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Abstract

PINE is a light weight yet very powerful open source console based e-mail client developed by the University of Washington. It has enjoyed popularity among UNIX users that spend a lot of time using command line interfaces. Many Linux and Mac users edit text files with the PICO, which is a daughter program of PINE.

What is PINE?

PINE is an acronym that stands for **P**rogram for **I**nternet **N**ews & **E**mail. Pine was developed in 1990 and development continued until 2005, where the project was continued but renamed to Alpine.

Why use PINE?

As a console based e-mail client, PINE is perfectly suited to low bandwidth environments. It is efficient and fast over dialup connections as well as other high latency satellite connections and cell phone connections. Since PINE is text based it is easier to ignore and delete text SPAM as well as Image SPAM.

PINE is also very secure as it does not use any sort of scripting. It is not vulnerable to any sort of e-mails with malicious code or e-mails that have viruses attached.

Installing PINE

(AL)PINE can be installed as a binary package for many UNIX / Linux distributions as well as compiled from the freely available source code [1].

There are also binary packages available to download for Windows and Mac OS X.

While PINE can act as it's own e-mail client, for local mailbox manipulation PINE requires an MTA such as Sendmail, Qmail, or Postfix. Many users who do not run their own mail servers also use a mail retrieval utility such as fetchmail in conjunction with PINE to download remote mail to a local mailbox.

Configuration

Configuration of PINE is done through the Setup option in the program. Pine is very user-configurable. Every option in PINE from the SMTP server to the mail headers to the colors of the text is able to be changed.

Advanced Features

Running in text mode PINE may not look very flashy but it is able to support some very nice features such as LDAP for addressing.

Extra Bonus

Included when you install PINE is the program that pine uses to compose e-mails called PICO (**P**ine's message **c**omposition editor[2]). PICO can also be used as a powerful stand-alone text editor that is much simpler to use than VI or EMACS.

Conclusion

PINE is an easy to use, secure text based e-mail client that is a perfect fit for anyone who spends most of their time in a command line environment.

References

- [1] <http://www.washington.edu/alpine/acquire/>
- [2] <http://www.washington.edu/pine/faq/whatis.html>