The MailFLOW Future

This is from a mail sent to the MailFLOW managers list to provoke some discussion. It did and therefore we have initiated a new mailing list mailflow-future@dante.org.uk and is a moderated list. To show you where we started I add the five scenarios we had in mind for continuation.

About the future of MailFLOW, or dare I say X.400 ... I've been pushing this forward for a while, but it is time to decide/do something. To be honest with you, this is not a very hot item or cool topic looking a the huge amount of e-mail on this list (or wg-msg).

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To: managers@mailflow.dante.org.uk
Subject: Provoking?
From: Vincent Berkhout <Vincent.Berkhout@dante.org.uk>
Date: Fri, 26 Jul 1996 12:09:04 +0100
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Well, let me try to provoke some discussion.

Scenario 1 -- As-is and FTP tables -> It will last my days
Let's leave everything as-is, "don't fix it until it's broken". Simply keep the current setup with the tables, SWITCH managing them will suffice for the time to come. The actual work involved is getting less and the continuation/ maintenance will be a very low effort. Eventually (during 97/98) the service will gradually fade away without major problem.

Scenario 2 -- DNS -> Install new bind and PX RR
Well, this is the "we'll ask Claudio approach". Let's go for DNS, it works and it is fast. The only thing to do is install a new bind and add a PX record (Pointer to X.400/RFC822 Resource Record). Strong feature SMTP->X400 mapping is easy. No control about what is happening, if some one makes an error, they are .. errrr .. gone? But, ala the Internet spirit they will be forced to correct this. The mapping the other way around (X400->SMTP) using the x42d "domain" seems a bit tricky and tinkered to me. I am a bit sceptic with moving the big files (5 Meg?) around via DNS. Where is the routing information?

Scenario 3 -- X.500 (LDAP) -> brush up Longbud DSA
There is a DSA running, there is code supporting it, it is maintained, but it is slow (Is this true, Stan?). An alternative could be to use LDAP for access, making it a bit faster, and maybe install a local (SLAPD) server? It has one advantage, it supports routing and we can have access control on it.

Scenario 4 -- Sell our soul to GOFOR (EEMA Gateway Operators Forum)
Wait for the first GOFOR meeting and see where they (we) go. There is quite a bit of overlap of interest and maybe we could "dump" the mapping/table problems in their lap. I am slightly worried about the final implementation and ending up with a "paper tiger".

Scenario 5 -- SAS -> the quick kill

We bundle our forces and try to stop X.400 mail all together. Academic and R&D MHSs go SMTP-only! If you try to reach us, be sure that your mail service provider supports the appropriate gateways between the domains. Personally I think this not the right way, we can ignore X.400, but we cannot make it go away.

SHOOT!

`Vinc&`

For further information on the future of MailFLOW please contact Vincent Berkhout.