IEEE Standards Interpretations for IEEE Std 1003.2™-1992 IEEE Standard for Information Technology--Portable Operating System Interfaces (POSIX®)--Part 2: Shell and Utilities

Interpretation Request #129
Topic: mail **Relevant Clauses:** 4.40.7

POSIX.2 Subclause 4.40.7 specifies the processing of messages, which are in the system mailbox or in a secondary mailbox: lines 6347-6356 state: read The message has been processed by one of the following commands: ~f, ~m, ~F, ~M, copy, mbox, next, pipe, print, Print, top, type, Type, undelete. The delete, dp and dt. commands may also cause the next message to be marked as read, depending on the value of the autoprint variable. Messages that are in the system mailbox and in state read when<=== mailx quits will be saved in the mbox, unless the internal variable hold was set. Messages that are in the mbox or in a secondary mailbox and in state read when mailx quits will be retained in their current location. and Subclause 4.40.7.2.28, lines 6754-6757, state: save [file] save [msglist] file Save the specified messages in the file named by the pathname file, or the mbox if the file argument is omitted. The file shall be created if it does not exist; otherwise, the messages shall be appended to the file. The messages shall be deleted from the mailbox when mailx terminates unless keepsave is set.

The issue that I would like resolved is: Shall messages in a secondary mailbox be deleted, if they have been processed by save. I note, that 'save' is not one of the commands listed in the first mentioned statement. I note further, that the second mentioned statement does not differ between "system" and "secondary" mailboxes. So I would conclude that messages, which have been written to a file using 'save' are removed also from a secondary mailbox.

Interpretation Response
Since the description of the save command refers to the keepsave internal variable, but the internal variable keepsave says nothing about secondary mailbox's, the standard is

unclear on this issue, and no conformance distinction can be made between alternative implementations based on this. This is being referred to the sponsor.

Rationale for Interpretation
None.