

Racing email against a snail

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The Windows team double-dogfoods Windows Server and Exchange Server, and while this is good for both products, it can be quite frustrating when something goes wrong. I remember back in the early days of the Windows 95 project, the mail servers once got so messed up that some email messages were not delivered for several days. After a colleague told me that he had just received an email message that I had sent several days earlier, I went to the library to look up the typical speed of a garden snail. (This was back in the days when you had to use an actual library to look up facts, and cat videos were available only once a week. The Internet looked like this and a few years later, this.) Conclusion: A garden snail would have delivered the message faster than our email system. More recently, a wrinkle in the space-time continuum resulted in one of our automated systems sending out warning messages four months after the anomalous situation was detected. (The anomalous situation was repaired almost immediately, so the warning was not only late, it was spurious.)

One of my colleagues remarked,

I have a story I read to my grandkids where Frog writes Toad a letter and gives it to a passing snail, who delivers it to Toad's house four days later.

Can we hire that snail?

Today is Thank a Mailman Day.

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