
LAFITETIMEDDELETE

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REQUIRES: LAFITE

INTERNAL

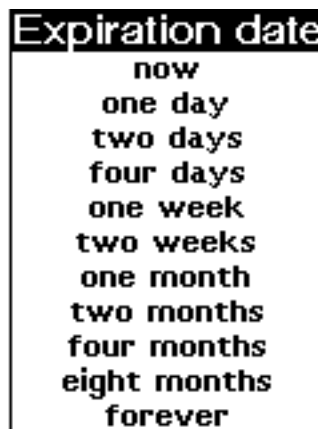
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INTRODUCTION

The package LafiteTimedDelete allows users to specify expiration dates on their mail messages as they read them. After a message has expired, it will be marked for deletion the next time the user invokes the command "Delete Expired Msgs". The package is useful for specifying deletion dates on dated information such as announcements of talks. It can also be used as a "sunset" clause on certain messages, saying in effect that if a message hasn't been acted on by this date, mark it for deletion. Since the command for deleting expired messages only marks them for deletion and doesn't actually delete them, the user can always intervene and save the message from deletion.

SETTING EXPIRATION DATES

To set an expiration date, simply select the message(s) that you wish to have deleted at some future time, and then click the "Delete" command on the Lafite browser with the middle button. This will produce a menu of durations like this:



Selecting a duration will determine how long until the message(s) expire, measured from the current day. If no selection is made, then the operation is aborted.

When a message is marked for future deletion, a number from 1 to 9 will appear in the mark field to the left of the message id. This number indicates how long until the message should expire, *measured from the date of the message*. The number is approximately the logarithm of the number of days until the message expires. Thus "1" means 1 day, "2" means 2 days, "3" means 4 days, "4" means 1 week, "5" means 2 weeks, "6" means 1 month, "7" means 2 months, "8" means 4 months, and "9" means 8 months.

Selecting the duration "now" is equivalent to normal deletion. Selecting the duration "forever" is equivalent to undeletion, with the side effect that all expiration marks are removed.

DELETING EXPIRED MESSAGES

To delete all of the messages that have expired, invoke the "Delete Expired Msgs" command in the browser's middle button menu. (The middle button menu is obtained by holding down the middle button while over the black bar in the mail folder.) The program will then examine all of the messages in that folder, looking for messages that have expired. When it finds a message that has expired, it will mark it to be deleted. Finally, it will print in the browser's prompt window the number of messages that it marked for deletion.

Messages expire at 12 noon on the Nth day from the date given in the date field of browser. Thus if on Wednesday, October 7th you mark a message sent that day to be deleted in two days, then the message would be deletable after 12 noon on Friday, October 9th. However, the messages don't actually get marked for deletion until you invoke the command "Delete Expired Msgs". You usually only need to invoke this command once per day since no new messages will expire later on, so if you are unhappy with 12 noon as an expiration time, you can move it by only invoking the command after the day is over (or early in the morning the next day.)

CAVEATS

Since LAFITETIMEDDELETE uses the mark field of the message header to save the information about how long until the message expires, you may run into conflicts with other uses of the mark field. For instance, if you set the expiration date on a message and then forward it, you will lose the expiration information because the forwarder puts an "f" in the mark field. If you notice this, you can restore the mark manually by clicking the mark field and typing a new number.

Also, since LAFITETIMEDDELETE is limited in the number of distinctions that it can make in the time until expiration, it may set the expiration of a message to a time much later than you might want. For instance, suppose that you are reading a message that was mailed yesterday and you want to set its expiration date to one week from today. Since it can only record expirations from the date of the message and not from the current date, it must set the message to expire in eight days. If the program used the one week expiration mark, then the message would expire in seven days, or six days from

today. Since that might expire the message before you intend, the program plays it safe and uses the two week expiration mark. A six day expiration might be OK with the user, but it would be awkward to ask him, especially if there were multiple messages selected. If the user is dissatisfied with the mark, he can always change it manually as described above.

Please send all comments, questions, and bug reports to Maxwell.pa.