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Testing SMTP from CLI

Learn how to test SMTP from the command line by connecting to a mail server, sending a test email, and troubleshooting common errors. This guide covers the essential commands and steps for successful email transmission.

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To gain access to your email account, you will need the following three essentials:

- A stable and active internet connection
- The address of a mail server that can handle relaying, which is usually provided by your email service provider (e.g., mail.domain.ext)
- A legitimate email address (e.g., mail@domain.ext)

Utilize the command line interface to initiate a connection from your computer to your designated mail server.

```
telnet mail.domain.ext 25
```

You should receive a response that looks something like this:

```
Trying ????.????.????.???... Connected to mail.domain.ext. Escape character is '^]'. 220  
mail.domain.ext ESMTP Sendmail ?version-number?; ?date+time+gmtoffset?
```

Proceed by indicating the origin of your email:

```
HELO local.domain.name
```

The exact local domain name is not critical, though using your fully qualified domain name as recognized externally is recommended. The mail server needs to trust your input as per the standards set by RFC822-RFC1123.

Reply 250 mail.domain.ext Hello local.domain.name [loc.al.i.p], pleased to meet you

Next, enter your email address:

```
MAIL FROM: mail@domain.ext
```

Reply

```
250 2.1.0 mail@domain.ext... Sender ok
```

Now, input the recipient's email address:

```
RCPT TO: mail@otherdomain.ext
```

Reply

```
250 2.1.0 mail@otherdomain.ext... Recipient ok
```

To start composing your email message, use the following command:

DATA *If you wish to include a subject for your email, type Subject:-type subject here- then press enter twice (these are required to comply with RFC 882) You can now proceed to write the body of your message.*

```
This is a test email
```

To signal to the mail server that you have completed your message, enter a single period

```
.
```

Reply

```
250 2.0.0 ???????? Message accepted for delivery.
```

To close the connection, use the following command:

```
QUIT
```

Reply

221 2.0.0 mail.domain.ext closing connection Connection closed by foreign host.

Errors

- **501** nouser@nosuchplace.here... Sender domain must exist
- **503** Need MAIL before RCPT - A recipient has been specified before a sender.
- **550** mail@domain.ext... Relaying Denied - The mail server has refused to relay mail for you.