The CEDRA Corporation's

COMMAND OF THE MONTH

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FEATURED COMMAND

Sending Mass E-mails
with Attachments

Application Description

Here's a problem we have all faced. You go to check your e-mail and all of a sudden a whole bunch of "junk" e-mails appear.

After asking yourself where did these things come from, you go about the task of deleting these unwanted e-mails.

In this month's issue of Command of the Month we do not discuss how to limit "junk" e-mails, but rather, we examine how one goes about sending mass e-mails. That is, sending a single e-mail to a whole bunch of different e-mail addresses without having each of the addresses appear in the To: component of the e-mail.

The CEDRA Solution

If one were to "Google", mass e-mailing software, you would find a number of software products that range from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars. Rather than purchasing one of these products we decided to develop a Visual Basic application that would perform this task (we are software developers after all). In so doing, we would have a program that was tailored for our specific needs.

Although these commercial products offer more than just mass e-mailing functionality, we were only interested in an application that would send a single e-mail to a number of different e-mail addresses with only a single address appearing in the To: component of the e-mail. That is, we did not want all of the e-mail addresses appearing in the To: component of the e-mail.

Send Mail - Overview

The premise of our **SendMail** application is that all of the e-mail addresses would be stored in an ASCII file.

Shown in Tables 1 and 2 are two samples illustrating the possible ASCII file formats for the e-mail addresses.

> ***Command Of The Month bulletin***
>
> *This month's issue discusses a free tool for sending mass e-mails, with or without attachments, to a variable number of e-mail addresses.*
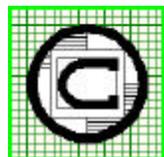
E-mail Address File Format 1 contains a single line for every e-mail address that is to be processed. On a data line there are two values. The first is the e-mail address and the second is the contact name associated with the e-mail address. A blank, comma or Tab character can be used to delineate the two values. As can be seen from Table 1, a comma is used to separate the two values in this particular example.

E-mail Address File Format 2 contains two lines of data for every e-mail address to be processed. Under this format, the first of the two lines contains the e-mail address, while the second contains the contact name associated with the e-mail address.

```
mmoore@cedra.com,Michelle
lstone@cedra.com,Lisa
nick@cedra.com,Nick
```

Table 1
E-mail Address File Format 1

```
mmoore@cedra.com
Michelle
lstone@cedra.com
Lisa
nick@cedra.com
Nick
```

Table 2
E-mail Address File Format 2

Under both of these file formats, there is no limit to the number of characters that can comprise the e-mail address or the contact name.

Furthermore, the user is able to introduce blank lines within the file to improve the "readability" of the file. That is to say, blank lines are ignored during the reading of the E-mail Address File.

Since the E-mail Address File is ASCII based, the file can be created manually using any word processing software. Alternatively, the file could be created by exporting a text file from a database or spreadsheet program.

Once the E-mail Address File has been established, the **SendMail** program can be invoked. A dialog box appears, from which, the user specifies the mass e-mailing parameters. Once the appropriate responses have been entered, a single button click begins the mass e-mail sending.
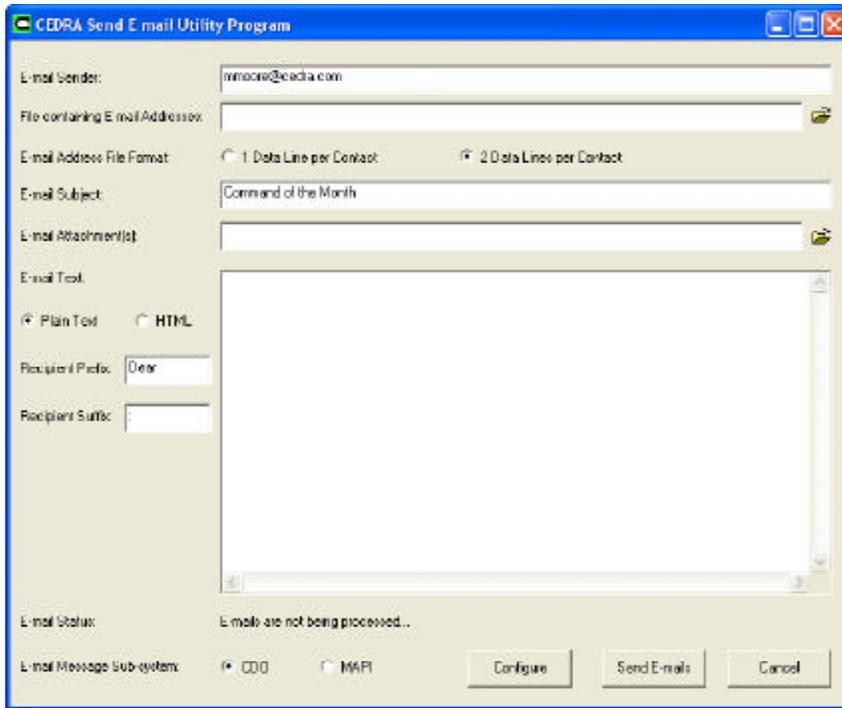
Figure 1
SendEmail Dialog Box

