Appendix C — Mail Transport

Outgoing Mail

When you send an e-mail message to someone, Eudora uses *SMTP* (Simple Mail Transfer Protocol) to send the mail to your local SMTP server computer. That computer then sends the mail to your addressee's computer, also (usually) by means of the SMTP protocol.

Why doesn't Eudora talk directly to your addressee's computer? For one thing, it would take a lot longer for your mail to leave your Macintosh, because your Macintosh would have to call up each addressee's computer and deliver your mail. For another, some computers are "hard to find;" it's much better to let another computer "hunt" for your addressee than to make your Macintosh do it. Finally, sometimes your addressee's computers won't be available when you want to send mail. The SMTP server can handle this with ease, by holding your mail until the other computer is ready to accept it. It would be inconvenient to have these unsent messages hanging around on your Macintosh.

Incoming Mail

When somebody sends you mail, other computers use the SMTP protocol to deliver the mail to your POP server. *POP* stands for "Post Office Protocol". Your POP server puts mail in your "maildrop", where it will stay until the Eudora program picks it up. When you check your mail, Eudora uses POP3 (Post Office Protocol, version 3) to pick up your mail, and move it to your Macintosh.

Why doesn't Eudora use SMTP to receive your mail? SMTP works best when the computers it knows about are always ready for mail. Unless you wanted to run Eudora and your Macintosh 24 hours per day, seven days a week, SMTP wouldn't work very well for you. It also doesn't work well in lab environments, where you might use any number of different Macintoshes.

Eudora uses SMTP to transfer your outgoing mail to your SMTP server machine, which in turn uses SMTP to send your mail to the world at large. Mail from the world at large arrives on your POP server, where it waits for Eudora to pick it up with POP3.
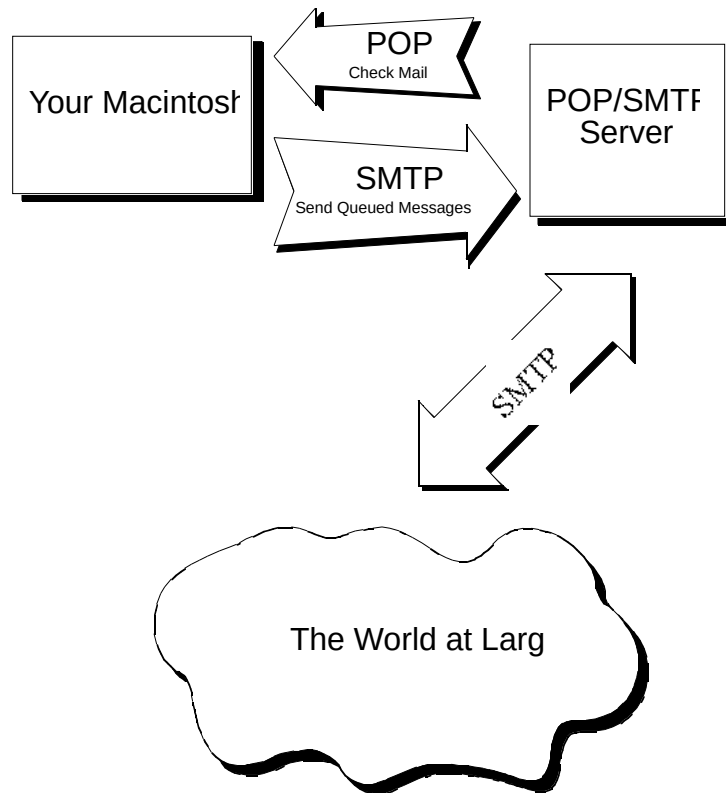
More Information
If you want to know more about the Internet in general, consult the book Internetworking with TCP/IP, by Douglas Comer, 1988, Prentice-Hall ISBN 0-13-470154-2 025.

If you want to know more about POP and SMTP, the official standards are:

POP3 - RFC 1081, "Post Office Protocol, Version 3," by Marshall
 Rose

SMTP - RFC 821, "Simple Mail Transfer Protocol," by Jonathan
 B. Postel

You can find the RFC's by anonymous ftp to *nic.ddn.mil*; see
<u>Internetworking with TCP/IP</u> for details.

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