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A/UX: biff Requires localhost in /etc/hosts File (8/94)

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TOPIC -----

Some users have tried to set up their systems for automatic notification of mail upon log in, but have failed. They report that although "biff y" in the ".profile" file works fine when in the Bourne shell, it fails in the Korn or C shell. Including "biff y" in both the ".login" and ".cshrc" files doesn't seem to help.

DISCUSSION -----

To solve this problem, first ensure that the "localhost" entry is present in the "/etc/hosts" file.

The "biff" notification is invoked by the sender's mailer (in this case, "/bin/mail"), which calls the "gethostbyname()" system call with "localhost" as its argument. This connects to the receiver's comsat server, which in turn alerts the receiver.

If your "/etc/hosts" file does not have the "localhost" entry, the "bin/mail" program will not try to call the receiver's comsat program.

Unfortunately, the "localhost" entry is not included in the distributed "/etc/hosts" file.

To make it possible for "/bin/mail" to connect to comsat, add the "localhost" name in the local loop back entry line in the "/etc/hosts" file:

```
127.0.0.1    localhost  loop lo loo
```

This doesn't work under any shell without the "localhost" name in the "/etc/hosts" file.

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Support Information Services

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