Send E-mail - Operation

To use the **SendMail** program, the user should:

➤ **1**   **Invoke** the **SendMail** program.

➤ **2**   **Enter** the appropriate responses to the parameters shown in Figure 1.

Beginning at the top of the dialog box, the user is able to control the following:

Data Line 1 - E-mail Sender

Enter the e-mail address that should appear in the From: component of an e-mail. This value is used only if the CDO option, under the Data Line 10 parameter, is active.

Data Line 2 - E-mail Addresses File

Enter the name of the file containing the e-mail addresses to be processed. Alternatively, select the File icon on the right side of this parameter to employ a file navigation dialog box to select the file.

Data Line 3 - E-mail Address File Format

Select the 1 Data Line per Contact option to denote that the E-mail Address File contains a single data line for each e-mail address to be processed, see Table 1, or select the 2 Data Lines per Contact option to denote that an e-mail address is comprised of two data lines, see Table 2.

Data Line 4 - E-mail Subject

Enter the string that is to appear in the Subject: component of the e-mail.

Data Line 5 - E-mail Attachment(s)

Enter the name(s) of the file(s) to be attached to the e-mail. These files will be sent as e-mail attachments and not embedded in the e-mail. If multiple files are to be attached with the E-mail, the comma character should be used to delineate the files, for example:

d:\tmp\attach.txt,c:\public.txt

Alternatively, select the File icon on the right side of this parameter to employ a file navigation dialog box to select the file(s). Note, multiple files can be selected by depressing the Ctrl key when selecting the files.

Data Line 6 - E-mail Text

Enter the text that represents the e-mail message.

Data Line 7 - E-mail Text Format

Select the Plain Text option to denote that the e-mail message contains plain ASCII text, or select the HTML option to denote that the e-mail message contains text in HTML format.

Data Line 8 - Recipient Prefix

Enter the text that is to precede the contact name. For example, if the contact name is Bob and the Prefix is Hello . The first line in the e-mail will be Hello Bob. If no prefix is specified, the first line in the e-mail will be Bob (the contact name associated with the e-mail address). The prefix string is used as is. That is to say, leading and trailing blanks are not removed from the prefix.

Data Line 9 - Recipient Suffix

Enter the text that is to follow the contact name. For example, if the contact name is Bob and the Suffix is :. The first line in the e-mail will be Bob:. If no suffix is specified, the first line in the e-mail will be Bob (the contact name associated with the e-mail address). The suffix string is used as is. That is to say, leading and trailing blanks are not removed from the suffix.

