

**The news and nntp URI Schemes**  
**draft-hoffman-news-nntp-uri-04.txt**

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Abstract

This document specifies the news and nntp Uniform Resource Identifier (URI) schemes that were originally specified in [RFC 1738](#). The purpose of this document is to allow [RFC 1738](#) to be made obsolete while keeping the information about the scheme on standards track.

**1. Introduction**

URIs were previously defined in [RFC 2396](#) [[RFC2396](#)], which was updated



by [draft-fielding-uri-rfc2396bis](#) [[2396bis](#)]. Those documents also specify how to define schemes for URIs.

The first definition for many URI schemes appeared in [RFC 1738](#) [[RFC1738](#)]. Because that document has been made obsolete, this document copies the news and nntp URI schemes from it to allow that material to remain on standards track.

Note: the definitions for the news and nntp URI schemes given here are significant updates from [RFC 1738](#) based on modern usage of these schemes.

Note: it is likely that the specification in this document will change based on input from the Usenet protocol community before this document is finalized.

## **2. Scheme Definition**

The news and nntp URL schemes are used to refer to either news groups or individual articles of USENET news, as specified in [RFC 1036](#).

The news URL takes the form:

```
newsURL      = "news" ":" [ news-server ]  
                ( newsgroup-name | '*' | message-id )  
news-server  = "://" server "/"  
message-id   = id-left "@" id-right
```

<server> is defined in [[2396bis](#)]. Note that there is widespread use of the username-password authentication in news servers, so news clients should implement this part of the <server> syntax.

### **2.1 The newsURL has a <newsgroup-name>**

The <newsgroup-name> is a period-delimited hierarchical name, such as "comp.lang.perl.modules". <id-left> and <id-right> are defined in [Section 3.6.4 of RFC 2822](#) [[RFC2822](#)].

The resource retrieved by this URL is some means to gain access to the articles in the given <newsgroup-name> that are available on the given <server> (usually by invoking a suitable news reading agent initialized to access that group). If no <server> is specified, the groups are to be retrieved from whatever server has been configured for local use.

### **2.2 The newsURL has a \***

If the last part of the newsURL is "\*" (as in <URL:news:\*>), it is

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used to refer to "all available news groups". The resource retrieved by this URL is some means to gain access to all the newsgroups that are available on the given <server> (usually by invoking a suitable news reading agent). If no <server> is specified, the access is to be to whatever server has been configured for local use.

### **2.3 The newsURL has a <message-id>**

The resource retrieved by this URL is the Netnews article with the given <message-id>. In a properly working Netnews system, the same article will be obtained whatever server is accessed for the purpose (assuming the server in question carried that article in the first place and that it has not expired). If no <server> is specified, the article is to be retrieved from whatever server has been configured for local use.

The <id-left> and the <id-right> MUST be in a canonical form in which no <quoted-string> or <quoted-pair> is used in a context where the same semantic meaning could have been rendered without such quoting; moreover, no whitespace may be included, whether %-encoded or not and/or quoted or not.

For example, neither

news:"abcd"@example.com

nor

"ab\cd"@example.com

is in canonical form, because the form

abcd@example.com

is available.

### **2.4 The nntp URL scheme**

The nntp URL defined in [RFC 1738](#) is deprecated. This section is likely to be replaced in a future version of this draft.

## **3. Security Considerations**

There are many security considerations for URI schemes discussed in [\[2396bis\]](#). The news protocol uses passwords in the clear for authentication, and offers no privacy, both of which are considered extremely unsafe in current practice.



#### **4 Informative References**

- [RFC1036] Horton, M. and R. Adams, "Standard for interchange of USENET messages", [RFC 1036](#), December 1987.
- [RFC1738] Berners-Lee, T., Masinter, L. and M. McCahill, "Uniform Resource Locators (URL)", [RFC 1738](#), December 1994.
- [RFC2396] Berners-Lee, T., Fielding, R. and L. Masinter, "Uniform Resource Identifiers (URI): Generic Syntax", [RFC 2396](#), August 1998.
- [RFC2822] Resnick, P., "Internet Message Format", [RFC 2822](#), April 2001.
- [2396bis] Berners-Lee, T., Fielding, R. and L. Masinter, "Uniform Resource Identifiers (URI): Generic Syntax", work in progress, [draft-fielding-uri-rfc2396bis-nn.txt](#).

#### Author's Address

Paul Hoffman  
VPN Consortium  
127 Segre Place  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
US

EMail: paul.hoffman@vpnc.org





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