mail to Pogran.CompNet.