Data Line 10 - E-mail Message Sub-system

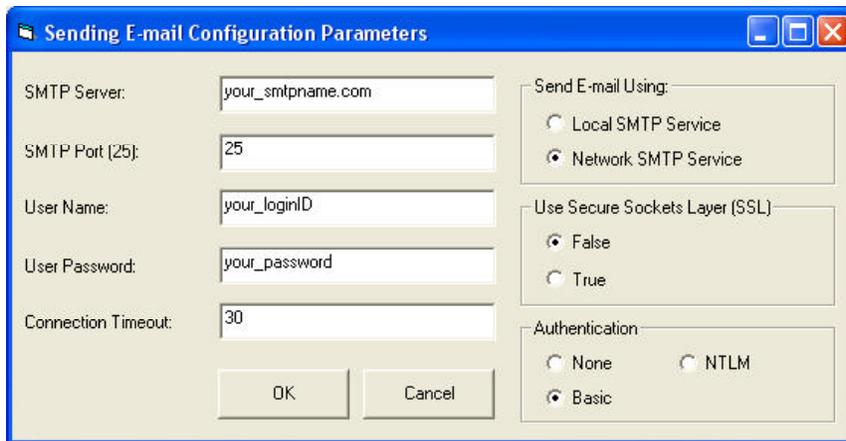Select the CDO option to denote that the e-mail message sub-system is to use the Collaboration Data

Figure 2
Configure button Dialog Box

Objects, or select the MAPI option to denote that the Messaging Application Programming Interface is to be used as the e-mail message subsystem.

➤ **3** **Click** at the Configure button to define the e-mail connection parameters. The dialog box shown in Figure 2 will appear.

Beginning at the top of the dialog box, the user is able to control the following:

Data Line 1 - SMTP Server

Enter the Name or IP of the Remote SMTP Server that handles the sending of e-mails.

Data Line 2 - SMTP Port (25)

Enter the server port value associated with the Remote SMTP server. This value is usually 25, although it does not have to be.

Data Line 3 - User Name

Enter the e-mail login ID on the Remote SMTP server.

Data Line 4 - User Password

Enter the password that is associated with the e-mail login ID.

Data Line 5 - Connection Time-out

Enter the maximum amount of time, in seconds, that should be used to establish a connection to the remote SMTP server.

Data Line 6 - Send E-mail Using

Select the Local SMTP Service option to denote that the e-mail is to be sent using the local SMTP service pickup directory, or select the Network SMTP Service option to denote that the e-mail is to be sent using the network (SMTP over the network).

Data Line 7 - Use Secure Sockets Layer (SSL)

Select the False or True option to denote whether Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) should be used when

sending the e-mails. This parameter is used only if the parameter, Send E-mail Using, is set to Network SMTP Service.

Data Line 8 - Authentication

Select the None, Basic or NTLM option to denote the type of authentication to be used when logging into the SMTP server. This parameter is used only if the parameter, Send E-mail Using, is set to Network SMTP Service. When the SMTP server, specified in the Data Line 1 parameter, requires authentication in order to send e-mails, the user will need to select the Basic or NTLM option (if the NONE option is selected, a "relay denied" error message will more than likely be generated).

➤ **4** **Click** at the OK button to define the e-mail connection parameters, or the Cancel button to abort the definition.

➤ **5** **Click** at the Send E-mails button to send the e-mails or the Cancel button to terminate the program.

Once the Send E-mails button is selected, the program will: (a) read the E-mail Address File and then (b) send the e-mails.

If an error is detected in sending an e-mail, the error message is displayed in a list box similar to that shown in Figure 3. Once this dialog box is dismissed (by
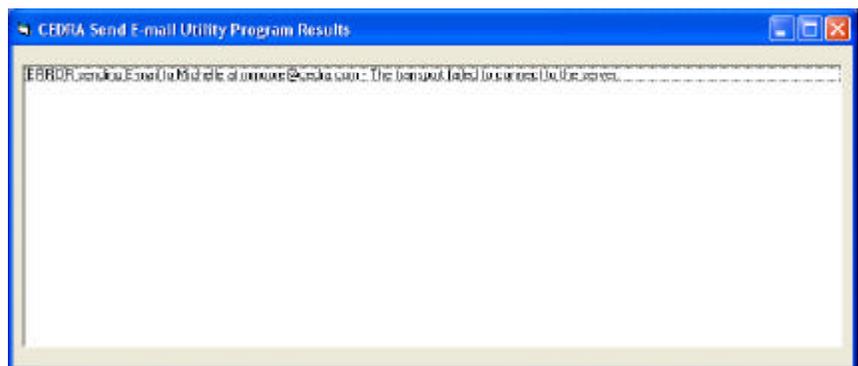

Figure 3
Error Message when an E-mail was not sent Successfully

clicking the x button in the upper right corner), the warning message shown in Figure 4 will appear.

