The VA Tech SSI/Mail and UCSTools Projects

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Introduction

- SSI/Mail

  -- SSI is the “Single System Image”

  -- Part of a strategic initiative begun by the Vice President for Information Systems.

  -- First in a proposed series of modules that allow untrained users access to enterprise-wide resources.

- UCSTools

  -- UCS is the “University Calendar System”

  -- The outgrowth of a project to provide calendar data to anyone with a computer, without their needed to know more than how to run a program.

  -- Project has grown to a series of interlocking modules.

SSI/Mail

- An inexpensive method of providing full mail service to the university community without requiring major system resources.

- Design goals included:

  -- Minimize use of system resources, such as TTY ports.

  -- Minimize the required computer expertise of the user.

  -- Minimize the number of times a user must log in daily while checking mail.

  -- Maximize security and accountability.

  -- Minimize staff overhead.

  -- Maximize use of existing system resources

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- Use existing or developing standards, including X.400, X.500 as available.

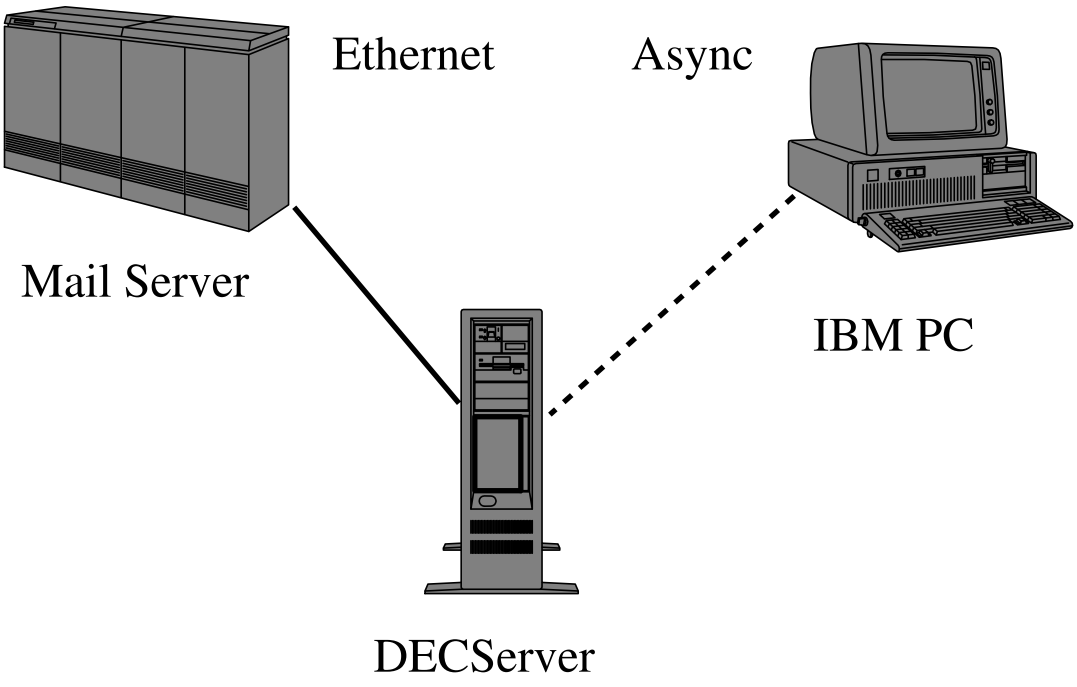
- Targeted towards popular personal computers.

  - Intended platforms include IBM, Apple Macintosh, and Amiga.

- Provides hooks for central user directory

SSI/Mail System Design

- SSI/Mail is built on a modular hardware design, using DEC ULTRIX facilities.
- Hardware components can be swapped invisibly to the the users.



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The SSI/Mail Client

C:/UTIL/SSI> ssimail

Setting Time Zone to EST5EDT

SSIMAIL.EXE using SSI/Mail v0.5a (Compiled Jun 06 1991 10:06:47)

Copyright (c) 1990,1991 Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Report new problems to "ssiadm@vtssi.vt.edu" or to "ssiadm@vtserf.cc.vt.edu"

SSIMAIL.EXE:?> login rjarrell

Password:

Calling physical connection... Starting server...

Sending operation to server... Server processing operation...

Receiving results from server...

Last Login 27/Jan/92 15:15:25; Next required password change 10/apr/92 02:29:22

SSIMAIL.EXE:rjarrell> list

The SSI/Mail Client

Sending operation to server... Server processing operation...

