a diagram illustrating
using .forwards and procmail
to collect mail sent to a single e-mail address and
distribute it to multiple users

The diagram on the following page illustrates how sendmail interacts with .forward files and procmail in the context of collecting e-mail sent to a single address and fanning it out to multiple addresses.

There is no warranty expressed or implied; this documnt is furnished for informational purposes only, in the spirit of collegial interchange of ideas. "ourco" is a fictitious company. Marc Gordon is a real person, to whose assistance and review I am indebted for the preparation of this document.

The general premise is as follows:

- Mail is sent to a single address, but intended for multiple recipients. For this example we will assume that the mechanism which flags separate users is on the To: line, but Subject line processing is also certainly possible. The specific mechanism is the name appearing in parentheses, as follows:

  `ourco@a-big-isp.tld (Fred Morris)` *mail intended for Fred Morris, for ultimate delivery to m3047@inwa.net*

  `ourco@a-big-isp.tld (Marc Gordon)` *mail intended for Marc Gordon, for ultimate delivery to marc@ourco.tld*

  Mail sent to the address with no name in parentheses, or with a name which is not recognized, will be set to the catchall address sales@ourco.tld

- A .forward file in the ourco account at a-big-isp forwards the mail to the default account on the ourco server.

- procmail is invoked on the ourco server to sort the mail out and send it to different accounts.

- There are 3 accounts on the ourco server: marc, sales and default.

There is a lot of detail; it is not intended to be printed out, instead you'll be zooming in and out to see various aspects of the process.

the internet "cloud"

e-mail message

```
Received: from boss.yoyodyne.com by
mail.yoyodyne.com
To: ourco@a-big-isp.tld (Marc Gordon)
From: bigboss@yoyodyne.com
```

SMTP

mail.a-big-isp.tld
(a unix server)

```
login: ourco
password:

~$ ls -a
  .                    .bashrc
  ..                   .forward
~$ more .forward
default@ourco.tld
~$
```

sendmail daemon

SMTP

e-mail message

```
Received: from mail.yoyodyne.com by mail.a-big-
isp.tld
Received: from boss.yoyodyne.com by
mail.yoyodyne.com
To: ourco@a-big-isp.tld (Marc Gordon)
From: bigboss@yoyodyne.com
```

mail.ourco.tld

sendmail daemon

```
login: default
password:

~$ ls -a
  .                    .bashrc          .procmailrc
  ..                   .forward
~$ more .forward
"|exec /usr/local/bin/procmail #default"

~$ more .procmailrc

:0
* ^TO.*Fred Morris
!m3047@inwa.net

:0
* ^TO.*Marc Gordon
!marc

:0
* ^TO.*ourco
!sales

~$ ls /usr/mail/spool
  default               sales
  marc
~$
```

procmail

popper

e-mail message

```
Received: from mail.a-big-isp.tld by
mail.ourco.tld
Received: from mail.yoyodyne.com by mail.a-big-
isp.tld
Received: from boss.yoyodyne.com by
mail.yoyodyne.com
To: ourco@a-big-isp.tld (Marc Gordon)
From: bigboss@yoyodyne.com
```

POP3

Marc's workstation

mail client