Figure 4
Warning message indicating the
Parameters that should be checked

Figure 5
Confirmation when all E-mails sent Successfully

There are only two reasons why an error would occur. The first is incorrect Configuration parameters and the second is an incorrect address file or file format specification.

To rectify the first, select the Configure button and verify the settings which are displayed, particularly the SMTP server, SMTP port, User Name and User Password.

To rectify the second, verify that the correct Address File Format has been specified and inspect the Address File for correctness.

If no errors are detected, a list box similar to that shown in Figure 5 will be displayed. Within this list box will be all of the e-mail addresses which were successfully processed.

The list box will remain displayed until it is dismissed (by clicking the x button in the upper right corner).

At this point, the dialog box shown in Figure 1 is still displayed. To terminate the program, the user can select the Cancel button or click the x button in the upper right corner.

When the program is terminated, a file called **sendmail.txt** will be written to the root level of the C: drive (provided the user has permission to create a file at the root level of the C: drive). This file contains the values that have been assigned to the various parameters shown in Figures 1 and 2. As such, when the
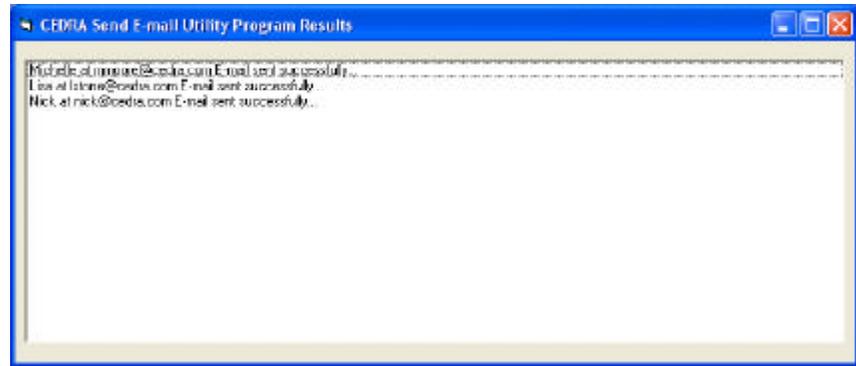
program is re-invoked, the default parameter values will echo those which were last assigned by the user.

Notes

a. To use the **SendMail** program you must have an Internet connection and access to an e-mail account.

b. The MAPI e-mail message sub-system is faster than CDO, however, MAPI does not allow for e-mails that contain HTML codes. HTML e-mails give the e-mail sender more flexibility in creating "fancier" or "prettier" e-mails because the sender has a lot more control in formatting the e-mail message.

c. When using the MAPI e-mail message sub-system, The From: address component in an E-mail is taken from the Address book that is used as the E-mail service. Eudora users can define this using the {Tools} [Options...] command under the Getting Started category with the Real Name parameter.

d. SMTP stands for Simple Mail Transfer Protocol.

e. A free version of the **SendMail** program can be downloaded at the site: **http://cedra.com/send_email**. To download the program, perform the following:
❑ right-click on SendMail.exe,
❑ select the Save Target As... menu item,

❑ navigate to a location on your hard drive, and then
❑ select the Save button to start the download.

f. In addition to the SendMail.exe file, the above referenced site contains two additional files:
❑ the SendEmail.txt file contains the VB 6.0 code that is used to perform the sending of an e-mail, while
❑ the SampleHTML.txt file contains a sample e-mail message that utilizes HTML codes to create a formatted e-mail message with an embedded graphic (bitmap image).

Summary

Although this issue does not discuss a CEDRA-AV series software command, it does cover a topic which some CEDRA users have an interest in. We encourage readers to try the free version of SendMail and provide us their comments.

As always, should the reader have any suggestions on functionality that should be featured in Command of the Month, please feel free to forward them on to us.

If you have a request for Command Of The Month, feel free to phone, fax or e-mail your request to The CEDRA Corporation.