Receiving results from server...

MsgID:	From:	To:	Length	Date:	Subject:
30863	"Ronald	rjarrell@vt	301	22/Dec/91	Testing..

SSIMAIL.EXE:rjarrell> get 30863

Sending operation to server... Server processing operation...

Receiving results from server...

(Message saved as 30863.MSG)

Received from......

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UCSTools

- An outgrowth of a project to provide the community with a current copy of the university calendar.
- Users access the calendar server via a GUI running on their local system.
- Users on campus never need see the underlying software; configuration, maintenance and fault recovery are all automatic.
- Design goals for the project included:

  -- Supporting popular personal computers as well as workstations.

  -- Allowing nearly computer illiterate users to use the software.

-- Minimize use of ports and resources.

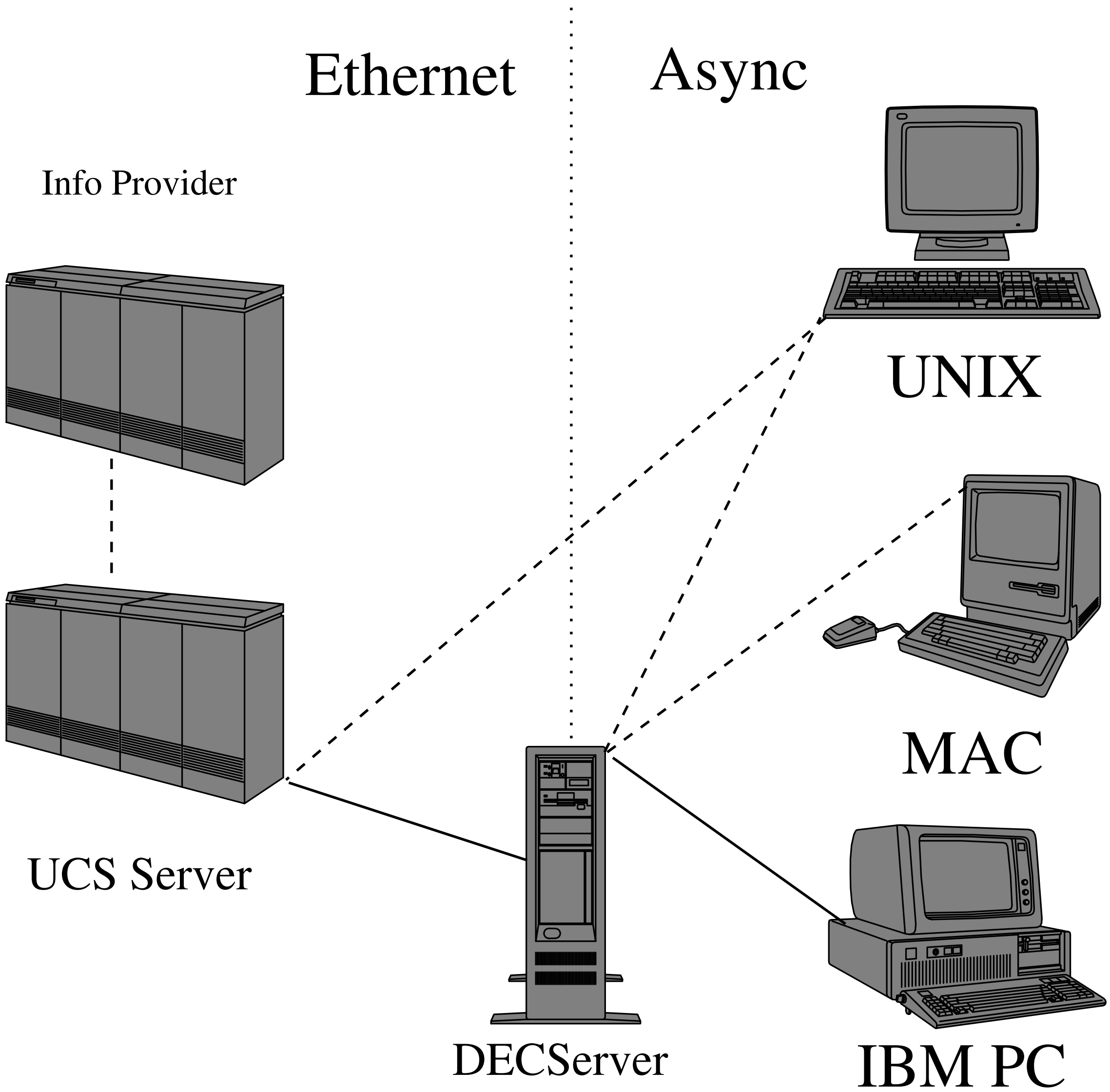
-- Be attractive to use.

