

The sys admin's daily grind: Biabam and Tre-agrep

Take Two

Most of the tools that show up in this column are small, smart, fast, and easily explained.

This month is no exception; we feature a dynamic duo of tools. *By Charly Kühnast*

If something goes wrong on one of my systems, I have the system send me an email – fortunately, I have never experienced a situation in which Postfix went haywire. I normally just use the `mail` command for this. However, it is difficult if you want to attach a file, such as a dump or a graphical overview by Munin. Some unsavory workarounds convert binary data into ASCII and create the necessary header so you can feed the whole enchilada to the `mail` command without any serious accidents, but life is so much easier with the right tool for the job.

That tool goes by the name of Biabam [1]. The name seems to be some kind of 21st century Dadaism, but luckily, it's the only irritating thing about the tool – I honestly have no idea what it means. If you want to attach two images to an email and send them to two different recipients, the command looks like:

```
echo "Malfunction, see graphics" | 📧
biabam /opt/scripts/image1.png, 📧
/opt/scripts/image2.png 📧
-s "Error on system Palim-Palim" 📧
admin1@example.com, 📧
admin2@example.com
```

The `echo` command outputs the mail text, which is then piped to Biabam. You need to pass in the comma-separated binaries to the Biabam command line to create the attachments. Avoid using relative paths here. The `-s` parameter specifies the text for the subject line. The recipient addresses finally follow, again separated by a comma.

Nicely Fuzzy

The second tool in my dynamic duo accepts significantly more parameters than Biabam. Tre-agrep [2] is a new implementation of Agrep [3].

In contrast to the original tool, which is not available for commercial use, tre-agrep is available under the more liberal BSD license. Tre-agrep gives you a simple approach to adding a selectable level of fuzziness to any search. For ex-

ample, if you want to search a logfile for `example.com` with a maximum fuzziness of two characters, you would type the following:

```
tre-agrep 📧
-2 example.com /var/log/mail.log
```

The result is shown in Figure 1: as this allows a deviation of up to two characters in the search, you will still see some matches if you misspell the name – the message seems to have gone to `exmaple.com` in this case. ■■■

INFO

- [1] Biabam: <http://freecode.com/projects/biabam>
- [2] Tre-agrep: <http://laurikari.net/tre/>
- [3] Agrep: <ftp://ftp.cs.arizona.edu/agrep/>

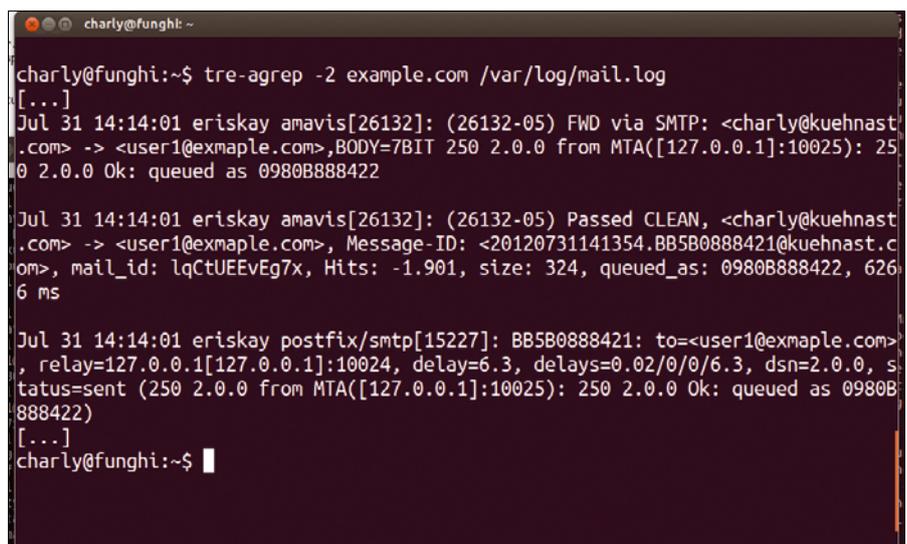


Figure 1: Tre-agrep performing a fuzzy search against the `mail.log` file; it still finds log entries when they are spelled wrong.

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