-- Attempt to eliminate the need for distributing new copies of the program when changes are made; as much as possible of the configuration info built into the *Server* not the client.

-- Follow standards where possible (such as Z39.50).

- UCSTools follows same functional approach as SSI/Mail, while not sharing any functions, allowing use of the same server, but not requiring it.

UCSTools System Design



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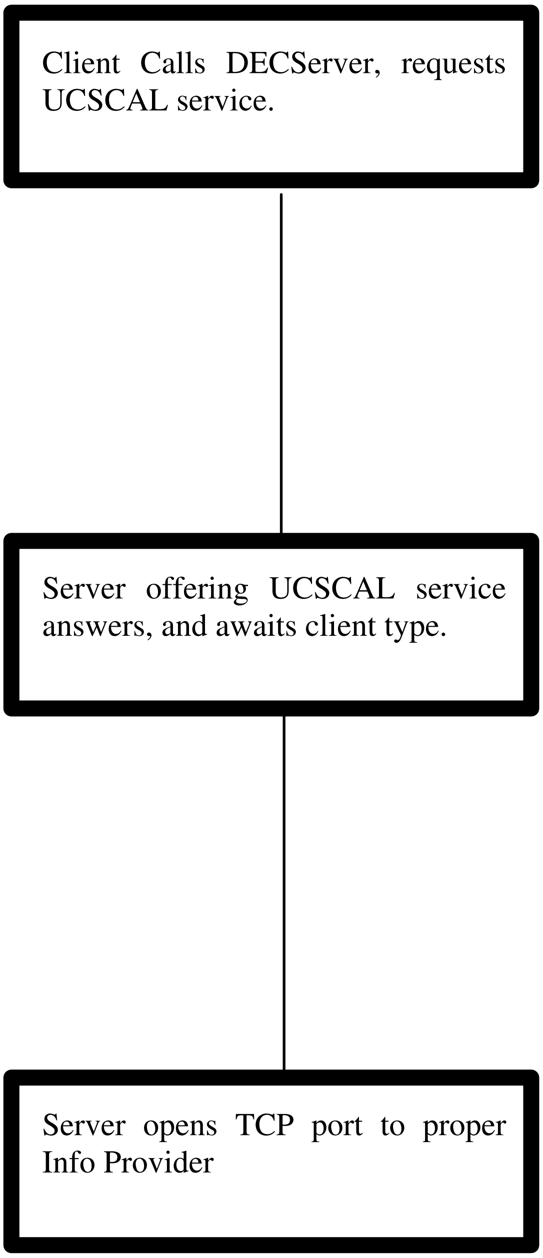
UCSTools Block Diagram



UCSTools Startup

UCS Tools

University Calendar

University News

University Catalog

Set Color

Mono/Color

Exit/Quit

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UCS Calendar

02/09	Student Orgs	7:00pm	Meeting of the Hiking Club	
02/09	University			Last day to submit form 2911
02/09	Community		7:30pm	YMCA Picnic, call for info.

The hiking club will meet in 123 Williams Hall at 7:00pm. Events will include a video presentation on loading your pack, and a discussion of the proposed hike to dragon's tooth on the 15th. Open to all interested parties.

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UCS News

Jobs at VPI

SGA Information

Facility Hours

Cranwell International Center

Bus Schedules

Weather

Newman Library

Architecture Library

Geology Library

Veterinary Medicine Library

Gymnasium

War Memorial Chapel

In this window, with a scroll bar, would appear the current news item that had been selected from the combination of the left top and bottom windows. It would be formatted to 40 columns, although the stored article would probably have been prepared to an 80 column format. This allows for quick perusal of news while still allowing for easier viewing later.

Future Plans for UCSTools

- New GUI modules
  - -- University Catalog
    - > A combined Catalog and Timetable.
    - > Allows searching for all occurrences of a class, or all classes at an open time.
    - > Automatically warns user of a co-requisite lab
    - > Can display pre-requisite courses for any selected course
    - > Can display curriculum requirements
  - -- University Files
    - > Designed to provide access to "slow changing" files, such as student life

policies, university regulations, etc.

-- Personal Information Viewer.

> Ability to manipulate and change forms-based information.

> Provides security via authentication of user.

> Allows such changes as:

* Library requests

* Change of Address

* Transcript Request

* Etc.

For more info:

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